

City of Poulsbo



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Poulsbo, Behavioral Health Outreach Program

200 NE Moe Street, Poulsbo, WA 98370

360 394 9794

kimberlyh@cityofpoulsbo.com

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City of Poulsbo to Hold Event on First Responders and Suicide Prevention

The City of Poulsbo will host a community event on Tuesday, July 17 to discuss the role of police and firefighters in suicide prevention. The event, **“How do First Responders Handle Suicide Attempts--and What Happens Next? Creating Police, Fire, and Community Partnerships to Help People in Crisis”** will be held at Olympic College, Poulsbo campus, room 105 from 6pm to 8pm. Admission is free and all are welcome.

The responsibility of responding to suicide events--in Kitsap County and elsewhere--falls largely on first responders. Police and fire personnel are typically involved after a suicide attempt or threat is made, and the actions that they take can have a profound effect on what follows. “We think it will be helpful for people to understand what happens after a 911 call is made,” says Poulsbo Mayor Becky Erickson, “and the important, often unrecognized work of first responders. Suicide rates are growing at an alarming rate across the nation, and we need to come together, as a community, to talk about how we can be more effective after crisis situations.” Kim Hendrickson, Project Manager of Poulsbo’s Behavioral Health Outreach Program, agrees. “We have asked police and fire to be on the front line of crisis response without thinking much about what follows. I’d like to see more agencies and individuals come forward after suicide attempts to offer support and services.”

Poulsbo and Bainbridge Island first responders will discuss how police and fire personnel respond to suicide-related calls for service, and how interventions do—and don’t--lead to follow up care and treatment. Other panelists include Dr. Susan Turner from the Public Health District, Charles Doyal from the Kitsap County Crisis Response Team, police embedded Navigator Kelsey Lynch, and representatives from Coffee Oasis and Gateway Fellowship Church. New laws will be discussed that are designed to help people at risk of suicide, such as "Sheena's Law" and Extreme Risk Protection Orders, as well as innovative local efforts like the police embedded Navigator program and Coffee Oasis' youth support services.

For more information about the event, please contact Kim Hendrickson, Project Manager of the City of Poulsbo’s Behavioral Health Outreach Program: kimberlyh@cityofpoulsbo.com, 360 394 9794.

The City of Poulsbo is grateful to Olympic College and the Kitsap Community Suicide Prevention Coalition for their support of this event.