



NEWS RELEASE

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Douglas County Suicide Prevention Coalition to host panel discussions in Eudora, Lawrence about 'Mental Wellness in the News'

Topics to include popular Netflix show, bullying, community resources

(Lawrence, KS) – The Douglas County Suicide Prevention Coalition is hosting a panel discussion, “Mental Wellness in the News,” in Eudora and Lawrence in conjunction with Mental Health Awareness Month. A panel of local experts, who work in the mental health field and suicide prevention, will talk about the Netflix show, “13 Reasons Why,” bullying, suicide prevention and resources that are available in Douglas County.

The events, which are free and open to the public, will be in:

- **Eudora** — May 6, 5 p.m.-7 p.m., Eudora Parks and Recreation Community Room, 1630 Elm St.
- **Lawrence** — May 20, 4 p.m.-6 p.m., Lawrence Public Library auditorium, 707 Vermont St.

“Communities play an important role in suicide prevention. Providing supportive services and talking about suicide are just some of the ways we can reduce stigma and encourage those in need to seek help,” Anna Barger, chair of the Douglas County Suicide Prevention Coalition, said. “We encourage residents to equip themselves with resources so they can help those in need.”

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and Kansas. Between 2012 and 2014, 1,386 Kansas residents died by suicide, 49 of whom were Douglas County residents, according to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. In 2014, one Kansan died by suicide each day. Research suggests that for every death by suicide, there are between 100 and 200 suicide attempts. According to a recent City of Lawrence report, the Lawrence Police Department responded to 615 suicide attempts or threats in 2015.

The Douglas County Suicide Prevention Coalition was formed in 2014. Its efforts include educating the public about suicide and suicide prevention, offering resources and training to residents and collecting data to identify individuals at risk. The goal is to reduce the number of suicide deaths and attempts in Douglas County.

The coalition’s members represent organizations across the county. They include: Headquarters Counseling Center, Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, Lawrence Public Schools, The Sexual Trauma & Abuse Care Center, The Willow Domestic Violence Center, Communities in Schools of Mid-America, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, KU Active Minds and Lawrence Police Department.

“Our agencies come together to serve as gatekeepers for nearly all populations at-risk of suicide in Douglas County. By working together and talking about it, we can all help prevent suicide,” Barger said.

For help, the following suicide prevention resources are available 24/7:

- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline — 1-800-273-8255.
- Headquarters Counseling Center — 785-841-2345.
- Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center — 785-843-9192.
- Crisis Text Line — Text START to 741741.

For more information about the events, email dcspcoalition@gmail.com or call Headquarters Counseling Center at 785-841-9900.