



November 2016 PBS Michigan

Death Is Not the Answer, the two-hour documentary from 11-time Emmy Award winner Keith Famie, unearths the roots of depression and explores the reasons for suicidal tendencies. The film examines the tragic nature of suicide while conveying the message that death is *not* the answer. Featured are mental health professionals and physicians from the University of Michigan, Wayne State University, Stanford University, University of California Berkeley Florida state University, and the Henry Ford Health System.

We delve into personal stories of suicide survivors; Eric Hipple, retired Lions Quarterback, shares his experience losing his 15-year-old son to suicide years ago, and we learn about the mentality behind the act from a man who survived jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge as he takes us back to the site of his jump. Saline, Michigan mother Cathy Radovich shares the story of losing her son, a U of M athlete to suicide and how she has used the experience to be a positive influence.

Nationally-leading suicide researcher Dr. Thomas Joiner explores the scientific reasoning behind suicide and we also examine the nature of depression, focusing on two major types - clinical and bipolar. Dr. Melvin McNinnis of the Prechter Bipolar Research Program at the University of Michigan offers his expertise, and one woman talks openly about how her bipolar disorder has affected her and how she has adapted.

We also take a look at who is at risk for depression and suicide, with particular emphasis on the phenomenon of bullying and how social media can amplify its effects. Peter Yarrow of the 60s folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary, and founder of anti-bullying organization Operation Respect, offers his thoughts. We also step into the world of a 17-year-old girl from Howell, Michigan as she recounts her story of pain and hope through three suicide attempts, and how she now wants to help others who may find themselves on such a journey.

Our second half explores different groups that are often overlooked or not thought of when discussing depression and suicide. We open with a look at how a cancer diagnosis can be either a motivation to live, or a trigger for severe depression. We focus on the complex world of military veterans and first responders, to examine severe injuries, PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). We listen to four military amputees and a blind Special Forces Major talk about how life has changed for them and their families. These same veterans spend an afternoon talking with the Pinckney High School Cross Country Team.

Metro Detroit firefighters talk about the impact that traumatic situations has on them, and Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard brings his perspective to the table, explaining the effects of long-term stress and trauma on first responders. Detroit Chief of Police James Craig, a major advocate for mental health awareness in policing also offers his thoughts, and we spend a day with Sergeant Douglas Muston of the Detroit Mounted Police to learn more about the relationship between mental health, police work, and animals.

We examine the high rate of suicide among older men - isolation, poor physical health and old social standards leads us into a discussion of how to improve and maintain our own mental health. We explore mind-body health, eusociality, happiness, comedy, animal companionship, and music. As we wrap up our two-hour special, we will leave audiences with new perspectives, moving stories, and a sense of hope and empowerment.

STATE WIDE RELEASE AND NATIONAL PREMIERES

Death Is Not the Answer will premiere on DPTV on Friday, November 11th at 8:00 PM, preceded by a premiere open to the general public, media and mental health professionals at the Emagine Theatre in Royal Oak on Sunday, November 6th at 5:30 PM. This production is in association with Kevin's Song and KnowResolve, two 501(c)(3) organizations dedicated to mental health and suicide awareness. To learn more about this production visit www.deathisnottheanswer.com.