



Suicide Calls Triple In Arkansas

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The Arkansas Crisis Center is dealing with not only a spike in the volume of suicide calls, but the intensity of the calls is also increasing.

The calls that the crisis center is getting are not calls about people wanting to be referred to a therapist or counselor. The calls are from people asking for help now because they're on the verge of suicide and these calls have tripled since last year this time.

"For ages 15 to 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death," explains Shelby Chandler, Arkansas Crisis Center Executive Director.

A shocking statistic that the Arkansas Crisis Center deals with on a daily basis and now the number of calls is on the rise. Last year from January to June they had over 2000 calls, 160 of them being suicide related.

"This time in this year from January 2009 to June we had almost 3000 calls, we had over 430 calls suicide related," says Chandler.

But Arkansas is not the only state seeing an increase. Chandler says she's talked with other crisis centers across the country and they're also seeing the amount of suicide calls grow.

"It's happening everywhere, so I don't know if it's the economy, if it's the stress. We've been at war for many years in Iraq and there are so many families and service men that are affected, so I think there's a lot going on right now," explains Chandler.

Chandler says most of the calls are people trying to deal with financial problems.

"Some have been laid off. For some it's the fear of being laid off and that they work somewhere where there have been two to three rounds of lay offs and they're wondering if they're next," says Chandler.

The crisis center serves all of Arkansas, but Chandler says most of the calls are from Washington County.

"Last year we got calls from 60 of the 75 counties in Arkansas," adds Chandler.

Chandler did give some pretty good advice; she says if you know someone that is going through a rough time just show them that you're there for them and that you care. And you can do that

by volunteering, the crisis center needs 50 more volunteers. If you have internet service at home the crisis center can hook you up where you can answer calls from your home.

For more information on how you can become a volunteer you can contact Chandler at (479) 365-2141 or schandler@arcrisis.org.
