Suicide is a problem that plagues any society. In Singapore, rising stress levels due to competition, the meritocratic value system, an excessive focus on material success and wealth as well as achievements, have contributed to the nation’s rising cause of suicide (Chee, 2010).

Samaritans of Singapore (SOS), Singapore’s volunteer suicide prevention helpline reported that in the last 10 years, Singapore has seen a 9% increase in suicides (Samaritans of Singapore, 2015; Cheong, 2013). Of these, 70.4% of the people who killed themselves were males. This puts males at a higher risk for suicide than females. Below are some myths and facts of suicide:

**MYTH 1**
Suicide cannot be prevented
The fact is, suicide is preventable. The majority of individuals who think of killing themselves often possess a fear of dying and do not want to die. Some seek an end to the intense physical and emotional pain. If such pain could be intervened effectively, suicide could be prevented.

**MYTH 2**
People who threaten to commit suicide simply want attention and will not act
People who verbally express suicidal intent are as a matter of fact at risk of suicide and will need your attention. Regardless of whether the suicidal behaviours will be acted upon is irrelevant. Some individuals may express suicidal ideation as a warning. As such, always take all suicide threats seriously! Even if you think it is merely ‘attention seeking’.

**MYTH 3**
Asking someone if they are thinking of suicide may put the idea in their head
If you know anyone who is in a state of emotional crisis, depressed or in need of help, asking them if they are thinking of suicide may actually be helpful. By asking them caring and empathic questions, you help by allowing them to ventilate their negative emotions and share their feelings.

**MYTH 4**
When people who are suicidal feel better, they will no longer be suicidal
Statistics have indicated that by resolving that they will kill themselves, certain individuals may actually feel relief and at peace with their inner pain. Therefore, a sudden uplifting of mood after a period of depression may indicate otherwise and these individuals need continued support.

**MYTH 5**
People who want to commit suicide are unwilling to seek help
Suicide studies have indicated that most suicide victims have sought help with their suicidal ideation (Smith, Segal & Robinson, 2015) and even the most depressed person usually has mixed feelings about death. Most do not want to die, but merely want the pain to stop. Suicide prevention starts with recognising the signs and treating it seriously. If you know of someone in need, seek the necessary help for your friend or family member.

At any life stage, we may have encountered friends, families, classmates, acquaintances or colleagues who are at risk of self-harm or suicidal behaviours. Instead of being desensitized to these individuals, we can remain vigilant and empathic towards such high risk individuals. We can do our part to prevent such a tragedy from happening.

Counselling & Psychological Services
University Health Centre

References

Reach Out:
If you are concerned about someone or would like more information on how we can provide you with the support you need, reach out to us at the following numbers:

On-Campus Resource:
Lifeline NUS : 6516 7777
(24hr line for students facing life-threatening psychological emergencies)

Counselling and Psychological Services:
Telephone: 6516 2376
Email: cps@nus.edu.sg

Off-Campus Resource:
Samaritans of Singapore (SOS): 1 800 221 4444 (24hrs)

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