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Robin Williams' suicide a siren for action, understanding



The recent suicide of comedian and Oscar-winning actor Robin Williams sent a

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shock wave through the American entertainment landscape with a shattering reminder that deep may run the pain and suffering wrought by the mental illness of depression.

The American novelist and essayist, William Styron, wrote in his 1990 memoir his grave personal account of living with "despair beyond despair."

"Depression is a disorder of mood," he wrote, "so mysteriously painful and elusive as to verge close to being beyond description."

For those afflicted with severe depression it truly is beyond description, and yet for those that live without the illness, the severity of depression that leads to suicide can seem, to many, beyond comprehension. Social media is alight with condolences, sympathy, and questions over Williams' suicide. Many bewildered followers and fans have wondered aloud, "How could this happen," "Why suicide," and "Did anyone know?"

So, what do we know about suicide? Did you know that 108 suicides occur daily across the nation, exceeding the national homicide rate, as reported by CBS Nightly News? Did you know that in Tennessee, motor vehicle and suicide deaths were practically equal in 2012 (958 versus 956)? Did you know that a Tennessee Youth Risk Behavior Survey published in 2011 by Tennessee Department of Education cited one in seven students actually considered suicide; one in nine had developed a plan; and one in 16 actually tried to take their life?

As the suicide statistics rise, so does the collateral toll on family and friends. Death by suicide, they readily acknowledge, changes everything, for everyone, evermore. It is a

complicated grief and sorrow that never quite brings resolution or peace to the survivors.

The truth is as a society, we don't treat depression as a mental illness that deserves proper assessment, care, and treatment. Culturally, we drive it into the shadows and dress it in a shameful cloak of secrecy and embarrassment. Until we take a critical first step to stamp out the shame associated with suffering from a mental illness, the tragic losses and collateral grief from suicide will continue to mount — leaving us, once again, in bewildered disbelief.

In a recent release from the Commissioner of Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Douglas Varney implored, "If you or someone you know and love is at a breaking point, especially one so low they speak of wanting to end their life, take immediate action to get them help." Here in the areas of Anderson, Scott, Morgan, Campbell, and Roane counties, immediate help comes from Ridgview Behavioral Health Services, which has caring professionals available to help at (865) 482-1076, or through the Mobile Crisis Team, which is available 24 hours a day at 1-800-870-5481.

Hope and treatment are available. Stories of recovery and healing do exist. Together, let us deepen our understanding of the despair felt by many, let us commit ourselves to eliminating the stigma associated with mental illness; and let us be resolute in suicide prevention efforts. It is time to dignify our discussion of mental illness by stamping out the shame associated with it.

Michael Yates is director of development for Ridgview, which is a private, not-for-profit community mental health center with locations in Anderson, Campbell, Morgan, Roane, and Scott counties.

Better watch for Kids...



Because they're **NOT** watching for you!

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Have we lost America's Dream? Part II

WILMA BANNER CURTIS

GUEST COLUMN

executive order to take over every aspect of our lives.

I have recorded the last executive order first, then I have recorded the others. If you have any doubts, please go online, type in executive orders and you will see for yourself. Our current President is not the only President to issue such orders, but those listed below are the ones which will affect us the most.

Executive Order 11921 allows the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop plans to establish control over the mechanisms of production and distribution, of energy sources, wages, salaries, credit and the flow of money in U.S. financial institution in any undefined national emergency. It also provides that when a state of emergency is declared by the President, Congress cannot review the action for six months.

The following executive order's allows the government to:

- To take over all modes of transportation and control of highways and seaports. EO 10990
- To seize and control the communication media. EO 10995
- To take over all electrical power, gas, petroleum, fuels and minerals. EO 10997
- To take over all food resources and farms. EO 10998
- To mobilize civilians into work brigades under government supervision. EO 11000
- To take over all health, education and welfare functions. EO 11001

- To take over all airports and aircraft, including commercial aircraft. EO 11003
- To take over railroads, inland waterways and public storage facilities. EO 11005
- Executive order 11002 designates

the Postmaster General to operate a national registration of all persons.

- Executive order 11004 allows the Housing and Finance Authority to relocate communities, build new housing with public funds, designate areas to be abandoned, and establish new locations for populations.

- Executive order 11049 assigns emergency preparedness function to federal departments and agencies, consolidating 21 operative executive orders issued over a fifteen year period.

- Executive order 11051 specifies the responsibility of the Office of Emergency Planning and gives authorization to put all executive orders into effect in times of increased international tensions and economic or financial crisis.

- Executive order 11310 grants authority to the Department of Justice to enforce the plans set out in executive orders, to institute industrial support to establish judicial and legislative liaison, to control all aliens, to operate penal and correctional institutions, and to advise and assist the President.

We once were a nation whose constitution the world could use as a model for their own democratic government. If the above executive orders should take place, we will no longer be a people enjoying representation into government affairs. Are we still capable of being "One Nation under God?" It is up to us. If we want to continue to be free, we must take a stand. We need to be sure we are providing the teaching, which will instill the love of freedom in the future generations. And above all else, vote. Vote for the person, whom you can trust to keep us a free nation. I sincerely pray that God will bless America. Don't let America lose her dream.

Wilma Banner Curtis is a longtime Clinton resident.