Debunking the holiday suicide myth

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The Huffington Post [1]

Nationwide, suicides are regularly at their lowest rate in the month of December, yet the myth persists that the winter holidays bring on a rise in suicidal behavior. This common misperception is a problem “because suggestibility can contribute to people acting out or, at a minimum, normalizing sadness during the holidays,” said Ramani Durvasula, a psychology professor at California State University, Los Angeles. Media researchers have found that over the 2012-13 winter holiday season, almost three-quarters of newspaper stories discussing suicide perpetuated this mistaken notion. Prevention experts do advise taking extra care to help people with few social connections not to become isolated during the winter months. Victor Schwartz, medical director of the Jed Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to suicide prevention among college students, noted that worsening depression is sometimes a warning sign for suicide. Signs of such a shift can include withdrawal, increased use of alcohol or other drugs, and problems sleeping.

Spark Extra! Check out SPRC’s list of Warning Signs for Suicide [2].

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