

St. Tammany coroner urges vigilance after high-profile suicides

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One Tammany: North Shore News

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The recent high-profile suicide deaths of [celebrity chef and TV star Anthony Bourdain](#) and [fashion designer Kate Spade](#) could trigger a local ripple effect, [St. Tammany Parish Coroner](#) Charles Preston warned Monday (June 11), asking the public to be vigilant.

Preston - who had two brothers die of suicide - offered a message for anyone contemplating taking their own life: "Pick up the phone" to contact a crisis hotline.

In a news release, Preston noted actor Robin Williams' 2014 suicide resulted in a dramatic uptick in suicides and suicide attempts in St. Tammany within only two weeks.

"It may be hard to understand, but many who deal with depression, despair and suicidal impulses can find themselves emboldened by celebrity suicide deaths," Preston said. "While we always take mental health and suicides very seriously, now is a time for the public to be extra alert."

Warning signs could include a person talking about suicide or expressing a desire to die, sudden irritability, sleeping too much or too little, increased use or abuse of alcohol, an elevation of mood and many other behavioral changes, Preston said.

Suicide is said to be a permanent solution to a temporary problem, he said, but it is not a solution at all. "Though you may be feeling alone and disconnected, you're not. Every suicide leaves significant scars to many, many people - people you care about and don't want to hurt," Preston said.

If someone you know is suicidal and they are unwilling or unable to seek help, call the St. Tammany coroner's office at 985-781-1150 and speak to an investigator about the involuntary commitment process, the release said.

If you are in crisis or know someone in crisis, here are some other resources:

* Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255). It's a free, 24/7 confidential service that provides people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress, or those around them, with support, information and local resources.

* Text "START" to 741741, the Crisis Text Line.

* Call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or text a message to 838255. It connects veterans and service members in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat or text 24/7.

* Gay, lesbian and transgender youth can call the Trevor Project at 866-488-7386 anytime; from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Central time on Thursdays and Fridays, they can text "Trevor" to 202-304-1200 to start talking.

If you live in St. Tammany and have lost a friend to suicide, S.T.O.P.S holds grief groups twice a month.