

Apparent suicide in Fairhaven causes concern around mental health

Late Monday morning there were reports of an apparent suicide at Fort Phoenix in Fairhaven. With no word from officials, we headed down to the area for confirmation and unfortunately came upon a scene of yellow duct tape, police officials, a hazmat crew, and several concerned citizens.

Individuals on the scene stated it was a man in his 20's that suffered a self inflicted gunshot wound on the rocks near the cannon display at the park.

This tragedy has shined light on an issue that many in the area feel needs more attention; The stigma around mental health issues for men in America.



According to suicide data from the CDC, "The suicide rate

among males in 2021 was approximately four times higher than the rate among females. Males make up 50% of the population but nearly 80% of suicides.”

In a scientific article titled “Males and Mental Health Stigma” by Benita N. Chatmon, PhD, MSN, RN, CNE, she connects this awful phenomenon to masculine Norms in our culture.

“American men are subjected to a culture where the standards of masculinity are literally killing them. One of the factors that contributes to the underuse of seeking professional help is masculinity norms.”

Among the outpouring condolences on social media, many men and woman were also specifically vocal about normalizing men speaking openly about anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts.

A New Bedford man shared on Facebook,

“Mental health for men needs to be talked about more. We go through so much and hold it all in, put on our masks with smiles and laughter when in reality we are tired inside drained or hurting and nobody realizes. Im not sure what the situation is with this guy but he was going through something and probably had no way to express it, lets do better for mens mental health.”

There were many other comments, posts, and shares with this same undertone. So the question is, what can we do in our community to stop this from happening? I am not a doctor or psychologist so I am not qualified to speak on a solution, but I am a man and feel sparking a public conversation is a good place to start.

There’s help out there if you’re in crisis: Suicide Prevention Crisis Hotlines

A list of mental health facilities in the South Coast can be

found here.