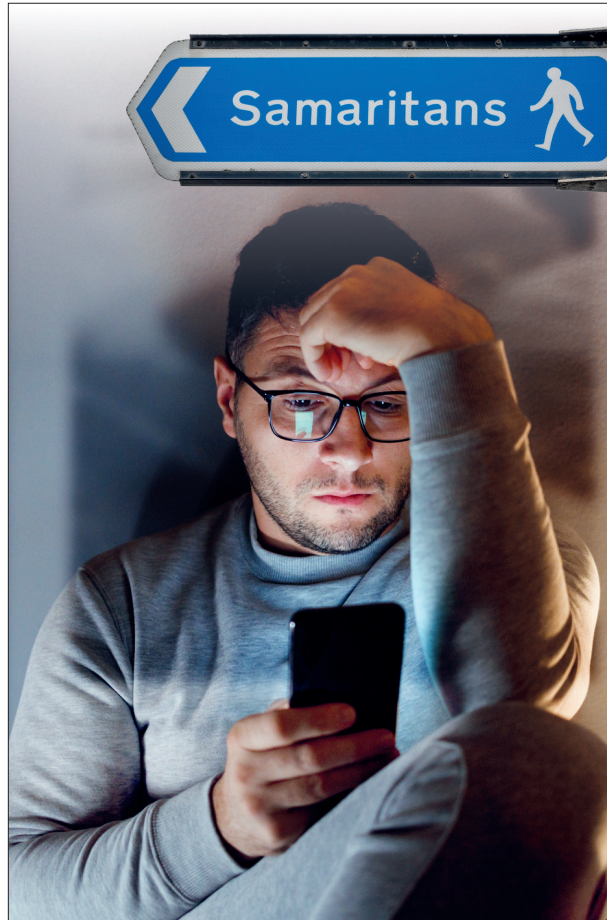


a good Samaritan

With the distraction of summer holidays, July can be mistaken for a month with little opportunity to raise awareness for various health causes. **Millie Browning** reports on two campaigns the pharmacy can still get involved in this month



In 2019, there were 5,691 registered deaths by suicide in England and Wales, according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS). This equates to roughly 18 suicides per day across the country, a figure that highlights how significant the issue is.

The ONS also emphasise that since the mid-1990s, male suicides have consistently accounted for almost three-quarters of all suicides in the UK, with suicide being the biggest killer of men under the age of 45.

Although not a religious organisation, the Samaritans were formed in 1953 by vicar Chad Varah. Chad had a passion for helping people, particularly those contemplating suicide and on 2 November 1953 answered the first call to a new helpline for anyone struggling, according to the organisation. "The service was just a man willing to listen, with a base and an emergency telephone," he said at the time.

Flash forward to today and the Samaritans now comprise of 20,000 volunteers with 201 branches across the UK and Ireland. Now, every six seconds a Samaritan responds to a call for help. The organisation has five key values which include:

1. Listening
2. Confidentiality
3. No judgement
4. People making their own decisions
5. Human contact.

Their overall vision is a simple one: to ensure that fewer people die by suicide. To achieve this, the Samaritans believe they have a role to play in four crucial areas.

1. Reducing the risk factors that make some people more likely to take their own lives
2. Ensuring that people who are at increased risk of suicide are supported

3. Making it less likely that people who do experience suicidal thoughts act on them
4. Reducing the likelihood that people will develop suicidal thoughts.

The Samaritans run many campaigns throughout the year, including:


- **Real People, Real Stories** – Men in rural areas are less likely to reach out for support if they're struggling and many say the stigma around mental health and not knowing who to turn to are two of the biggest barriers to seeking support. Through this campaign, the Samaritans work with the National Farming Union Mutual Charitable Trust and the Scottish Government to break down stigma and offer these men an opportunity to speak up
- **Small Talk Saves Lives** – The pandemic had a significant influence on people's confidence when it comes to small talk, according to a YouGov poll. In partnership with Network Rail, British Transport Police and the wider rail industry, the Samaritans launched this campaign to remind the public to trust their instincts if they feel someone may be at risk. "A little small talk and a simple question such as 'Hello, what's the time?' can be all it takes to interrupt someone's suicidal thoughts and help set them on the journey to recovery," says the organisation.

Samaritans Awareness Day: 24 July

24/7 is Samaritans Awareness Day. The date was chosen to emphasise the fact that volunteers are available around the clock, all day every day. On this date and throughout July, the organisation run a campaign entitled Talk to Us to "remind people that they are there for anyone who needs someone to listen".

Samaritans' branches across the UK and Ireland get involved and hold events to raise awareness of their services. Events include coffee mornings, bake sales and sponsored walks. If not already familiar, pharmacies can find their nearest Samaritans branch via: samaritans.org/ branches.

To help raise awareness, pharmacy teams can get involved by:

- Posting on social media with the hashtags #TalkToUs and #SamaritansAwarenessDay
- Use the social media assets provided by the Samaritans: samaritans.org/support-us/campaign/talk-to-us/toolkit
- Provide signposting materials for customers in store: samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/signposting. 

useful details

Colleagues or customers who are struggling can get in touch with the Samaritans via phone, email or post:

- For phone, the Samaritans free, one-to-one, 24-hour helpline number is: 116 123
- For email, get in touch with jo@samaritans.org – response time is usually under 24 hours
- For post, write to Freepost SAMARITANS LETTERS.

SAMARITANS



World Hepatitis Day: 28 July

Every 30 seconds a person dies from a hepatitis related illness. The issue is becoming more and more urgent, which is why the World Hepatitis Alliance (WHA) have chosen the theme "I can't wait" for World Hepatitis Day 2022.

This year's campaign will emphasise the need to accelerate the fight against viral hepatitis and amplify the voices of people affected calling for immediate action and the end of stigma associated with the condition.

"People living with hepatitis can't wait for life saving treatments. Expectant mothers can't wait for hepatitis screening and treatment. Decision makers can't wait and must act now to make hepatitis elimination a reality through political will and funding," says WHA.

The organisation has offered one-minute, 10-minute and longer actions as suggestions for how people can get involved.

These are available at: worldhepatitisday.org/get-involved and include the below:

One-minute actions

- Send a WHA graphic to your WhatsApp contacts
- Sign the WHA pledge to commit to hepatitis elimination
- Add a World Hepatitis Day branded frame to your Facebook profile.

10-minute actions

- Join the WHA virtual global relay by submitting a 30-second video explaining what the elimination of viral hepatitis means to you
- Create a poster to put up in the pharmacy
- Apply to light up a local landmark green in support of World Hepatitis Day.

Longer actions

- Hold an event or webinar to raise awareness
- Set up a meeting with your local politician
- Write a letter to your local politician.

For more information visit: worldhepatitisday.org.



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