



# Florence County Health Department

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## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Florence County School District, Local Health Department, and UW Extension Held Suicide Prevention Training for High School Students at the Resource Center in Florence, WI**

**(Florence, WI)** The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a negative toll on everyone's mental health over the last two years. As a result, it is critical that we continue to teach evidence-based programs such as the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention Training to save lives in our families and communities. Suicide continues to be listed as the 10th leading cause of preventable death among all ages, claiming the lives of over 47,500 people (NIMH, 2021). It is the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34 years of age and the fourth leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 35 and 44 (NIMH, 2021). One person **every 15 minutes** dies by suicide in the United States. Studies, along with nationwide and statewide statistics, continue to show that we need to continue our efforts as a community to prevent zero suicide. Any life lost to suicide is one too many. So, as a community, we are continuing to raise suicide awareness to prevent suicide. How are we accomplishing this? Florence County Health Department, in our five-year community health improvement plan identified mental health awareness as a strategy and in partnership with the School District & UW Extension offered a suicide awareness and prevention programming to local high school students, 11 students attended.

Ally Kalkofen, Public Health Nurse with the Florence County Health Department, and Maria Bournoville, 4-H Educator with UW Extension have both received training, through the nationally recognized QPR Institute, to teach others the importance of being able to recognize the signs of someone who is at risk of suicide and how to offer that person hope through positive action. The training is meant to provide individuals with the opportunity to learn the warning signs of a friend or loved one who may need help. If you are interested in learning more about what the QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention program teaches, please call the Florence County Health department at 715-528-4837. For public health information and referral services for women, children, and families, please call the Maternal and Child Health Hotline at 1-880-722-2295 or visit their website at [www.mch-hotlines.org](http://www.mch-hotlines.org).

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