

News

## Suicides increasing; deaths may be linked to recession

Monday, December 14, 2009

By Nick Carrabine

[NCarrabine@News-Herald.com](mailto:NCarrabine@News-Herald.com)

---

Jim Adams believes there is a direct correlation between the recent recession and an increase in area suicides reported since the beginning of 2008.

The executive director of the Geauga County Board of Mental Health and Recovery Services said emergency crisis calls to the organization are up 58 percent this year.

So far in 2009, there have been 21 suicides in Lake and Geauga counties, according to statistics from coroners' offices in both counties. But that number could rise as some deaths have not officially been ruled on yet, officials said.

In 2008, there were 13 suicides reported in Geauga County, which was seven more than 2007 and in Lake County, there were 32 suicides reported, up from 23 in 2007, according to the coroner's offices.

"I sincerely believe the economy is a factor," Adams said. "There is absolutely no question. More people are in foreclosure, more people are losing jobs and that creates anxiety and depression.

"I get the feeling it will get worse. We have no reason to believe there will be a drop (in suicides) until there are significant changes in the economy."

Connie Martin, manager of the Lake County Ohio Alcohol and Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Crisis Hotline, said men between 51 and 60 years old are more likely to commit suicide.

"Those are the men who are losing their jobs," she said. "Younger men are losing jobs too, but for the older guys, it seems harder for them to bounce back because of their age.

"Unfortunately, they don't reach out as much as the younger guys would and I think that is because they are used to taking care of their families and used to taking care of everything else and they don't know how to reach out."

Adams said the people he sees now are more distressed than in past years.

"When we see people now, these people are very emotionally fragile and many are already on the verge of suicide or have attempted it already," he said.

When it comes to suicides, depression is normally the biggest factor, Martin said.

Anyone can become depressed, she said.

"They can come from a terrifically happy home, but depression is an actual medical illness," she said.

"If it goes untreated, people can sink so low they don't see any other way out."

While suicide numbers were up in 2008, there normally isn't a solid explanation experts can give as to why the statistics look the way they do.

In 2004, there were 36 reported suicides in Lake County, which is the highest amount in the past 30 years but Martin said she has no explanation for the spike that year.

"There was no big dip in the economy, so there really is no explanation for what was going on then," she said.

---

URL: <http://www.news-herald.com/articles/2009/12/14/news/nh1797978.prt>

© 2009 news-herald.com, a **Journal Register** Property