



The Samaritan

Celebrating our 40th Year 1977—2017

News from The Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands

Spring 2017 Edition

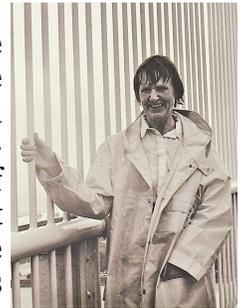
Dear Friends,

As Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands celebrates its 40th year, I couldn't help but look back at where the organization has been, where we are now, and where we hope to be in the future.



As many of you know, we have a quite unique and interesting history. Our roots began in London in 1953 when Chad Varah, an Anglican priest, was deeply affected when he performed the burial ceremony for a fourteen year old girl who had died by suicide. Distressed by the girl's death, Chad created a crisis line program to provide a different choice to others in need. And, thus, Samaritans was born.

In the late 1960's, a young writer, Monica Dickens, the great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens, interviewed Chad Varah to write about the Samaritan movement. After training as a volunteer on the phone lines, being a Samaritan quickly became her life's calling, and upon moving to the U.S., Monica opened the first Samaritan center in Boston in 1974. When she retired to Falmouth, Monica saw the need for a call center on the Cape and, in 1977, founded Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands. In addition to our organization, two of the most lasting aspects of Monica's legacy are the iconic "**Desperate?**" signs that have been a part of the landscape on the approaches to the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges (installed in 1979) and the suicide prevention barriers on both bridges (erected in the early 1980's).



As we look back over the last 40 years, many things have changed. From the first crisis line call in 1977 to 17,142 calls to our center in 2016. From a time when one dared not utter the word "**suicide**" to a time where we work diligently through outreach and education to encourage everyone to speak openly about mental health issues and suicide. From providing support through one program (our Crisis Lines) to the many offered by our organization today (*Safe Place* groups for suicide loss survivors, *A Second Chance* groups for suicide attempt survivors, *Senior Outreach*) to new programs currently in development (groups for family members of suicide attempt survivors and peer support for individuals immediately after a suicide attempt).



While much has changed, there have been two constants – our unwavering dedication to our mission to provide emotional support to those who are lonely, depressed, or even suicidal, and the ongoing generosity of donors and community members like you. On behalf of the Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands, I thank you for your past support and I hope you will continue to join us in our efforts as we begin our next 40 years.

Sincerely,

Stephanie G. Kelly
Executive Director



Let's Talk About Men and Suicide

Why talk about men in particular?

- To raise awareness around the fact that the suicide rate for men (particularly men in their middle years) is rising;
- To educate ourselves about factors that are contributing to this increase, strategies for helping this very high risk demographic, and resources that are available.

“If we are going to reduce the overall number of suicide deaths in the United States, men in the middle years need our attention.”~Dr. Jeff Sung~

Did you know that according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's 2015 national statistics...

- White males account for 7 of 10 suicides;
- Men die by suicide 3.5x more often than women;
- Suicide is highest in middle age (white men in particular);
- Suicide is the 4th leading cause of death for ages 35-54 and the 8th leading cause of death for ages 55-64.

Looking closer to home – in Massachusetts and on Cape Cod and the Islands...

- According to the latest statistics from the MA Department of Public Health, in 2014, 77% of the suicides in the state were men;
- The ratio of suicide deaths on the Cape is 4-5 males to 1 female. This is significantly higher than the state trend of 3 males to 1 female;
- The rate of suicide overall on Cape Cod and the Islands is more than 1.4 x the state average.

What's causing this increase? Unfortunately, there isn't one cause that can explain this spike in suicide rates for middle-aged men. It's much more likely that there is a convergence of multiple factors within men in this age group that makes them especially vulnerable, including:

(cont'd. from column 1)

- Work-related issues/lack of employment opportunities – men often identify themselves by what they do. Work or career is often inextricably tied to feelings of self-worth;
- Untreated mental illness including depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, and other mood disorders – this factor makes all individuals more vulnerable but may be intensified by men's reluctance to reach out for help;
- Social isolation – as men grow older, they tend to let their friendships lapse;
- Use of more lethal means – men tend to use firearms thus their suicide attempts are more often fatal;
- Loss of hope for the future – this often ties back to work-related issues. For example, being downsized out of a job, inability to provide financially for their family, loss of retirement due to economic crisis.

Knowing what to look for. Although many symptoms of depression are not gender specific, there are several that may be displayed by men more frequently, including:

- Fatigue – men are often more likely to report fatigue and other physical symptoms of depression such as backaches, stomachaches, or sleep issues as their chief complaint;
- Irritability – instead of seeming down, men who are depressed often show signs of irritability;
- Anger and hostility – this is different than irritability. Anger tends to be a stronger emotion while irritability can be described as “crankiness.” Men often become hostile when they have withdrawn as a result of their depression and feel pressure by friends or family to rejoin society;
- Anxiety – men may be no more likely to experience anxiety than women but it's often easier for them to talk about feeling anxious rather than sad;
- Stress – men are generally more likely to report symptoms of depression as stress. It's not that they have more stress than women; it's that they feel it's more socially acceptable to report their feelings as stress rather than sadness;

(cont'd. from page 2)

- Substance abuse – using drugs or alcohol to mask uncomfortable feelings is a strategy that many men will employ instead of seeking health care;
- Sexual dysfunction – depression is a common reason for loss of desire and erectile dysfunction and it's one symptom that men are inclined not to report;
- Suicidal thoughts – women are more likely to attempt suicide, but men are more than 4 times as likely to die if they do attempt suicide. One reason is that men tend to use more lethal means such as firearms.

Knowing what resources are available.

- Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands
Crisis Lines: 508-548-8900 or
800-893-9900
Statewide Samaritans Line: 877-870-4673
- Massmen.org
Screenings, Personal Stories, and Resources
- Mantherapy.org
A site that employs humor to cut through stigma and tackle issues like depression, divorce and anxiety.

Knowing how to ask the question. Most importantly, don't be afraid to ask the question. If you're worried about a man in your life, ask him if he's okay. Tell him you're worried about him. Give him the opportunity to talk about it. For tips on how to start the conversation, visit the "Worried About Someone" section of our website at www.CapeSamaritans.org.



Would you rather receive our newsletter electronically?



Visit our website at www.CapeSamaritans.org to sign up today.

Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands is Proud to Present

COMEDIAN,
SPEAKER,
&
N.Y. TIMES BEST SELLING
AUTHOR



DARRELL HAMMOND

In celebration of our 40th year, we wanted to host an event that the entire community could take part in – an event relevant to our mission and programs.

We're excited to present Darrell Hammond, New York Times bestselling author and longest-tenured cast member of Saturday Night Live, who will reveal a story you won't soon forget.

Hammond describes the childhood abuse and trauma that led to a secret life of self-injury and addiction. By age five, Hammond learned that by doing voices, he could make his perpetrator laugh, and even prevent abuse from occurring.

He translated this survival technique into a career, bringing to life over 100 people on SNL, including President Clinton, Donald Trump, and Sean Connery, cementing his place as a comedic and pop culture icon.

Hammond will describe the lasting effects of trauma, and how he lives every day for recovery. Telling the details of his painful past, his story may shock some, but it is also a force for healing -- bringing a special light to the under-discussed topic of depression among men.

The evening with Darrell Hammond concludes with a Q&A session followed by a set of his most famous impressions.

You – our donors and supporters – have been so good to us, we'd like to take this opportunity to give back by giving you first access to information about this event. Ticket availability is limited and sales will be opening soon. Keep checking in at www.CapeSamaritans.org to reserve your tickets before they sell out!

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Grant Awards

The Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the following state, private, and charitable foundations for their generous support:

C. Northrop Pond and Alethea Marder Pond
Foundation
Cape and Islands Suicide Prevention Coalition
Cape Cod Health Care
Elder Services on Cape Cod & the Islands
The Massachusetts Suicide Prevention Program of
the Massachusetts Department of Public Health
The Woods Hole Foundation

Special Recognition

To our Gold Sponsor,
The Enterprise Newspapers

Thank You

To all of our individual and private donors.
Your generosity keeps us going!

Heartfelt Gratitude

To our volunteers for your time and your
compassion!
We could never do what we do without you!

Samaritans 2017-2018 Board of Directors

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Sue Andersen
Peter Clark
Jill Garvin
Peter Murner
Paul Ruane

Summer Fundraisers!

Join us for our two biggest fundraising events of the year!



Visit us at
www.CapeSamaritans.org
for registration
information.
Space is limited so register
today!



**16th Annual Monica Dickens
Golf Tournament**
Monday, June 26, 2017
The Cape Club

**10th Annual Upper Cape
Bocce Festival**
Saturday, September 16, 2017
Falmouth Academy

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and the Islands



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