

JANUARY 1985

CONVERSATIONS UNLIMITED - Monday, Jan. 7, 1985

INTRO UP AND UNDER

Hi, everybody. Our subject today is not a very pleasant one. It is suicide. More particularly, it is adolescent suicide. No, it's not at all a pleasant subject but that may be the strongest reason for talking about it. As we will bring out in our conversation today, suicide has been called a "silent killer" -- that's silent as in parents and other adults not being able to talk with young people who are, tragically, seriously thinking about taking their own lives. So, despite the grimness of this subject, I hope you will stay with us. I hope you never have a need to talk with an at-risk teenager, but if you should, perhaps having listened to this program will help you...and help the youngster.

I'll be talking today with Dr. Donald McGuire, assistant professor in the School of Social Welfare at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. One of Dr. McGuire's fields of special interest is adolescent suicide.

Later in the program, we will go with some depth into how all of us can help youngsters facing this kind of trouble. And we'll talk about available agencies and support groups.

But let's start with some figures, Dr. McGuire, to help put our subject in perspective. I've read that suicide is the second largest killer of young people between the ages of 15 and 24.

MORE MORE MORE



INTERVIEW DR. McGUIRE:

- Review of statistics: how many deaths in various categories
- boys versus girls (5-1) deaths
- estimated 50-100 attempts for every death
- breakdown by age groups: below high school, high school, college, young adults (21-24)
- U.S. versus other nations
- Adolescents as percentage of all U.S. suicides
- Increasing rate: Nassau from 15 to 17% in decade
- How? What methods are most commonly used? 8
- Why? What are the more common reasons? (Boys versus girls)
- Signs of suicide, and where to turn for help? (At this point, give a quick look at obvious community resources, such as school counselors, police, welfare agencies)

14:00 - We'll take a short break and be back in a moment. Stay tuned, please.

BRIDGE MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Hi. I'm Al Oickle and I'm at the State University of New York at Stony Brook with Dr. Donald McGuire, assistant professor at Stony Brook's School of Social Welfare. We're talking about adolescent suicide. Any suicide is a cause for sadness throughout the general community but, for me, there is a special distress when a young person takes his or her own life. I suppose that is because I think of all the lost years left behind by an adolescent suicide, the poignancy of a life with all its vigor and promise cut short.

MORE MORE MORE



We've said that for every death by suicide there are as many as 100 attempts. What about the youngsters who survive? Do they generally go on to live normal lives, Dr. McGuire?

INTERVIEW DR. McGUIRE:

- What's being done to help?
  - Awareness training
  - School, PTA and church forums
  - Hotlines
  - Publications
  - Films ("Silence of the Heart")
  - State Council on Youth Suicide Prevention
  - National Committee for Youth Suicide Prevention
- Sum up: Signs for at-risk youngsters
  - Where to turn for help

29:00 - OUTRO