Mental Health Conference Brings Patients And Professionals Together To Focus On Suicide Prevention

By REBECCA MARTINEZ • OCT 23, 2015
NAMI NC wants people affected by mental illness to inform health professionals about how best to work with people who are suicidal.

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The North Carolina chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI (https://www.nami.org/)) is hosting a two-day mental health conference in Raleigh. Discussion will focus heavily on the best practices for discussing and preventing suicide.

This week, the North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force reported 46 children died by suicide last year (http://wunc.org/post/child-suicide-numbers-nc-while-overall-child-fatality-rates-drop#stream/0), more than double the number in 2010.

NAMI NC (http://naminc.org/) Executive Director Jack Register said the stigma surrounding suicide shames people into silence.

"Part of what we feel like our responsibility is at NAMI is to open the conversation and to end the silence so that young people are no longer feeling like this is the only avenue out there," Register said. "So that, at some point, somebody touches their life and says, 'It sounds like you've got some stuff going on. It sounds like you're really not okay. Let me help you.'"

People living with mental illness will be accompanied by loved ones as they join government officials and mental health professionals at the annual conference.
Register said they will be vital to shaping discussion on best practices for preventing suicide.

"It’s absolutely foundational to who NAMI is, because we want people who live this every day to be able to tell their story. The currency that we as family members and consumers have that no one else does is the story of what is it like to do this walk."

The conference runs from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at N.C. State University's McKimmon Conference & Training Center (https://onece.ncsu.edu/mckimmon/divisionUnits/mctc/staff.jsp) in Raleigh. The event is open to the public.
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