A Conversation Addressing Youth Suicide

October 22, YES CEO David W. Downing and special guest Kevin Hines, suicide-survivor, best-selling author, filmmaker and mental health advocate, invited our community to join an online conversation addressing youth suicide. We’re grateful to all of you who participated in this conversation!

During the event, David and Kevin took questions from attendees and below we’ve included a few of these questions and answers. We hope you find these educational and valuable:

Before your suicide attempt at the age of 19, how could have the people around you responded better?

At the time, I didn’t have the vernacular to describe what was happening to me, but my parents also didn’t have the tools to start that conversation. I believe every parent should be taught how to have these conversations with their kids and to have them regularly. Instead of judging their behavior, dig deep into their pain and understand how you can be there for your children.

Why is there a rise in suicidality?

What’s leading this rise in suicide deaths is a complex multitude of things. Partially it’s due to our current competitive culture and setting unrealistic expectations. Teens are thinking if I don’t get these “likes,” if I don’t get into a good college, if I don’t make this athletic team, it means that I am not worthy.

What are the symptoms of suicide?

Increasingly we are seeing instances of suicide where there haven’t been any of the typical signs. It is scary. It is devastating. So let’s be proactive instead of reactive. Let’s give students and teens the tools they need to find the self-awareness to know when and how to reach out for help.

How do you start a conversation with your child about suicide or mental health?

Watch Kevin answer this question in a short video clip on our website at youtheastsideservices.org/preventsuicide

What do you do if you have a teen who refuses help?

Inspired by the caring letters experiment by psychiatrist Jerry Motto, I suggest having 3-5 people send caring letters to the person who is suffering recognizing the signs they are seeing in a nonjudgmental, empathic and loving way. It will help the person suffering recognize the symptoms in themselves.

Educational community programs such as this critical conversation addressing youth suicide are made possible by generous donations from supporters like you. Please consider making a donation to YES today to support children and youth struggling with suicidal thoughts, at youtheastsideservices.org/donate
Providing East King County’s Only DBT Program with Financial Assistance

Thanks to the generous support of our community, YES is the only behavioral health agency in East King County to provide a comprehensive Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) program through either in-network insurance, Medicare, or on a sliding fee scale.

YES donors make it possible for all youth and families to access this evidence-based therapy, regardless of their ability to pay. Having this community of support can make a life-changing difference to clients in need of services.

“Many kids who access our DBT services are from low-income families that normally wouldn’t have access to these valuable skills. They are the kids who need it the most,” says Debbie Halela, Director of Behavioral Health Services.

“Due to financial struggles their home lives are already stressful, and they aren’t able to find the emotional support they need.”

The program consists of 16 weeks of individual therapy with a DBT-certified therapist, and a weekly “skills group”, currently provided virtually via TeleHealth, facilitated by a DBT-certified counselor. Each week the skills group focuses on teaching two skills that empower teens to better handle their emotions and build effective coping skills. This fall we have 24 youth participating in the program.

SPECIAL VIDEO JUST FOR YOU!
Learn more about YES’ DBT Program by watching this informal program video from two YES Youth & Family Counselors.
Visit youtheastsideservices.org/DBTvideo

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Welcome Miguel Messina to the YES Leadership Team

On November 9, Miguel Messina, Psy. D., LMHC, SUDP will join the YES team as its Chief Programs Officer (CPO), replacing David W. Downing who moved into YES’ CEO role last May. Miguel brings with him a diverse background in both mental health and substance use treatment, working with children, youth, families and adults.

“I started working with youth many years back and I wanted to go back to doing that. I found that out of all the modalities that I have worked with, working with youth is one that is most rewarding to me,” said Miguel.

Twenty years ago, Miguel found himself at an intersection in his life - he desired more of a purpose and passion in his career - so he went back to school for behavioral health counseling and treatment, earning his Master’s Degree in Mental Health Counseling and a Doctorate in Psychology and Organizational Leadership. Miguel says he has always walked two paths, one of co-occurring disorder counselor, supporting clients with both mental health and substance use disorders, and the other path of leadership, management and organizational success.

Miguel looks forward to joining the YES leadership team furthering YES’ mission of providing trauma-informed care and integrating mental health, substance use and family support for the well-being of youth and our community.
ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Invest in Youth Fundraiser Moves to May 2021

Celebrate and join us in May for Mental Health Month and the annual Invest in Youth Event to raise awareness and financial support for children and youth living with mental health and substance use challenges.

Stay tuned for more information!

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Andy & Caryn: Supporting Mental Health Education

Both Andy & Caryn have strong ties to East King County. Andy is a Bellevue native, and Caryn is a teacher at a local high school. Giving back to their community has always been important to them, but it was their roles as parents that inspired them to support youth with mental health issues.

When a young family member began to struggle with mental health challenges, a family friend was able to recognize the symptoms and recommend seeking help at YES.

“Sometimes you don’t see it as a parent. I am grateful that we have friends who know what to do. Everyone needs this education in order to help others,” said Andy.

Last year, Andy and Caryn donated $9,000 to support Youth Mental Health First Aid Training at YES, an eight-hour course designed to educate community members about how to recognize behavioral health symptoms in teens.

“Supporting an organization that is serving our community, our kids, is very important to us. The work YES does touches our lives in so many ways,” says Caryn.

Education and training like Youth Mental Health First Aid is possible because of caring and generous community members like Andy and Caryn. We are deeply grateful that they are helping to build YES into the invaluable community resource it is today.

HOLIDAY GIFT CARD DRIVE

Make the Holidays a Little Brighter

For years, generous donors have provided warmth and light to YES client families through our holiday Adopt-A-Family program. This year, in an effort to help even more families, we are expanding the program to the YES Gift Card Drive, which will support families not just during the holidays, but also throughout the year.

As a Gift Card Drive Sponsor, you would donate gift cards of either $25 or $50 to provide families with groceries, clothing, school supplies, or other items they may need.

Make the holidays and the year to come a little brighter for families struggling with mental health and substance use challenges. Reach out to Becca Holbrook at beccah@youtheastsideservices.org and become a Gift Card Drive Sponsor today!

HOPE IS AN EVERLASTING LEGACY

You can provide a brighter future to children and youth struggling with mental health and substance use issues with a gift to YES in your will.

There are several ways to include YES in your estate planning visit youtheastsideservices.org/legacy
Mark Gets Help for His Self-Harming Behavior

Mark 18*, has been self-harming since he was in fifth grade, then as a 9th grader, he was diagnosed with clinical depression.

When people would ask him, “What are you going to do after high school?” He would answer that he didn’t know. He didn’t think he was going to live that long.

It was soon after, that Mark ended up in the hospital due to his self-inflicted injuries.

After individual counseling sessions with his doctor and no change in his mental health status his mother found YES as a promising alternative. Within a month, he was enrolled in YES’ Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) Skills Group where he learned the skills to better handle his emotions and build effective coping skills.

Your gift today will help others like Mark, who have trouble managing their behaviors and their intense emotions. It will give young people hope for a future beyond high school.

Support Others Like Mark

✓ I want to make a year-end tax-deductible gift and support other young clients like Mark.

Make your year-end gift today!

www.youtheastsideservices.org/donate

* At YES, we respect everyone who comes to us for support – and many are working on improving their lives. So while their stories are true, client names and images have been changed to protect their privacy. Thank you for understanding.