



### **WHO: Suicide Prevention**

Hi! My name is Kyle Cota, and I will be your head chair for the upcoming MVHS conference. I am a sophomore here, and I'm in my second year of MUN. As far as school goes, I am an AP student much like my two older sisters, so it's all in the family. Outside of school, I'm a pitcher on the Mission Viejo baseball team and play hockey. In my free time, I enjoy playing guitar with my friends and working on cars. I am genuinely excited to be in charge of a committee and hope we can have as much fun as MUN will allow. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [mvhsmunwho@gmail.com](mailto:mvhsmunwho@gmail.com).

#### **I. Background**

Suicide has a heavy impact on community relations and social disruption. As mental illnesses and dire circumstances become more prominent within the global community, suicide prevention begins to climb in importance to the UN. With the close accessibility of self-inflicting harmful objects, suicide is a global phenomenon, accounting for 1.4% of all deaths worldwide. The World Health Organization estimates that more than 800,000 people die each year from suicide each year, around one death per 40 seconds. It was recorded to be the fifteenth leading cause of death worldwide in 2012, and is the third leading cause in death for teens. With suicide, teens and the elderly are at the most risk, along with people living with a mental disorder. Some of the main issues surrounding this are that the signs of possible suicide go unnoticed and the lack of treatment for mental disorders. This cause of death is highly associated with taboo and stigma, leading it to be heavily underreported. Only 60 countries have high enough quality data to estimate the number of suicides within their country. Of these 60, only 28 countries are reported to have a national strategy to suicide prevention, most of which are within the category of high-income countries.

#### **II. Past UN Involvement**

The UN has taken a considerable amount of action to promote suicide prevention globally. In May of 2013, the World Health Assembly passed the first-ever Mental Health Action of the World Health Organization in order to combat rising suicide rates. The plan called for all members of WHO to demonstrate commitment to public health by achieving goals set by the plan, suicide prevention being a key component. In addition, in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals was passed by the UN General Assembly. Within target 3.4, suicide rate is a proposed indicator, and prevention was a goal. WHO also sponsors the International Association for Suicide Prevention, which has created campaigns for increased awareness and reduction of stigma for suicide.

#### **III. Possible Solutions**

Possible solutions should encompass the stigmatism and taboo that are associated with suicide in various countries as well as lowering the overall rate of suicide. The lack of solid data received from lower income countries should also be addressed. Solutions should not be identical from those previously passed by the UN or the World Health Organization. Solutions could



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involve a variety of angles that range from prevention to intervention to post-attempt care. Countries may suggest their own national strategies as a solution to suicide rates.

#### IV. Country Bloc Positions

**Western:** In the Western world, many countries have adopted national plans to fight suicide rates. Many nations host awareness campaigns and keep close track on the number of suicides.

**African:** Currently, almost all African nations do not have national strategies to combat suicide rates, and oftentimes suicide is considered taboo.

**Asian:** Most asian countries do not have a strategy to combat suicide within their countries. This topic is considered taboo despite numerous countries such as Japan and Korea having double the rate of suicide than average.

**Latin:** Suicide rates in Latin America are lower than the average, however it is still a stigmatized taboo topic that most nations prefer not to discuss. Still some countries have adopted national strategies against suicide.

**Middle Eastern:** Suicide prevention in the Middle East has taken a turn for the worst with the rise of extremist groups such as ISIS and Al Qaeda. However, a few Middle Eastern countries have begun working on national strategies against suicide.

#### V. Guiding Questions

1. What can be done to lower overall suicide rates?
2. How can the UN fight the stigmatism and taboo associated with suicide in the lower-income countries?
3. What can be done to gather more complete data on suicide rates in lower income countries?
4. What national strategies has your nation adopted in order to combat suicide rates?

#### VI. Works Cited

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