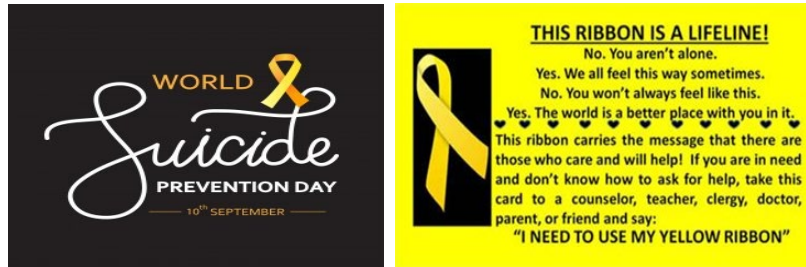


# SOUTHWEST

## TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Hello students, professors, administrators, and staff at Southwest Tennessee Community College!

For those of you that are not familiar with me, my name is Kimberly Weddington. I am the Mental Health Counselor for the Counseling and Social Services Department.

I am approaching everyone with a topic that I want everyone to become more knowledgeable and open about to discuss. For many, suicide is a hard topic to deal with but it is not a subject that we can turn our eyes to, sweep under the rug, or remain silent about it. Most important, increasing our awareness about suicide will help make us and/or our loved ones feel better, keep someone safe, and save lives as we endure difficult times.

We all have our experiences in life. I think it is even safe to go further to say that we can all agree some of our experiences have been great; some have been good; some have been surprising or unexpected; and some have been unfortunate or rather troubling.... It is the result of our experiences that we experience so many emotions from sadness, anger, anxiety, hurt, shame, embarrassment, etc. Some of us find ways to cope with our feelings and get past our trying experiences. Some people find ways function and coexist with their emotions whereas others struggle with their emotions. I cannot begin to describe the darkness of chronic depression that people display when they cannot find a way out of their feelings but some of the things that can occur are excessive crying most days and all day, nonstop worrying, explosive outbursts, severe agitation, alcoholism, substance abuse, isolating from all loved ones and friends, disinterest in sex, rapid weight loss or weight gain, lack of interests in most activities known to a person, numerous health issues, , low energy and fatigue to the point where one does not get out of the bed, making decisions without thinking about the negative consequences, self-harm, etc. Before you know it, the depression worsens, and "those thoughts" settle in-the *hopelessness, helplessness, shame guilt, having no purpose, feeling as if one is a burden, or thinking what if things were better if...???*

Too many times, a mother, father, sister, brother, cousin, friend, teacher, boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife, fiancé, classmate, coworker...has lost a loved one to suicide because someone did not know the signs or because *WE* don't talk enough about how we feel today. There are overwhelming stigmas looming in the Mental Health Community such as we don't talk about our issues or that it's shameful to have a mental health issue or just a simple life problem when in reality it's completely the opposites. Mental illness has no boundaries; it does not discriminate between race, color of skin, social status, age group, gender, sex, religion, etc. It doesn't matter what issue a person struggles with whether it is depression, trauma/PTSD, anxiety, ADHD, bipolar disorder, stress, or just trying to adjust to life, any one can struggle with suicide thoughts.

Please know, it's ok to get help. Please don't be afraid to speak up. Always know there is nothing wrong for speaking out and asking for help. You are not wrong for your inner hurt; we can always learn to sort it out. You are not a burden because you suffer from anxiety, depression, substance issue(s), or whatever it is you are dealing with. Check in with family, friends, and loved ones daily. Don't just always check in with the close ones that are struggling with something, but check in with loved ones that "look happy" and even say that "they are ok" because you never know what they are feeling on the inside. Your mental health matters.

Southwest Tennessee Community College has a Suicide Prevention Plan available for review by students, faculty, staff, and administration that was developed in collaboration with various departments. The goal is to be prepared to handle a suicidal situation or emergency. The plan was updated ahead of the fall 2021 term. Everyone is encouraged to review the plan's updated polices.

For more information, please contact me at 901-333-5121 or [kweddington@southwest.tn.edu](mailto:kweddington@southwest.tn.edu).

Thank you and be well!

Kimberly Weddington, M.S.

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