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Cumbrian mental health groups set to join forces to tackle our county's high suicide rates



Francesca Flynn

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Mental health experts from across Europe are gathering in Penrith today- to try and tackle Cumbria's above average suicide rate.

Janine's from Workington- her brother Craig took his life last year.

She now raises awareness in West Cumbria.

"There's a lack of knowledge around stress and anxiety and depressions around West Cumbria in particular.



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"It seems to be polarised to Carlisle and the South of the County, rather than in West Cumbria, where the suicide rates are actually higher- there should be more focus on these areas."

Richard Twaites is from Cumbria's mental health service in the NHS- First Step.

They were key in organising the conference today- and want groups across the county to work together.

"Within Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust a wealth of collaborative work has already been undertaken to identify risk factors and apply best practice in order to help prevent as many suicides as possible.

"Prevention and early intervention is key and by becoming aware of cutting edge research from experts from across Europe, we can take positive steps forward to address suicide in our region."

Speaking ahead of the conference, Elaine Readhead, Mental Health programme manager at the AHSN NENC, said: "Circumstances surrounding suicide are often complex and there isn't just one risk or attributable factor. This is why it is seen locally as a priority for focused action.

"It's pleasing to see so many people signing up to attend the suicide prevention conference and we hope we can get as many healthcare professionals as possible talking about the key issues that surround this area of mental health.

"By finding solutions and new ways of working that we can then roll out both regionally and then nationally we can work towards meeting the mental health needs of the population."

Cumbrian mental health groups are meeting today to work on tackling our county's suicide problem- as one Cumbrian takes their life every week.

"In Cumbria we have suicide rates higher than national average so it is vitally important that we look at ways in which the healthcare community and the wider community can work together to reduce this."



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