

Essay written by Alexa Henson

How does the concept of “we matter” relate to suicide prevention?

The term matter means to “be of importance” and “have significance.” As humans, we are of importance and have significance. We matter. Roper helps us realize God's perspective on why we matter by saying, "We matter because we're deeply, eternally loved by the God who made us" (2020). God had every single human in mind and planned out their purpose even before conception. He formed us by his hands and loves us deeply and eternally. Realizing and accepting this gift from Him gives us power and importance beyond all measure. The root of suicide is the conviction that one does not matter. Many cases of suicide are caused by people retaining this opposite feeling of insignificance and unimportance. Some people feel as if no one cares about them and their life is meaningless. Catalysts of these feelings are states of loneliness, addiction, and abuse. Other triggers are depression, mental health disorders, and chemical imbalances in the brain. One study states, “Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States, 3 with 45,979 deaths in 2020. This is about one death every 11 minutes. The number of people who think about or attempt suicide is even higher” (*Facts About Suicide | Suicide | CDC*). These statistics stem from something deeper than a number or a ranking. They show the amount of insignificance felt by many people across the United States. This insignificance can be overridden by the concept of “we matter.”

What does “I matter, you matter, we matter” mean to you?

To me, “I matter, you matter, we matter” means that I am significant, and I have a purpose. I was created by God on purpose, for a purpose (Proverbs 16:4). He did not make a

mistake in creating me. You matter means you are significant. You overflow in abundance of worthiness. Your presence on this earth is a gift. It is valuable. We matter means we are significant as a whole. We is plural as in a group of individuals. We can work together as a community to make everyone around us feel wanted, accepted, worthy, and significant. No one can live a fulfilling life on their own. We were made for community and fellowship to help guide and encourage us. We were made to prosper together on earth. To prosper, we must make an intentional effort to make certain that the people around us know they matter. I matter, you matter, we matter.

How can you apply the concept of “I matter, you matter, we matter” in your personal life?

Application of this important concept requires that I begin to become more aware of the people around me. I need to recognize the messages people are reflecting to me by their actions and words because many people who are struggling with thoughts of suicide give subtle warnings to their family or close friends. I need to see these warnings and act immediately and appropriately. For example, if I have a thought that someone might be considering ending their life, I will let someone in a higher authority know. It is not a defiance of trust if somebody's life is on the line. Don't risk it! Help is the one and only answer. As I walk through the halls or see a stranger on the street, I will send a kind, intentional message. If I notice someone is having a bad day, I will choose to be thoughtful, encouraging, and intentional with my words and actions. If someone confides in me that they are struggling with suicidal thoughts, I will remind them that there is healing! By God's grace and restoration, what is broken will be made new (Psalm 119:75). There is no existing feeling too strong that cannot be overcome by the power of Jesus. He shed his blood so that we did not have to and reminded us that we matter above all else.

How can suicide prevention, through the concept of “we matter”, be promoted effectively within your school and the community at large?

The good news is that suicide is not inevitable, it can be prevented. This is something to be promoted everywhere to encourage those who are wrestling with this internal battle. At school, we can promote suicide prevention by creating a positive environment. We can promote positive influence by creating emotional support groups and engaging in group activities. A key idea of suicide prevention is unity because “we” matter. We must be unified to make a change. For example, strengthen each other and stabilize those feelings of unworthiness that creep into our lives. Unworthiness roots from inner feelings of insecurity and lack of confidence. How can we encourage others in their being to strengthen their perceptions of life and themselves as a person? Create an environment that protects and cares and encourages others to find their purpose. Express feelings of uncertainty that make their way into the mind because talking about the hard things in life is what sparks change and growth. Invest in the people who make you feel like you matter and are loved. If a small group of people made an intentional effort to show empathy and make everybody feel as if they mattered, how would our community change and how would the world change? A ripple effect is needed to promote more and more change each day. Where do we go from here? Keep investing in the people around you. They will invest in others. And then to others. From here, we can spark a generation that confides in each other, encourages each other in growth, and loves each other. Most importantly, we can become a generation that makes everybody feel as if they matter. This starts with me. This starts with you. This starts with us. I matter, you matter, we matter.

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