

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

SEPTEMBER 10, 2009

“The Meaning of Kites”

September 10th marks World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD). On that day people around the world come together to remember the lives of those whose pain and suffering overwhelmed their feelings of hope and who died by suicide, to provide comfort to those who grieve and remind them that they are not alone and publicly declare and renew our commitment to preventing suicides in our community.

This year the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention has chosen kites to be its symbol for WSPD. Choosing kites as a symbol to represent World Suicide Prevention Day in Canada may seem like an odd choice. Kites are often associated with young children playing in a field on a lovely summer's day, laughing and running as they try to keep their kite soaring in the sky. This image does not necessarily fit with the ones we often associate with the pain and suffering of suicide. The kite however can have other meanings and associations. The kite can represent the person we have lost and the string the connection we will have with them forever. As we watch the kite flying high above us we remember those we have lost but who are always with us. We do not wish to let go of the memory of that person and hold on to the string and our connection with them. We do hope for the day we can let go of our pain, sadness and even anger so that we can remember and see the person more clearly. Those feelings can be like clouds that block our view of the kite. Let us see the person for all their brilliance, like these brightly coloured kites, fluttering high in the sky. A person's value, identity and importance are not determined by how they died but rather what they meant to us when they lived. The kite can also represent our connection to others, the need to connect with a community and stay connected to people who add to the quality of our lives. The kite represents our sense of purpose and hope, something that we grasp tightly to do not lose sight of. The kite also reminds us of the importance of staying connected to ourselves to keep our feet on the ground and to sometimes put our heads in the clouds and dream, to be aware of ourselves, to feel our own importance and power, to care for and nurture ourselves, to have fun and play.

The string is a very necessary part of the kite for without it the kite is lost. The string is perhaps the central theme, our need for connectedness, and connection with hope, with community, with those who have died, with those who struggle with thoughts of suicide and with ourselves. This string connects and unites us all together.

CASP has created a resource package for WSPD that organizations across Canada are free to use and adapt to help them organize and recognize WSPD in their community. This package includes; a WSPD poster that can be downloaded and you can insert information about your WSPD event, sample editorials and press releases and a post card that can be downloaded that is mailed postage free to the Minister of Health and urges the Government of Canada to take action on a national suicide prevention strategy. By

contacting CASP's national office at casp@casp-acps.ca we can also send you hard copies of the post card to distribute in your community. This year we have also created an epetition that also calls upon the federal government to establish a Canadian strategy for suicide prevention. To register your support via the epetition goes to <http://npspcnd.epetitions.net>

Thank you for support. We hope that your WSPD events go well.