Suicide and Mental Illness
What Can Communities Do?

Saturday, October 7, 2017
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Las Fuentes Resort Village
1035 Scott Drive in Prescott

GUEST PANEL:

LAURA NORMAN, DIRECTOR, WEST YAVAPAI GUIDANCE CLINIC FOUNDATION

JOHN SCHUDERER, DIRECTOR, YAVAPAI SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

JERALD MONAHAN, CHIEF OF POLICE YAVAPAI COLLEGE

BARBARA LITRELL, DIRECTOR MENTAL HEALTH COALITION OF THE VERDE VALLEY

It’s a great time to join the League! LWVCYC.org
Message from the Board
With the recent release of the Yavapai County Community Health Assessment, data indicates the high demand and access for mental health services, and the statistics for suicide in our County are alarming. We have invited a panel of speakers involved in working on solutions in our community to talk about what is being done, and what our communities can continue to do to help.

Please join us on Saturday, October 7th for this informative discussion.

LWV Position on BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: The League of Women Voters supports:

- Behavioral Health as the nationally accepted term that includes both mental illness and substance use disorder
- Access for all people to affordable, quality in- and out-patient behavioral health care, including needed medications and supportive services
- Behavioral Health care that is integrated with, and achieves parity with, physical health care
- Early and affordable behavioral health diagnosis and treatment for children and youth from early childhood through adolescence
- Early and appropriate diagnosis and treatment for children and adolescents that is family-focused and community-based
- Access to safe and stable housing for people with behavioral health challenges, including those who are chronically homeless
- Effective re-entry planning and follow-up for people released from both behavioral health hospitalization and the criminal justice system
- Problem solving or specialty courts, including mental health and drug courts, in all judicial districts to provide needed treatment and avoid inappropriate entry into the criminal justice system
- Health education from early childhood throughout life that integrates all aspects of social, emotional and physical health and wellness
- Efforts to decrease the stigmatization of, and normalize, behavioral health problems and care.

Our Guest Speakers:

Laura Norman is the Chief Development and Communication Officer for West Yavapai Guidance Clinic. Laura works out of the CEO’s office and has responsibilities that include: educational presentations, fund-raising, special event planning, media relations, internal and external publications, special projects for the CEO, as well as client relations, housing, transportation and prevention. She has been on staff since 1996.

John M. Schuderer, MA, LPC, LISAC - As a licensed mental health and substance abuse counselor, John has spent the last 20 years helping others with challenges in these often overlapping areas. John has been a volunteer with MATFORCE for the last 11 years and is currently the Chairperson of the Yavapai Suicide Prevention Coalition bringing suicide awareness and prevention to Yavapai County.

Jerald Monahan is the Chief of Police for Yavapai College. Chief Monahan has been actively involved in addressing issues of violence against women with each agency he has served. He was appointed to the Governor’s Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women in 2003. In January of 2011, Chief Monahan was named as the Chairperson, serving in that role until December of 2013. In April of 2015 he was appointed to the Board of Directors for the End Violence Against Women International organization and is the current board Vice President.

Barbara Litrell is a former Sedona City Councilwoman and currently serves as President of two leading organizations, the League of Women Voters Greater Verde Valley and the Mental Health Coalition Verde Valley. She began her career as a French teacher in New York followed by a 28-year career in sales and management with The New York Times and national magazines including Working Woman, Working Mother and McCall’s. After moving to Arizona in 2002, she gained community experience as a real estate agent, President of Keep Sedona Beautiful, Executive Director of Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition, and President of University Women of Sedona.
Have you signed the Strong Schools Pledge? Here’s the link: [https://azschoolsnow.org/strong-schools/](https://azschoolsnow.org/strong-schools/)

**QUAD CITY COMMUNITY TOWN HALL**  
**FUNDING PRE-K-12 EDUCATION**

Arizona Town Hall, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting discussions on some of the state’s most challenging topics, is taking on pre-K-12 education funding and inviting our communities to help hash out solutions to improve Arizona’s schools.

The organization, which boasts of being a catalyst for civic action and the advancement of issues important to Arizonans for more than 55 years, is hosting a daylong community town hall on Tuesday, October 17, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University’s Student Union, 3700 Willow Creek Rd., in Prescott. The event costs $25, which includes lunch.

Residents will have the opportunity to weigh in on a number of key issues including: teacher pay, high school graduation, post-high school enrollment, post-secondary attainment, opportunity youth, third grade reading and eighth grade math, preschool enrollment, achievement gaps based on ethnicity or poverty, classroom size, parent choice and pre-K-12 funding formulas.

Town hall participants will be asked to come to a consensus on how to address those pressing topics, and input from participants in the Prescott area will help lead discussions at Arizona Town Hall’s annual event in Mesa, where participants will draft a report filled with recommendations that can be enacted locally, as well as statewide, in support of the goals defined for each subject area.

To register and participate in this event: [http://aztownhall.org/event-2626869/Registration](http://aztownhall.org/event-2626869/Registration)

Here is the link to the 12-page background information for the Town Hall:  

---

National Voter Registration Day – Tuesday, September 26th  
at Meals on Wheels, 1280 E. Rosser Street in Prescott  
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
West Yavapai Guidance Clinic’s Crisis Stabilization Unit Now Open

One year ago, the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors applauded the West Yavapai Guidance Clinic leaders for their insight and investment that led to building a crisis intervention facility in Prescott Valley.

On the first day of summer, June 21, two years after clinical officials initiated the $1.75 million renovation and licensing of a former warehouse on Eastridge Drive into a crisis intervention facility, West Yavapai Guidance Clinic opened the doors to its brand new, 6,475 square-foot space to patients. As of 7 a.m. Wednesday, the center that offers crisis care for up to 23 hours and 59 minutes – the official time allotted for such a facility – provided care to three patients, said WYGC Chief Executive Officer Larry Green.

The center has 10 lounge chairs for people who need assistance up to a minute before the 24-hour mark. For those who may need extended care for as much as three to five days, the center also has eight beds to accommodate those patients.

The center can certainly accommodate more than 10 at a time as not everyone who comes into the center for help will require a several-hour stay. Some may just need a counselor to talk with for a few minutes, or possibly need a filled prescription, officials said.

“It’s an exciting day,” Green said of the center that will have a 50-member staff of clinicians from social workers and counselors to nurses and a psychiatrist. “This is the culmination of a two-year journey.”

WYGC is the largest mental health care provider in Yavapai County, providing counseling, addiction and mental health services to some 7,000 men, women and children annually.

A community open house for the facility was held last month. Community leaders, including the police, hospital leaders, and other charities, hailed the opening of this center as yet another significant resource to help those struggling with mental health and addiction issues, sometimes with both.

Until now, crisis services have essentially been limited to the Yavapai Medical Center’s emergency rooms or the Yavapai County jail.

“I think everybody realizes there are folks in our community, like every community in the United States, who at some time in their life find themselves in a crisis situation, and they can come in many forms … something as simple as a relationship gone bad as it relates to depression, or it could be who knows what,” Green said.

In this nation, one in five people suffers from some sort of mental health or substance abuse issue, but often there are no places for people to get help, particularly when it becomes an emergency, Green said.

“I’m very proud that we’re able to bring this facility to the community,” Green said, noting the clinic operation has existed here for 51 years.

Prescott Police Department Lead Officer Dave Fuller is equally enthusiastic about the opening.

“It’s a great resource for us,” Fuller said.
On a regular basis, local police are called upon to deal with people who may be acting irrationally due to some type of mental health or substance abuse issue. They may not deserve to go to jail, or require the hospital, but until now there were no other options, Fuller said.

“Any kind of professional help that is streamlined is a huge benefit for us,” Fuller said.

Yavapai Medical Center President and Chief Executive Officer John Amos was one of the keynote speakers for the community open house. He, too, reiterated the need for this type of service as part of an extended continuum of care.

He said he was confident that this new facility would fulfill the clinic’s motto of promoting “hope, health and healing.”

“We’re very proud of it, and we know it’s going to save lives in this community,” Green concluded.

**Suicide rate in Yavapai County ‘alarming,’ leads state**

**Resources to help are available** by Scott Orr, *The Daily Courier* 9/2/17

Yavapai County’s suicide rate has been trending upward since 2010, and — by one statistical measurement, suicides per 100,000 people — the county leads the entire state.

In 2016, Yavapai County had 69 suicides, according to the Medical Examiner’s office.

That may seem bad enough, but what concerns experts is the trend: in 2010, Yavapai County had 23 self-inflicted deaths per 100,000 population, but by 2015, the number had climbed to 32.8 per 100,000.

That’s higher than any other county; the next-closest is Mohave County at 30.3.

The figures add up to what the just-released 2017 Yavapai County Community Health report calls an “alarming health trend.”

It’s a death rate almost twice the rate for Arizona overall.

The cause, or causes, of the rising suicide rate seem to be hard to pin down.

“One key informant discussed the high suicide rate among elderly populations, attributing it to depression and seclusion, and added that it affects younger age groups, too,” the report said.

“Some of it may be drug-related — maybe they can’t get out of the cycle,” said Terri Farneti, public health coordinator for the county’s Community Health Service.

“The prevalence of guns in homes” may be a factor, she added.

For a copy of the 2017 Community Health Assessment, go to [www.YavapaiHealth.com/health-resources](http://www.YavapaiHealth.com/health-resources)
Farneti said help is available to those in crisis in several forms:

**Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program** — The program was created by teens who lost a friend to suicide in Colorado.

Laura Norman of West Yavapai Guidance Clinic presented this program to Chino Valley and Prescott unified school district administrators and staff.

The Light for Life Foundation International/Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program is dedicated to preventing suicide and attempts by making suicide prevention accessible to everyone and removing barriers to help by:

• Empowering individuals and communities through leadership, awareness and education; and,
• By collaborating and partnering with support networks to reduce stigma and help save lives.

**Teen Lifeline** — “Teen Lifeline started after a movie, “Surviving,” starring Molly Ringwald, aired on prime time network television in 1985,” Farneti said. “The movie was quite controversial because it was the first time teen suicide had been portrayed in such a public way. The movie made the cover of People Magazine and was instrumental in beginning public conversations about teen suicide. As a result, mental health agencies began to look at the problem of teen suicide.

“It was then discovered that Arizona’s teen suicide rate was double the national average.”

Teen Lifeline was developed as an innovative solution to address teen suicide,” she said teens answer the phones and talk to their peers at 1-800-248-TEEN (8336).

**Survivors of Suicide** support group in Prescott is held on the last Monday of the month at 6 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 216 E. Gurley Street.

**EMPACT-SPC’s Prevention Program** works with schools, senior centers, and other community agencies and business organizations to empower individuals to become healthy, self-sufficient people. EMPACT–SPC offers nationally recognized suicide prevention programs, such as Signs of Suicide and safeTALK, and is a leader in “postvention,” providing a variety of services to those who have lost a loved one to suicide. The Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) program provides immediate support to the family and friends after a suicide occurs.

**Youth Mental Health First Aid** classes — West Yavapai Guidance Clinic is offering this course on Thursday, Sept. 28 in Prescott Valley. Call Laura Norman to register 928-445-5211, extension 3615.

A young person you know could be experiencing a mental health or substance abuse problem. Learn an action plan to help. An adult, 18 or older, can take Youth Mental Health First Aid, but it is recommended for those who regularly have contact with young people ages 12 to 18 — teachers, coaches, social workers, faith leaders and other caring citizens.

“I know (suicide) is going to be a focus when we come up with our Community Health Improvement Plan for 2017. We’re going to be working on that for the next three months and hope to have it prepared by early December,” Farneti said.
Suicide and Sexual Assault
“From the Trenches” a blog by the organization End Violence Against Women International. Friday, September 1, 2017

This blog post is a joint effort by the three listed authors. One of the authors shares some of her personal experiences surrounding the death of a loved one by suicide. In the post, when the voice shifts to first person, the author is Elizabeth Gallus.

With as many as 321,500 victims of rape and sexual assault each year in the United States, sexual assault is an ongoing issue. Research shows that one in five women and one in seventy-one men are sexually assaulted in their lifetime. Unfortunately, victims of sexual violence are also at greater risk for serious mental health consequences. I am passionate about this issue because my cousin was one of these statistics. Sexually molested at age 8; dying by suicide just 18 years later.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for individuals between the ages of 10 and 24. One of the biggest concerns of most parents and school administrators is the fear of “copycat” suicides. Recently, the Netflix series, “13 Reasons Why” has sparked deep debate around the correlation between sexual assault victimization and suicidality. Research has shown that the prevalence of copycat suicides following a detailed portrayal, like that shown in “13 Reasons Why”, increased the risk of suicide involving the same method by 81% to 125% in weeks and months after the release.

Some believe the show has raised awareness about the growing issue of teen suicide, including displaying warning signs and symptoms. Others have expressed concern, accusing the show of romanticizing the issue and using overly graphic scenes, thereby triggering individuals already at risk. CNN and other media outlets seemed to confirm the fears when they reported an increase in the number of suicidal ideation and suicide method searches online since the show first aired.

Sexual assault is a significant precursor for suicidal behavior. Victims of sexual assault tend to suffer silently, and the impact can lead to very dangerous outcomes. Studies show that approximately 33% of female rape victims have suicidal thoughts, and 13% of female rape victims have attempted suicide. Additionally, male victims of sexual assault are at higher risk for suicide than females. Male victims of sexual assault in the United States are four times more likely to attempt suicide than female victims.

Numerous studies have shown that psychological distress, hopelessness, substance use/abuse, coping skills, and social support are key factors involved in the relationship between sexual abuse and suicide attempts. Issues involving sexual violence are extremely sensitive and must be handled properly upon first contact with a victim. Medical professionals, advocates, law enforcement, college administrators, etc. are often the first people to be notified when sexual violence cases are reported, thus how these professionals respond to the victims and/or the accused could have a direct impact on the outcomes and mental health status of these individuals. First responders’ reactions to the disclosure of a sexual assault by a victim are a critical determinant of how that individual will begin to process and respond to the trauma of an assault. Over the last few years, institutions of higher education have been in the spotlight, often criticized, for both their response to victims-and their adjudication practices for the accused.

Colleges and universities are often called out for having a “rape culture” on campus. Rape culture refers to a setting that permits or normalizes incidents of sexual violence through the permeation of discriminatory attitudes surrounding gender and sexuality. Additionally, with students generally ranging from 17 to 24
years of age, institutions are at increased risk for suicidality among students. This creates a proverbial “perfect storm” for administrators, law enforcement, counselors, and advocates. Nevertheless, not all is hopeless. Institutions of higher education are also uniquely equipped to both proactively and reactively address these issues. In order to combat these risk factors, most institutions provide increased training and resources for students, staff, and faculty to help ensure a safer campus environment. If you are a student, colleges typically offer some or all of the following services to assist students with physical and mental safety:

**Mental Health Counseling**

Mental Health services are typically not billed to a student’s health insurance which allows for confidential counseling, with little or no risk of the student’s parents finding out through a billing process. Some counseling offices will also house counselors with specialized training and experience treating victims of sexual violence.

**Anti-Violence Initiatives Offices**

These offices are often the programming and educational training arm of colleges. They may house the organizers of the [Green Dot](#) campaigns, the [Clothesline Project](#), [Take Back the Night](#) marches, and the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Awareness Month programs, in addition to the preventative outreach programs institutions offer. Some of these offices also house mental health counselors specializing in treating victims of sexual violence. Once again, the services of these counselors are typically not billed to a student’s health insurance plan.

**Case Managers**

A growing trend in college administration includes the utilization of case managers. These individuals may or may not be licensed social workers, but individuals tasked with receiving referrals regarding students who appear to be struggling. This role often includes direct outreach to the student and providing on/off campus resources; regularly scheduled “check-in” meetings throughout the semester; advocacy and support in working with other offices within the institution, etc.

**CARE or other Behavioral Assessment Teams**

Dean of Students offices are often tasked with creating a community of administrators who meet on a regular basis to review recent referrals and outreach to appropriate individuals in order to assist students. This group usually consists of administrators, including representatives from academia, student academic support services, disability services, student health services, counseling offices, residential education and housing, student conduct, and campus police.

**Title IX Coordinator**

Title IX is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that receives federal funding. If a student experiences sexual assault of any kind, schools are responsible for stopping the discrimination, preventing its recurrence, and addressing the effects that this may have on the victim. Under the Clery Act, school administrators are required to notify survivors of counseling services, inquire with the survivors about reporting options, either through law enforcement or the school, and provide academic and/or living accommodations, such as dormitory or class changes.

**Partnerships with the JED Foundation**

The JED Foundation is a non-profit organization designed to protect emotional health and prevent suicide of our teens and young adults. This organization works with campus leaders (administration) and healthcare professionals to help evaluate and strengthen mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention programming and systems.
Start by Believing

Start by Believing is a public awareness campaign dedicated to ending the cycle of silence. Because a friend or family member is typically the first person a victim confides in after an assault, each person’s reaction is the first step in a long path toward justice and healing. Knowing how to respond is critical—a negative response can worsen the trauma and foster an environment where perpetrators face zero consequences for their crimes.

Because rapists often re-offend, one failed response can equal additional victims. Start by Believing is leading the way toward stopping this cycle, by creating a positive community response, informing the public, uniting allies and supporters, and improving our personal reactions. The goal is to change the world, and outcomes for victims, one response at a time.

How Will You Respond?

Responding to a disclosure isn’t complicated. There are four main tips when working with victims of sexual assault. START BY BELIEVING the victim. The words “I believe you” can have an enormous impact for survivors. BE SUPPORTIVE. Remind the victim it is not their fault and you are there to help. AVOID ASKING QUESTIONS that begin with “why?” Why questions can sound accusing and make a victim feel shame. Finally, ASK HOW YOU CAN HELP. Letting the survivor know that you are there for them and letting them make their own choices can make a world of difference to them.

I had no knowledge that my cousin was a victim of sexual abuse until almost a year after he died by suicide. By that time, I had already been addressing issues of sexual violence on college campuses as a student conduct administrator for over six years. I had heard the statistics... Rape and sexual assault are the most underreported crimes... Out of 100 rapes, only an estimated 5-20 cases are reported to law enforcement... It made me wonder how I could recognize possible signs and help a student if I could not recognize the signs in my own family. And if they did tell me, how could I show them that I believe them while also maintaining impartiality? How could I let them know that I care about them, without compromising the fairness and integrity of the system? How can I support this person and get them the resources they need to heal, both physically and emotionally?

While colleges may not have the power to change the narrative entirely, we can be better and do better. Through increased programming and prevention, training on trauma-informed interviewing techniques and investigations, and more comprehensive referrals, we can forge a path for change to help victims heal and receive the justice that they deserve; thereby reducing both victimization and suicidality in the process.
The Equal Rights Amendment: Unfinished Business for the Constitution

The proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) states that the rights guaranteed by the Constitution apply equally to all persons regardless of their sex. After the 19th Amendment affirming women’s right to vote was ratified in 1920, suffragist leader Alice Paul introduced the ERA in 1923 as the next step in bringing "equal justice under law" to all citizens.

In 1972, the ERA was finally passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. The original seven-year time limit was extended by Congress to June 30, 1982, but at that deadline, the ERA had been ratified by only 35 states, three states short of the 38 required to put it into the Constitution. The ERA has been introduced into every Congress since the deadline, and beginning in 1994, ERA advocates have been pursuing two different routes to ratification:

- the traditional process described in Article V of the Constitution (passage by a two-thirds majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, followed by ratification by three-quarters of the states), and

- the innovative “three-state strategy” (ratification in three more of the 15 state legislatures that did not ratify the ERA in 1972-82, based on legal analysis that when three more states vote yes, this process could withstand legal challenge and accomplish ratification of the ERA).

For more information about the Equal Rights Amendment, this is a great website: [http://equalrightsamendment.org/](http://equalrightsamendment.org/)

Did you know that September 17th was Constitution Day?

Constitution Day commemorates the formation and signing of the U.S. Constitution by thirty-nine brave men on September 17, 1787, recognizing all who are born in the U.S. or by naturalization, have become citizens.

Test your knowledge of the Constitution here: [https://www.constitutionfacts.com/?page=quiz.cfm](https://www.constitutionfacts.com/?page=quiz.cfm)
**League of Women Voters**  
**2017-2018 Calendar by Topic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Updated 9/20/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Board meetings**

5:15 p.m. – Meals on Wheels, Rosser Adult Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017:</th>
<th>Oct. 3</th>
<th>Oct. 30</th>
<th>Nov. 28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018:</td>
<td>Jan. 2</td>
<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>Feb. 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Monthly Meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oct. 7</th>
<th>Mental Health &amp; Suicide What can Communities Do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 4</td>
<td>Why are You Registered Independent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>Holiday luncheon – location TBD Fundraiser and Gift Drive for Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 6</td>
<td>Program Planning for ’18-’19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>What Happened to Safe Yield?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Legislative Update w/Lobbyists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>Kimberly Mine?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>Annual meeting/luncheon 11:00 a.m. – Location TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let’s Talk Politics @ Mountain Artists Guild 5-7 p.m.

| Oct. 20 | Nov. 17 | Dec. 8 |

---

**WALK TO FIGHT SUICIDE**  
**PRESCOTT OUT OF THE DARKNESS Community Walk**

**Saturday, November 4, 2017**  
**A.C. Williams Granite Creek Park**

Register today at afsp.org/prescott

---

We’re Collecting Travel Size Products such as:  
Shampoos, soaps, deodorants, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, etc.

DONATING TO:  
- OPEN INN TURNING POINT YOUTH SHELTER  
- PRESCOTT AREA SHELTER SERVICES  
- COALITION FOR COMPASSION & JUSTICE

Collection basket will be at each League Meeting
Have you renewed your membership?
If not, please drop your check in the mail along with the form above.