

**Suicide Prevention and Mental
Health Awareness Coalition of
Portage County**

**January
2022**



BEGIN AGAIN

1. **Make connections.** Maintain good relationships with close family members and friends; accept help and support from those who care about you; be active in civic, faith-based or other local organizations; assist others in their time of need.
2. **Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.** Try to look beyond the present to how future circumstance may be better. Note any subtle ways in which you may already be feeling better as you deal with difficult circumstances.
3. **Accept that change is part of living.** Try to increase your flexibility and understand that some goals may no longer be attainable. Learning to accept circumstances that cannot be changed may help you focus your attention on circumstances you can change.
4. **Move toward your goal.** Develop realistic goals and break them into small, achievable goals. Try to accomplish at least a small amount of progress toward your goal(s) each day.
5. **Take decisive actions.** Act on adverse situations as much and as soon as you can. Take action rather than detaching from problems and wishing they would go away.
6. **Look for opportunities for self-discovery.** Evaluate and re-frame your adverse situations and examine ways in which you have grown through the process of dealing with them. Many people who have experienced tragedies and intense personal hardships have reported better relationships, greater sense of self strength, increased self-worth, a more developed spirituality, and a heightened appreciation for life.
7. **Nurture a positive view of yourself.** Develop confidence in your ability to solve problems and trust your own instincts.
8. **Keep things in perspective.** Try to consider your stressful situations in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Try to avoid blowing unpleasant events out of proportion.
9. **Maintain a hopeful outlook.** Try visualizing what you want rather than worrying about what you fear. An optimistic outlook allows you to expect good things to happen in life.
10. **Take care of yourself.** Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Participate in activities that you find enjoyable and relaxing, such as exercise, entertainment and hobbies.

Coalition Summary for 2021

- We welcomed **8** new members this year bringing our group to **47** members!
- Thank you cookies for COVID Fatigue
- May MH Awareness: library windows, community BINGO, community conversations, school poster contest, Meals on Wheels: Coping Skills,
- Created system to track data for youth presenting with suicidal ideation in emergency rooms
- Meditation Speaker: SPASH and community sessions in September.
- Walk for Hope: raised **\$12,000!!!**
- Created Teen/Parent resource packets for both ERs
- Offered Angst documentary to all Po Co schools.
- Coffee Sleeve Stickers: **500**
- Enchanted Forest
- Website Redesign
- Suicide Death Review
- United Way Peace of Mind Website
- Pride Event
- Newsletter

Goals for 2022

- Outreach to youth and older adults
- Offer QPR and Make it OK
- Offer a summit or conference for professionals
- Assist in creating a Teen Support Group
- Fire Arms: Resources/Outreach
- Collaboration: AODA Coalition
- Suicide Prevention Training for WIAA/Coaches



You matter. Stickers

The coalition created stickers (500 total) with the contact information for the National Suicide Prevention Hotline, Portage County Crisis Line, and the Crisis Text Line. The Coalition worked in collaboration with four local coffee shops, Emy J's, Ruby Coffee Roasters, The Coffee Studio, and Zest Bakery and Coffeehouse and pizza restaurants who were kind enough to put the stickers on boxes and sleeves for their cups. The purpose of this project was to promote awareness of mental health resources in our community.

In 2022, the Coalition has plans to expand our outreach to other potential collaborating partners in order to get resources to more community members. If you know any local businesses that would want to promote Mental Health Awareness and have stickers placed on their cups or to-go boxes, please contact the coalition. We are incredibly appreciative of the support our community provides to raise awareness of Mental Health!

Mindfulness Speaker

On Wed. Sept. 29, Chad McGehee, Director of Meditation Training at UW-Madison Athletic Department and Founder of Inner Edge Meditation, regaled the Portage County Community and students at SPASH physical education classes with stories of college & pro athletes, SWAT teams, corporate teams and classrooms who have tuned to the practice of Meditation to heighten their performance with-in their professions and personal lives. His message was simple; meditation's impact on resilience, focus, stability, and well-being is unparalleled. Meditation Training is to the brain as strength and conditioning training is to the body and Chad's message is that starting with a single simple practice is key to building the meditation habit. His examples of 4-5-6 breathing, be where your feet are, and moments of gratitude, demonstrated the



ease at which meditation tools can be incorporated into one's daily routine. Chad also shared that the tools may be easy to incorporate, yet practice, practice, practice is still key and offered up that "no one can be bad at meditation"! Although Meditation has a "hippity-dippity" reputation, according to Chad, research is very much showing the positive effects of taking moments to connect to your body and get out of your "thought-parade" throughout the day lead to perceptions of less stress, over all improved well-being, and an improvement in sleep. Chad's message was clear training your brain for optimal performance is just as important as training your body for optimal performance.

Make It OK

Make It OK is a campaign to reduce stigma by increasing understanding and creating caring conversations about mental illnesses. The material covers learning about stigma and its impact on those with mental illnesses, common symptoms and diagnoses, as well as what to say to someone when they open up about their experiences with mental illnesses. We have a few ambassadors that are able to provide presentations to organizations, businesses, groups, anyone who is interested in learning more. The main message is that it is OK to have a mental illness. Learn more at makeitok.org!



Stop the silence – Make It OK

Death by Suicide Reflections for 2021

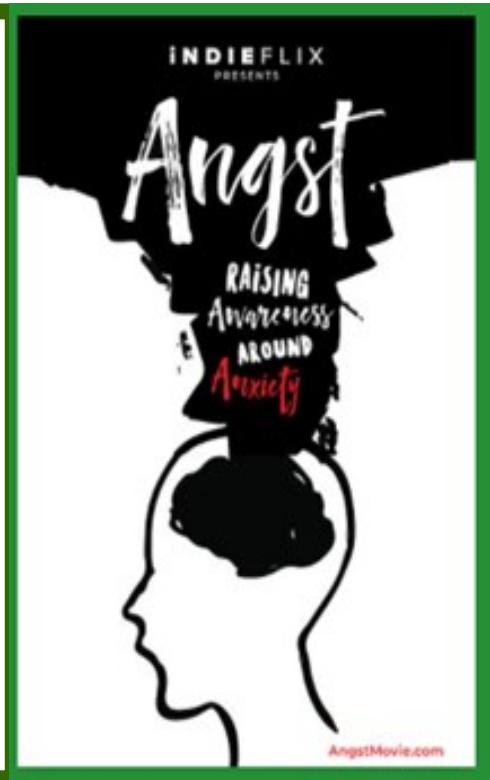
Use of firearms is the trending lead for means used, while strangulation is second. More males than females have passed by means of suicide in 2021 in Portage County. Ages ranged from young to elderly. Some contributing factors were recent medical/terminal diagnoses, relationship stressors, and substance use at time of death.

Angst is built around elementary to high school students' experiences, with **young people talking candidly** about how they have been affected, **how they have coped**, and their **optimism for the future**.

Angst is an INDIEFLIX Original documentary designed to raise awareness around anxiety. Angst removes the stigma and opens up the conversation around anxiety, helping people understand and manage their symptoms.

In 2021, the Coalition provided funding for just over 1,700 students from Ben Franklin Junior High School, PJ Jacobs Junior High School, Charles F. Fernandez Alternative School, and SPASH, to view Angst.

Staff and students reported that Angst providing a meaningful account of what it's like to have anxiety as a teen. The film provided varying aspects of how anxiety impacts students in their personal and academic lives, and opened the door for students to engage in meaningful discussion and conversation with staff on how anxiety is a barrier to their academic success.



Social Media Corner:

Our Coalition is actively revamping our webpage to make sure we have a strong resourceful webpage for our community members. We continue to post daily on our Facebook page and recently developed our own Instagram! Search for us and join, like, or follow!

Webpage- <http://www.suicidepreventionportagecounty.org/>



Facebook Page
Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness
Coalition of Portage County



Instagram Page- poccoalition

Questions? Articles to share?

Please feel free to contact us:

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Mission Statement

**To prevent suicide by providing hope,
creating mental health awareness,
and facilitating change
in the community.**