

Letter: Do something to help us all combat suicide and save lives

September 17, 2019



Dear Editor: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that in 2017, more people in the U.S. died by suicide than in any previous year.

Suicide was the second-leading cause of death for 15- to 24-year-olds and 35- to 44-year-olds in California.

This is particularly troubling along the Wild Rivers Coast, where there aren't adequate behavioral-health professionals.

We can wait around for the powers-to-be to find the funding to make the necessary changes, or we can step up as individual citizens to do something about it.

On Sept. 7, The Triplicate newspaper included a 16-page, four-color insert titled "Suicide Awareness and Prevention: Finding Hope," that is filled with information, warning signs, and what to do when you notice a change in a friend, neighbor, colleague or family member, no matter how small.

It encourages you to trust the signs, trust your gut and ask, "R U OK?" Let them know that it's okay to say, "I'm not OK."

If that doesn't work, and you're having difficulty knowing what to say, check out the list at <https://bit.ly/2SOU1la>.

There are 42 locations in Crescent City and Smith River that have counter displays holding R U OK? wallet cards. Stop in, thank the proprietor and pick up a few cards, so that when you see a friend exhibiting a warning sign, you can hand them a card to let them know you're available to listen.

We all have a role to play in suicide prevention. I hope people will get a copy of that newspaper at The Triplicate office, 312 H St., read the insert, learn the warning signs, and learn what to do and not do.

Then, commit to break the silence by talking about your experience, freely. Let's work together as a village to save lives.