

*By Wade Gerhardt*

## The Effects of “We Matter”

The idea of “I Matter, You Matter, We Matter” is that it doesn’t matter who you are or where you come from. We are all equal beings with the same inalienable rights: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness (Jefferson, 1776). It is my belief that I am called to love everyone, even those who have known no love. I am called to give help to anyone who asks or needs it.

### **“We Matter” as Suicide Prevention**

The concept of brotherhood has a strong impact on people’s decisions and mindsets. Being yourself and genuinely caring for someone is much more effective than knowing the “right” words to say to someone who is contemplating suicide (Smith, Segal, & Robinson, 2019). If someone comes to you expressing thoughts like suicide, do not play it off as a joke. Always take matters like this seriously. You are allowing them to talk about their pain with you, not you putting ideas into their heads (Smith, Segal, & Robinson, 2019). By using “We Matter”, we are letting them know they are not alone. No matter how dark the world may seem to them, no one should have to fight things like this alone. Suicide prevention and “We Matter” go hand-in-hand because the thought of “We Matter” is that we, as people, have a common cause and want what is best for our fellow man. It holds a mindset of the aforementioned brotherhood that we all look out for one another and want what is best for one another. Simply being there for someone when they need it most can be enough to disregard those thoughts of ending their life (Smith, Segal, & Robinson). Our culture has made it acceptable to joke about things like suicide, making the topic almost seem comical (Solomon, 2018). The dangers of this are self-evident and should not be taken lightly. When someone makes a joke about suicide, ask and make sure they are really okay and see if they need help. The most important thing is to make that person believe that you

truly care about them. Look for some of the warning signs such as talking about suicide, preoccupation with death, self-destructive behavior, and withdrawal from others (Smith, Segal, & Robinson, 2019).

### **What it Means to Me**

I am so lucky not to have experienced any suicides in my family or friends, but I have lost those whom I love. What really gets me is the thought of my friends hurting so much that that is what they turn to. The thought of them suffering either without me knowing or me not being able to help hurts me to my core. I am a deeply emotional person who wears my heart on my sleeve and I empathize with people. So, I couldn't imagine the pain that someone goes through when they lose someone to suicide. “I Matter, You Matter, We Matter” means that no one is alone. I want to be a help to anyone that needs it and to anyone who needs someone to just listen to their problems. It's foolish to think that I would be able to understand their problems or be able to give advice, but I hope that my love and willingness to help would be enough to ease their pain. “I Matter, You Matter, We Matter” means simple things like inviting someone who's sitting alone at lunch to your table or being kind to the one that everyone bullies. My actions have impacts on people even if I don't see them. People see the way that I am around others, and if I can be seen helping those who need it, then maybe they might follow in my footsteps. It is my hope that through a campaign such as “We Matter”, we can give hope to the people who feel there is none.

### **“We Matter” Can Be Promoted Effectively Through My Student Body**

By using simple things like wristbands or posters in the halls, students can be surrounded and therefore constantly reminded of the fact that each one of them has value. Guest speakers and stories given by students (voluntarily of course) can also be a very effective tool in relating

to the student body and maybe even making the topic not seem so distant. Some kids might think, “Oh, this will never affect me.”, but doing activities like these can maybe wipe away that illusion. I am of the belief that statistics are mostly ineffective to high school and, especially, younger students and that real accounts have a much greater impact on them. Another effective method could be not just stories that end in suicide, but ones where the person survives or gets help. Through this, maybe those listening who might be going through the same sort of things can actually relate to someone who went through the same situation. Seeing the person survive and be able to give advice could prove to be extremely effective for the prevention of suicides. Our student body could also take a stand against bullying or maltreatment of others. Showing one who is being hurt that someone cares about them could have a great impact on their life and the way that they think.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, this paper discussed how “We Matter” can be used as suicide prevention, what “We Matter” means to me, and how “We Matter” can be used in my student body. We are all the same, really. We are all human and we want what is best. Through “We Matter” we can look out for our neighbors and help them in their time of need. Always be a servant and remember that no one is alone.

### References

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