Preventing suicide in Lebanon
Much can be done with whole-of-society approach

Suicide is a serious matter that needs immediate attention and action.

Suicide can be the result of:
- A mental health condition (like depression, psychosis, or bipolar disorder).
- Severe emotional distress resulting from a crisis (economic, social, interpersonal, or other) without the presence of any pre-existing mental health condition necessarily.

Every 40 seconds, we lose someone to suicide in the world.
Every 2.1 days, we lose someone to suicide in Lebanon (estimate).*

* This number does not reflect the rate of deaths by suicide due to under-reporting because of stigma and limited surveillance system.

Key statistics in Lebanon:

Number of registered deaths by suicide:

- 2016: 127
- 2017: 143
- 2018: 157
- 2019: 171

(data from ISF, 2020)

In students aged 13 to 17 years old:

- 13.5% seriously considered attempting suicide
- 8.5% made a plan for suicide attempt
- 9.7% attempted suicide one or more times

(data from GSHS, 2017)

7,782 calls received since Feb 2018 to the national suicide prevention hotline, 1564-Embrace Lifeline.

194% increase in calls between 2019 and 2020.

32% of callers reported having suicide ideation or were attempting suicide during the call.

65% of callers reported struggling with emotional distress.

(data from the national hotline for emotional support and suicide prevention 1564-Embrace Lifeline, Feb 2018 - Aug 2020)
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

A comprehensive multisectorial approach is key:

- Restricting access to means of suicide
- Ensuring sustainable funding to increase access to quality affordable mental health care
- Enhancing responsible media reporting to prevent imitative suicide and raise awareness
- Helping young people develop skills to cope with life’s pressures (school-based interventions)
- Introducing alcohol policies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol
- Fighting the stigma
- Addressing social determinants such as poverty, unemployment, education, violence, and abuse, etc.
- Strengthening the monitoring and surveillance system for suicide

SUICIDES ARE PREVENTABLE through effective measures

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN LEBANON?

As part of the implementation of the first National Mental Health Strategy for Lebanon (2015-2020):

- Increasing access to quality affordable mental health services
- Capacity-building of health workers on early identification and management of mental disorders and suicide risk
- Guide for media professionals published
- Introducing life skills education programming
- Mental health and suicide awareness campaigns
- National hotline for emotional support and suicide prevention “1564 Embrace Lifeline”

Decreasing suicide is a target of the 2030 sustainable development agenda and the global mental health action plan. If not addressed, suicide has huge impact on individuals, families, societies, and humanity as a whole.