



— Your community partner for responsive, effective and affordable behavioral health care —

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Learn the Warning Signs of Suicide

*Suicide Prevention Week is September 6-12*

**Rochester, Minn.** – To help mark the nation’s 35<sup>th</sup> National Suicide Prevention Week, Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center is joining organizations across the United States to increase awareness of suicide and the causes behind it.

“Death is difficult enough for people to deal with,” says Dr. Annette Smick, medical director for Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center. “However, a suicidal death can be especially demanding for loved ones to understand.” She adds that although there are often warning signs such as depression or other mental illnesses, suicide also can strike out of nowhere.

Warning signs include:

- Statements about hopelessness, helplessness or worthlessness
- Sudden change from a depressed mood to a happier, calmer mood
- Giving away cherished items
- Isolating oneself from family and friends
- Making arrangements or setting one’s affairs in order
- Direct or indirect statements about death or dying

Smick says other risk factors include family history of suicide or mental illness, recent crisis or loss, substance abuse and previous traumatic experiences.

Suicide is the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in America, with a person taking their own life every 15 minutes. In Minnesota, 571 people died by suicide in 2007. The number of Minnesotans that commit suicide is nearly five times higher than the number of homicide victims.

(more)

**About Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center**

Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center enhances the quality of life for residents in southeastern Minnesota by serving as a community resource for the understanding and treatment of behavioral health and substance use disorders. The organization collaborates with government agencies, schools, non-profit groups and others to provide programs dedicated to improving the mental health of adults, adolescents and children. Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center is a private, non-profit organization serving Olmsted and Fillmore counties. For more information, visit our Web site at [www.zumbromhc.org](http://www.zumbromhc.org) or call 507-289-2089.

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