

IOTI Grant to Fund Suicide Prevention Efforts

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An Interagency Outreach Training Initiative (IOTI) grant has been awarded to the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University to fund suicide prevention efforts.

According to Jeanie Peck, licensed clinical social worker and the project coordinator for the IOTI Suicide Prevention grant, the goal of the project is to do training and instruction in suicide prevention to the communities in Utah served by the Independent Living Centers.

“We will target people with disabilities or mental illness, but also the communities at large,” Peck said. “The number one cause of death in Utah is suicide. It has surpassed motor vehicle deaths, which I think is tragic.”

Utah is #5 in the nation in suicide completion, Peck said, and is part of the so-called “suicide belt” consisting of Wyoming (#1), Montana (#3), New Mexico (#4), Colorado (#6), Idaho (#7), Nevada (#8) and Arizona (not in the top 10). Oregon is rated #9 and Oklahoma rounds out the top 10.

According to information from the Utah Department of Health, one in 15 adults in Utah have had serious thoughts of suicide.

In 2012, Utah ranked #7 for suicides ages 10-17, and in 2013, suicide was the #1 cause of death for Utahns ages 10-17 in 2013. That same year, Logan had the highest youth suicide rate.

In an average classroom of 30 youth, eight will report feeling sad and hopeless. Five will have seriously considered suicide, and four will have made a plan. Two will have attempted suicide one or more times, and one will have had medical treatment for a suicide attempt.

Statistical information regarding suicide attempts and completions specifically among people with disabilities is not available.