

*By Kristin Limerick*

### **“I Matter, You Matter, We Matter”**

Suicide, while being something I have never personally considered, has had a major impact on my life. Suicide has a way of trickling into the lives of everyone around it, affecting not only the person attempting it, but all those who love them. So many think that suicide is an isolated event, when in reality it is something that is an all-inclusive event. I Matter, You Matter, We Matter is an anthem that cries just that. It is a “We’re all in this together” kind of deal.

### **How does the concept of “We Matter” relate to suicide prevention?**

All people, Christian or not, are born with a sinful nature. We are fallen beings. We are inherently, and some may say, naturally selfish. We have a frequent tendency to get caught up in ourselves, and what we are doing, and what people think of us, so that we inhibit ourselves from recognizing the problems in those around us. This selfish nature could also cause a fear of confrontation. We might see the signs, but convince ourselves that it is just a phase and what they really need is space to figure it out. By doing this, it can cause us to distance ourselves from whomever is struggling and that inevitably leads to loneliness, or the feeling of not being seen. Heather McClelland wrote that, “A review of published research identified that loneliness was significantly associated later suicidal thoughts and behaviors.” (Hewings, 2022) This is something we can change. “We Matter” is our tool to create a feeling of community and the allowance of the thought “I am never alone.” By doing this we could redefine the narrative and use suicide prevention as a cause to bring people together, rather than tearing them apart.

### **What does “I Matter, You matter, We matter” mean to you?**

The beginning of senior year was one of great excitement and anticipation for the end of a chapter and the start of a new one. I was happy, my friends were happy, everything seemed to be going fine, when suddenly one of my closest friends seemingly disappeared off the face of the earth. For weeks she did not come to school and my texts were left un-replied, questions left unanswered, and naturally, worry and panic rose as I began to recall the last couple of months, I had thought were ‘normal’. I remember reliving some of our interactions and it became immediately noticeable that she was not herself, there was something missing, almost like a hollowness, and slowly the realization became apparent. She had been “withdrawn and feeling isolated” and “talked about feeling trapped and was in unbearable pain.” (*Warning Signs for Suicide / Suicide Prevention Resource Center, 2019*) While being subtle, the warning signs were clear and an obvious cry for help and I had missed them. “I Matter, You Matter, We Matter” is a reminder to me to never leave things unsaid, to never not act out of fear, to never allow someone to feel so alone that they think the only solution is taking their life. It is a reminder that we have to stand up and cannot become complacent, because the fight against suicide is a continual battle.

### **How can you apply the concept of “I Matter, You Matter, We Matter” in your personal life?**

The concept of “I Matter, You Matter, We Matter,” I think, has to be a constant reminder of the danger that suicide poses. It is a saying that can assure us that suicide is something that should never be dealt with alone. It reminds me of the time that I did not see the signs and I chose to convince myself that everything was fine. It reminds me that I was choosing me over the betterment of someone who was in a dark place, and that should never and will never happen

again. We have to be intentional and we have to remember that even in the darkest of times you are not alone.

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

“I Matter, You Matter, and We Matter” can be applied in our personal lives, but this concept needs to reach a much greater audience. In order to translate “We Matter” within my school and my community, it has to be done by raising awareness. The best ways to raise awareness are by “knowing the risk factors, knowing the warning signs, delivering resources, breaking down barriers to mental healthcare.” (*How to Raise Awareness for Suicide Prevention as Mental Health Providers*, n.d.) We have to know what we are dealing with before going out and spreading awareness. We can use the concept of “We Matter” to spread the idea that you are never alone. It could be as simple as telling someone that they are loved and that they matter.

**Conclusion**

Suicide is something not to be taken lightly. It is something that we, as a society, cannot overlook or ignore. “I Matter, You Matter, We Matter” has to be the song our nation sings. Our society would rather be left with the assurance of trying to fight the fight, than the regret of not trying at all. This battle is raging, and it is time to step up.

## References

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