

YOUR EAP NEWS

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SEPTEMBER IS
SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

“Take a Minute, Save a Life”

LIVING OUT LOUD

Many people have come up with catchy phrases & tag lines to express what life means to them. In the movie “Forrest Gump,” Forrest quoted his mother as saying, “Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are going to get (Forrest Gump (1994).” Julia Roberts stated, “The older you get, the more fragile you understand life to be. I think that’s good motivation for getting out of bed joyful (quotefancy.com).” Kamil Ravikant defined life in this way, “Life is from the inside out. When you shift on the inside, life shifts on the outside (npnewramager.com).” Life is a mixture of experiences, including opportunities for growth and decline. Circumstances in life can change one’s perspective of life and bring about a positive or negative shift in mood.

The movie “Inside Out” provides a great depiction of how a change in life can have a profound impact on emotional stability. Raleigh, a little girl in the 6th grade, was uprooted from her home in Minnesota after her father took a job in San Francisco. Her parents were excited about the move as it represented a new beginning on various levels. Her parents were seen trying to convince her of how great the move would be based on their experience. The only problem was her parents did not understand how the transition would affect her as an 11 y/o, in the sixth grade. As Raleigh did her best to go along with the program, she discovered it was the things that were beyond her control that caused her distress. Raleigh had to deal with what we call “adjustment issues.”

Raleigh probably would have defined life as unpredictable, because one day she was in Minnesota and the next day she was in San Francisco. Have you ever experienced a shift where things are working in your favor one minute and the next minute things seem to be going awry? It’s easy to live life out loud when things are going just as we expect, or according to our plan. A shift can come about that leaves us with little to no time to plan. Planning can help us to mitigate undesired outcomes, however, planning does not always guarantee a particular outcome. So how do we live life out loud when circumstances are not working in our favor?

Living life out loud does not mean everything is going well. It means despite circumstances; I am going to make the best of my situation.

7 Things to Consider When Dealing with Suicide Risk:

- ❖ Don’t hesitate to ask the person if they are considering taking their life.
- ❖ Never uphold the confidence of someone who shares with you they are thinking about taking their life.
- ❖ Take seriously all threats of suicide.
- ❖ Offer the person with thoughts of suicide to call the suicide prevention lifeline 1-800-273-talk (8255).
- ❖ Remove lethal weapons and any items that pose an imminent risk of harm to self or others (i.e. firearms, pills, sharp objects, etc).
- ❖ Call 911 or mobile crisis in the event of an emergency.
- ❖ Seek the help of a professional counselor.



LIVING OUT LOUD (continued)...

First, we must define what it means to live life out loud. Living life out loud does not mean everything is going well. It means despite circumstances; I am going to make the best of my situation. When I think about living life out loud, I'm reminded of my father-in-law who received a stage four lung cancer diagnosis over three years ago. He maintained a good attitude and decided that he would not exist, but live. He kept on driving, cooking, and traveling, just as he did before his diagnosis. He is now 81 years of age and still doing those things that enhance his quality of life.

As we process the challenges of life, we must have anchors that help us work through feelings of anxiety and depression. My father-in-law utilized the support of family, his physicians, and medical team, and continued prayer offered by the faith community he is connected to. An article published in the National Library of Medicine reports "Patients who are spiritual may utilize their beliefs in coping with illness, pain, and life stresses. Some studies indicate that those who are spiritual tend to have a more positive outlook and a better quality of life. For example, patients with advanced cancer who found comfort from their religious and spiritual beliefs were more satisfied with their lives, were happier, and had less pain (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>)."

Secondly, living life out loud does not mean you fail to acknowledge the difficulties of life. Talking to other people that will listen without judgment, but will tell you the truth, can serve to keep you on track. If you don't have a friend or relative that can serve in this capacity, utilize the help of a professional. A life coach can help you to meet your goals and serve as an accountability partner. If your issues supersede goal setting and pertain more to mental and behavioral health, seek the help of a professional counselor. Living life out loud starts with you and it is sustained with the help of others.

Keep in mind, as human beings, we were created to function in the context of community. Living life out loud does not mean you live life to yourself. Allowing your gifts and talents to be used as a resource for others can enhance their quality of life and increase your capacity to receive. As you pour out to others, you must seek to be poured into to avoid being depleted. Some of the most influential people have made it known that they could not live their life out loud without the influence of others. Last year, the late renowned actor, Chadwick Boseman, "thanked Denzel Washington for paying for his tuition for a summer program Boseman completed during his time at Howard University." He further stated. ... "Imagine receiving a letter that your tuition for that summer was paid for and that your benefactor was none other than the dopest actor on the planet. There is no Black Panther without Denzel Washington (www.elle.com)."

Living your life out loud means that you are deciding to show up. September is Suicide prevention month. Death by suicide has been deemed a permanent solution to life's temporary problems. Unfortunately, "suicide is a leading cause of death across the United States and continues to be a growing public health problem in Tennessee. The effect of suicide on individuals, families, friends, and communities is long-lasting and profound. In 2018, there were 48,344 suicide deaths in the United States, at a rate of 14.8 per 100,000 person population (<https://www.tn.gov>). We can change the trajectory of death by suicide by living life out loud and taking care of those in our community.

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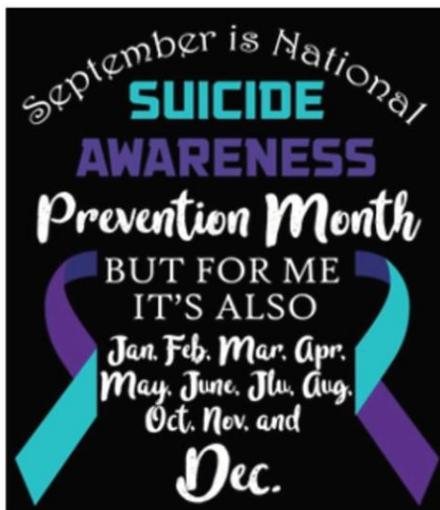
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