GREENLAND: National Public Radio Series on Suicide in Greenland

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How do you help someone who is at risk of suicide? [1]
The Arctic suicides: Your questions answered [2]

National Public Radio recently published a series of articles about suicides in Greenland, where the national rate is the highest in the world (about 80 per 100,000). One of these articles [1] presents an interview with two psychiatrists who discuss some of the key issues, including the very small size of Greenland’s isolated communities and the lack of resources. The high exposure and intense focus that suicides often receive in such small communities may inadvertently reinforce the suicidal behavior. This can lead to clusters of suicides, especially if youth come to see suicide as a way they can escape from their problems. In these situations, teachers and parents, and guidance counselors when available, are advised to check in regularly with high-risk youth, especially after a suicide. However, the Greenlandic Ministry of Health said that its main problem in preventing suicide is the lack of counselors, therapists, psychiatrists, and the funds to bring them to a community after a suicide and support them there for the weeks or months needed.

Another article [2] in the NPR series reports that there has been some help in the past five years from telemedicine, which enables patients to talk face-to-face with doctors via video link. In addition, starting next year, the Ministry of Health will use the Resilience and Suicide Prevention Project created in Canada to develop emotional resilience among community leaders and provide education on recognizing and responding to suicidal behavior.

Links within this resource