

Stop-suicide workshop has space

No one can prevent suicide, says Richard Hoskins.

The best anyone can do is intervene long enough to get help.

That's the message he'll deliver to participants next week in a workshop designed to train nearly 200 local community members about potential suicide risk.

"If you have not been trained in CPR and you see someone lying on the ground, you don't know what to do," says Hoskins, a Medford representative of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. "You don't do anything and they just die. This is CPR for the brain."

Five spaces remain in the Feb. 22 and 23 Applied Suicide Intervention Training (ASSIST) sessions, held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the ACCESS Nutrition Center, 3630 Aviation Way, Medford. Cost is \$40.

Participants will join an estimated 500 trained staff in a nine-county region in Southern Oregon. They include law enforcement and mental health workers, as well as the general public.

The training is aimed at reducing the risk of suicide among young people ages 10 to 24. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for teens. Last year, 54 Jackson County youngsters attempted suicide, boosting the rate 129 percent from the year before, according to a recent survey sponsored by Children First for Oregon.

The two-day seminar offers assessment tools to determine the immediate risk of suicide intervention skills to keep people safe until longer-term help can be found.

Hoskins, whose wife committed suicide in 1972, says learning to intervene is key.

"There are things I could have done that I didn't know how to do," he says. "If you knew what to do, you wouldn't have that feeling for the rest of your life that you could have done something."

Medford Mail Tribune