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Press Release

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Men in 40-49 Age Group at Highest Risk of Suicide – Problems Faced Included Loneliness and Difficulty Coping with Everyday Stresses

In 2008, the suicide rate was the lowest for the past decade, at 8.76 per 100,000 residents. Despite this, there was still about one suicide a day. The past year saw a total of 364 confirmed suicides, with 232 male suicides and 132 female suicides.

Men in the 40-49 age group was found to be of highest risk, making up about 15% of total suicides in 2008. This is followed by men in their age group of 50-59, which made up about 12% of total suicides. Suicide among the males in the 40-49 age group and suicide among females in the 50-59 age group increased by 4% each as compared to the previous year.

Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) provides confidential 24-hour emotional support by trained volunteers to people in crisis, thinking of suicide or affected by suicide. For the recent review period from April 2008 to March 2009, SOS handled a total of 43,404 calls, out of which 33,499 calls were crisis calls made to SOS. Crisis calls handled increased by 8.4% as compared to the previous review period.

Male callers in the 40-49 and above 50 age groups expressed mainly social and psychological concerns such as feelings of loneliness as well as difficulties in coping with the stresses and challenges of everyday life. Female callers in the 50-59 age group often experienced loneliness or stress from relationships with other people such as family members, friends and colleagues.



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As part of the SOS Suicide Awareness Week from 7 to 13 September 2009 and in conjunction with the World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September, SOS is organising a series of events to increase the community's awareness of the issue of suicide. Events include a talk cum forum exclusively for those bereaved by a suicide death, suicide intervention workshops for professionals and a photography contest and exhibition on "Life's Caring Moments" for members of the public.

The "Life's Caring Moments" photography contest and exhibition aims to increase the community's awareness of the importance of resources such as strong social bonds which can help to promote resilience, moderate the impact of stress and reduce the inclination towards suicide. Through this event, we also hope to remind the community of how important it is to show care and empathy in the relationships we have and to the people around us.

Members of the public are invited to participate in the photography contest by sending in photographs that reflect empathy, understanding and care. Top three winners stand to win \$3,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 in cash prizes. Closing date for submission of photographs has been extended to 14 August 2009 and the contest form can be downloaded from <http://SamaritansOfSingapore.blogspot.com/>.

Winning photographs as well as selected entries will be exhibited at VivoCity during the Suicide Awareness Week from September 7 to 13, 2009. The exhibition will also feature a special category showcasing images taken by SPH's photographers on "Life's Caring Moments".
