

Events in the capital this weekend to begin Suicide Prevention Week

If you can read between the lines, you can save lives.

That's the simple message from a new campaign in Edinburgh to mark the start of Suicide Prevention Week which runs from 10-16 September.

A series of events are being held this weekend in Edinburgh to highlight Suicide Prevention Week:

- A five-a-side football tournament at Gracemount Leisure Centre tomorrow 8 September 2012 from 9.30am until 12.30pm
- A special free screening at The Filmhouse of Monsieur Lazare – a film showing how school children try to come to terms with the suicide of their teacher tomorrow 8 September 2012 at 2.30pm
- A special service for those affected by suicide at Augustine United Church on George IV Bridge on Sunday 9 September 2012 at 3pm

Monday 10 September is also [World Suicide Prevention Day](#).

Last year 60 people in the capital took their own lives, leaving a lasting impact on families, friends and communities.

[Choose Life](#) – the national strategy and action plan to prevent suicide in Scotland – is tackling the issue of suicide through the 'Read between the lines' campaign. The message is that if you're worried about someone, such as a friend, family member or work colleague, asking them about their feelings may help to save their life.

The campaign acknowledges that signs of suicide can be

ambiguous, but encourages people to take all signs of distress seriously, even if the person seems to be living a normal life. Asking a person about what's troubling them can make a positive difference.



Convener of
Health, Social
Care & Housing –
Ricky Henderson

Councillor Ricky Henderson, Health and Social Care Leader for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “This campaign is about asking people to be alert to any potential warning signs of suicide. You tend to know when someone close to you isn't quite themselves. So if you notice any changes in their behaviour that worry you – even if the signs come and go – ask them about it.

“Talking can help a person gain clarity about what it is that's troubling them, and often gives a sense of perspective. Starting a conversation is half the battle. You don't need to have an answer to their problems – just be there for them, try to listen carefully without judging, and show that you care.

“People often worry about asking someone if they are thinking about suicide but Choose Life advises that raising the subject won't do this. Instead, it can be a big relief for them to be able to say, ‘yes, I am’ and acknowledge they need help.”

The campaign is aimed at those who are likely to be in greatest contact with people most at risk of suicide – men aged 30-59. Statistics show that around three quarters of suicides have been men in every year since 1990.

Thought-provoking posters will be displayed in a range of community venues as well as in public toilets, and on buses and trains. Choose Life is also making widely available

information cards with simple 'how to help' steps, and [leaflets](#) giving advice on starting conversations about suicide and listening effectively.

Since the launch of Choose Life in 2002, Scotland's suicide rate has decreased by 17%. Choose Life in Edinburgh has made a key contribution by providing financial support to the Samaritans, funding a service to support people who self-harm and funding research about the particular risks of suicide faced by people with substance misuse issues.

Organisations are available for anyone to talk to about their feelings: contact Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87 or Samaritans on 08457 90 90 90.