



Take a minute, change a life

This year's World Suicide Prevention Day theme is called "*Take a minute, change a life.*" Each of us has a role to play in supporting the mental health of a loved one, a friend or a work colleague. Oftentimes when we encounter someone who is feeling down or depressed, we're not sure what to say or do and choose instead to remain silent and do nothing. The truth is, your support and encouragement can play an important role. Often, the simple act of talking to someone face to face can be an enormous help to someone suffering from depression. Encourage this individual to talk about his or her feelings, and be willing to listen without judgment.

As part of this year's World Suicide Prevention Day theme, we encourage everyone to take a minute and spend some time with someone who you feel may be dealing with a mental health problem. Remember that just by being there and asking how you can help can be an incredible gift.

Along these lines, we are also excited to share our feature story that focuses on an interesting project that encourages young people to support their peers who are dealing with depression. This project is gaining traction internationally thanks in large part to Rotary's involvement.

World Suicide Prevention Day

**WORLD
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
DAY** ●●●

10th September

Every year, more than 800,000 people die by suicide and up to 25 times as many make a suicide attempt. Behind these statistics are the individual stories of those who have, for many different reasons, questioned the value of their own lives.

Each one of these individuals is part of a community. Some may be well linked into this community, and have a network of family, friends and work colleagues or schoolmates. Others may be less well-connected, and some may be quite isolated. Regardless of the circumstances, communities have an important role to play in supporting those who are vulnerable.

This sentiment is reflected in the theme of the 2017 World Suicide Prevention Day, "*Take a minute, change a life.*" As members of communities, it is our responsibility to look out for those who may be struggling, check in with them, and encourage them to tell their story in their own way and at their own pace. Offering a gentle word of support and listening in a non-judgmental way can make all the difference.



FEATURE

The Peer Leadership & Depression Prevention project, and how RAGMHI helps

We'd like to introduce you to the Interact *Peer Leadership & Depression Prevention (PLDP)* project. Before we answer specific questions about it, here are related comments from teens in the USA, Puerto Rico and India:

- *“I noticed a few symptoms in a member of my family. Now I understand, we can get help.”*
- *“... I have been thinking about Interact a lot recently because when I look back it was one of the most meaningful experiences I've had. I was wondering if there is any way to stay involved / to help you in any way from my college campus this year.”*
- *“I liked how Interact was very clear and had a helpful non-biased view. It really helped to open my eyes and erase stigma around getting help.”*

What is PLDP?

It is a curriculum delivered by teens and educators to normalize the conversation for awareness and asking for help, if needed. It is provided for students aged 13 and older by Boston Children's Hospital. One goal is to keep healthy children healthy by developing their coping and problem skills to better balance the

weight of life's worries. Another goal is to prompt treatment if symptoms already exist; therefore, the project starts by establishing a referral protocol. For example, District 3170 in India arranged this through the Department of Psychiatry in the Karnataka Institute of Medical Sciences and also by contracting a psychologist to routinely visit the participating schools.

Why is Interact involved?

It is fun! The peer leaders train like the adults and co-facilitate. Audiences are more engaged by the teens than by adults presenting alone. Teens with mentoring experience coach the newer teens – for example, the Rotary Club of Wellesley Interact teens answered questions from peer leaders introduced by the Rotary Club of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Teens also foster project sustainability by introducing the content beyond the school community and by creating art or video clips.

Are there measurable outcomes?

Yes! Here are the improvements over baseline, measured using pre- and post-surveys with regards to Knowledge, Help-seeking, and Attitude, by country:

Country	Knowledge	Help-seeking	Attitude
USA	77%	97%	9%
Puerto Rico	146%	32%	10%
India	665%	42%	49%



A classroom of students in India participating in the PLDP program

How does RAGMHI help PLDP?

RAGMHI encourages wider adoption of the project by clubs everywhere. For example, a visitor to the RAGMHI booth at the annual conference has offered to be the host club in District 9125; this resulted in the global grant application titled *Peer Leadership & Depression Prevention – Nigeria*. Beyond introducing potential host and international clubs, it actively

solicits donations to reduce the financial barrier for the international clubs. Outside of global grant projects, RAGMHI encourages wider adoption of the underlying curricula and resources used in these and other projects it promotes.

Want to get involved in PLDP? Contact Bob Anthony at rwa1645@gmail.com



GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT: Depression Awareness and Prevention – Nagpur, India



RAGMHI, along with the support of Rotary District 3030, conducted a two-hour awareness program for the parents of South Point School in Nagpur, India on Sept. 9, 2017. More than 350 parents, along with many teachers, participated in the initiative.

Program Director Dr. Rita Aggarwal, a consultant psychologist at Nagpur, delivered the program along with her team of counsellors, Kunal Ashtikar, Shrishti Murarka and Rucha Vaidya. Dr. Mrinalini Dasture, Director and Principal of South Point School and also a Rotarian, collaborated to make the program a tremendous success.

The program focused on providing parents with information on the signs and symptoms to look for with youth whom they suspect may be dealing with depression.

The session included role-playing both effective and ineffective ways in which parents and teachers can support youth who may be dealing with a mental health problem. The discussion focused on providing mental health “first aid” to children with depression and helping prevent tragic outcomes such as self-harm and suicide.

This was followed by an interactive question-and-answer session with the audience. Several individual counselling sessions were held with parents seeking guidance regarding specific challenges with their wards.

This program has generated a strong response from other schools that are interested in providing similar sessions with their teachers and parents.



We want to highlight stories about mental health in YOUR community for our new Global Spotlight column! If you have an interesting story you'd like to share, drop us a line at www.ragonmentalhealth.org/SingleEmail/ContactUs



Rotary  Rotarian Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives

It was nice to meet all of you!



Thank you to all who visited our booth at Rotary's International Convention in Atlanta this past June. We met some very passionate, engaging people who were interested in supporting our work and getting involved to help drive change in their communities and abroad.



We would like to recognize the appointments to the RAGMHI board of Myca Haynes to the position of secretary, and Bob Anthony as member-at-large. We welcome both Myca and Bob and look forward to their involvement in our work.