



embrace



EMBRACE'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER • ISSUE NO. 7 • AUGUST - DECEMBER 2019

## THE EMBRACE LIFELINE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Since October 17, 2019 Lebanon has been witnessing difficult times and unstable social and economic conditions. In light of these circumstances, and in the midst of the protests Lebanon has been witnessing, **the Embrace Lifeline was accompanying the Lebanese through their crises and for two weeks there was a spike in the number of calls after the media reported consecutive cases of death to suicide.** The country was collectively talking about suicide and sharing the number 1564 encouraging people to reach out for help.

For two weeks after December 4th, we were receiving **over 150 calls a day**, compared to the previous average of 7 calls a day. To continue to support all callers within Lebanon we have added an additional phone to our operations giving a total of 3 calls at a time. Additionally, we are planning on extending our hours to 5:30 AM by the beginning of 2020 and gradually reach 24 hours of operations by mid 2020.

While these operations help the Embrace Lifeline support all callers, they do add heavy costs. We are reaching out to international donors, but we do need community support in these difficult times.

Additionally, to increase awareness about the availability of the Embrace Lifeline to all citizens, **PROMOMEDIA sponsored Embrace to run a billboard campaign** with the message, "During these difficult times, we are here to listen."



If you are interested in supporting the Embrace Lifeline Call our donation line on 81/029399



## GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING SUICIDE IN THE MEDIA

In the early weeks of December, Lebanon's media outlets heavily focused on suicide reporting. While it is important to talk about suicide, the way the media was reporting suicide was not respecting the guidelines set by the World Health Organization and adapted by the Ministry of Public Health's National Mental Health Program.

The media has an important role at a national level that may impact the risk of suicide among vulnerable audiences. As Embrace has become the major source of reference for more information on the topic, Embrace's team highlighted in all its appearances and discussions of mental health the appropriate guidelines to talk about suicide in the media to raise the needed awareness and avoid the phenomena of suicide contagion and respect the families who have lost loved ones to suicide.

### Guideline Reminders:

-  **Fact Check before posting any news about suicide.**
-  **Don't describe or release images of the method of suicide. Don't like or share such photos, videos or links.**
-  **Don't speculate about the causes of suicide even if information was provided by the family. Suicide is complex and multi-factorial. Ask specialists, use this chance to educate yourself and others.**
-  **Don't assume suicide is an act of weakness or lack of faith. 90% of suicides are related to a treatable mental illness.**

## SELF CARE IN TIMES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

With the recent events taking place in the country, Embrace raised awareness on the importance of self-care on its social media platforms as well as through news articles in collaboration with Annahar Newspaper. The difficult times we are experiencing as a nation can have a strong impact on our mental well-being. Therefore, practicing self-care remains important and can be simple using these tips:

-  **Be informed, know more**
-  **Take a digital break, news will not change significantly within a matter of hours**
-  **Get enough sleep - lack of sleep will affect your mood**
-  **Eat regular meals - keeping a routine is important in uncertain times**
-  **Check in with family and friends, they may need your support, and vice versa**
-  **Make use of your own personal skills to contribute where you feel is important**
-  **Engage in small acts of kindness**
-  **Remember that everything you do matters**



## EMBRACE'S AWARENESS AND OUTREACH EFFORTS IN THE LAST QUARTER

### #TalkingSavesLives- the National Campaign for World Mental Health Day

On October 10, 2019 Embrace launched another national campaign under the title #TalkingSavesLives, this time making an effort to personally reach as many people as possible across different areas of Lebanon.

The campaign was an outreach initiative launched by Embrace's devoted and passionate volunteers. The team wrote 10,452 positive messages in English, Arabic, French and Armenian with the aim of engaging at least 10,452 people; with a resemblance to our country's geographic area. The cards were all hand written and personally distributed by the team during the night of October 9, 2019 so people wake up the morning of October 10th to find these cards on their cars.

The team targeted areas across Lebanon including Tripoli, Batroun, Jbeil, Jounieh, Zouk Mosbeh, Zouk Mikayel, Kaslik, Jal el Dib, Zalka, Jdeideh, Burj Hammoud, Roumieh, Broumana, Shahhar, Beit Mery, Furn el Chebek, Badaro, Ashrafieh, Mar Mkhael, Gemmayze, Ain el Mreisseh, Hamra, Raouche, Verdun, Mar Elias, Mazraa, Basta, Dahiyeh, Saida, Sour.

The campaign had a nation-wide impact and was covered on the front-page of the print version of Annahar newspaper, billboard coverage of the front page across Lebanon on PROMOMEDIA billboards, and hundreds of people sharing their cards on social media tagging Embrace and several people calling us to express their gratitude. News reporters also reached out to us to talk about the campaign and its success.

The campaign was also implemented within private spaces such as Diwan El Hachem Restaurant- Zalka, Beirut Digital District- Bechara El Khoury, and upon their request with Café Hamra- Hamra and Zeitouna Bay branches, and Cozmo Café- Zaitouna Bay.



Have an awareness or outreach initiative you want to implement? It could be a talk, a working session, participation in an event or more!

Contact us on [info@embracelebanon.org](mailto:info@embracelebanon.org), or call +961 1 346226



## PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL CONFERENCES



On the occasion of World Mental Health Day and as part of the 24th Annual Congress of the St George's Hospital University Medical Center, Embrace was invited to present its work and the National Lifeline (1564) in the conference:

### **Children and Adolescents' Harmful Behaviors: Challenges and Safety Integrating Evidence-Based Treatments.**

The conference, which was in collaboration with McLean Hospital – Harvard, the Lebanese Psychological Association and the Lebanese

Psychiatric Society, discussed the latest evidence-based treatments for harmful behaviors in children, adolescents and young adults. Embrace presented data from the Embrace Lifeline (1564), the national emotional support and suicide prevention helpline in Lebanon on its latest updates with regards to phone calls received from Lebanese youth and adolescents experiencing emotional distress and/or suicidal thoughts.

## EMBRACE'S INTERNATIONAL LOBBYING EFFORTS IN THE LAST QUARTER



### **Challenges and Chances for Suicide Prevention in the Middle East- Identifying Ways Forward Working Exchange in Berlin**

Embrace was invited to Berlin by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) for the working exchange "Challenges and Chances for Suicide Prevention in the Middle East - Identifying Ways Forward".

Embrace's Executive Director, Lea Zeinoun and Embrace's Research Assistant, Serene Yordi attended the working exchange where they presented the work of the National Mental Health Program at the Ministry of Public Health as well as the work of the Embrace Lifeline (1564). The knowledge shared by the Embrace team highlighted Lebanon's advanced work in the field of mental health compared to neighboring Arab Countries and set a standard of practice for many countries to work towards implementing.

### **Suicide and Self Injury Facebook meeting in New York**

Embrace's Executive Director, Lea Zeinoun, was invited to be part of Facebook's- In Person- Suicide and Self Injury (SSI) meeting in New York. Embrace has been a part of the SSI committee for 4 months, participating in online discussions of suicide and self- injury topics as relevant on the Facebook platform. This meeting brought together experts from Thailand, the UK, Finland, Brazil, India, the US and more. The aim of the meeting was to gather insights and best practice towards the development of a policy on suicide and self- injury cases as received or detected by Facebook from its users.

### **Religion and Medical Ethics Conference, Italy**

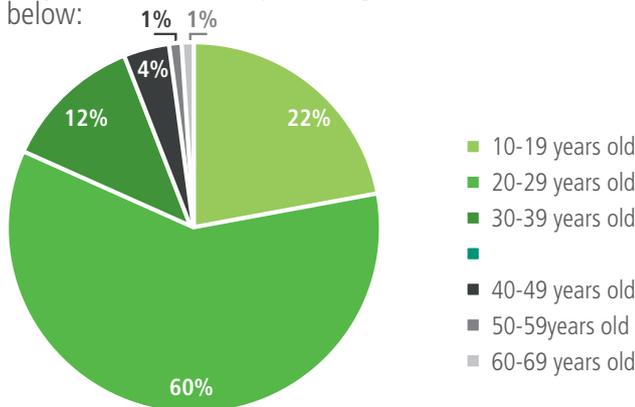
Embrace was invited to participate in the Religion and Medical Ethics Conference held in Rome in December 2019, which was organized by World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), an initiative of Qatar Foundation and the Pontifical Academy for Life (PAL) in Rome. This special symposium examines the role that religion plays in providing holistic care in the context of medical ethics and palliative care. Embrace's Vice President, Mia Atoui, moderated a panel on suicide in the elderly population and presented the work of the Embrace Lifeline to an international community of mental health experts.



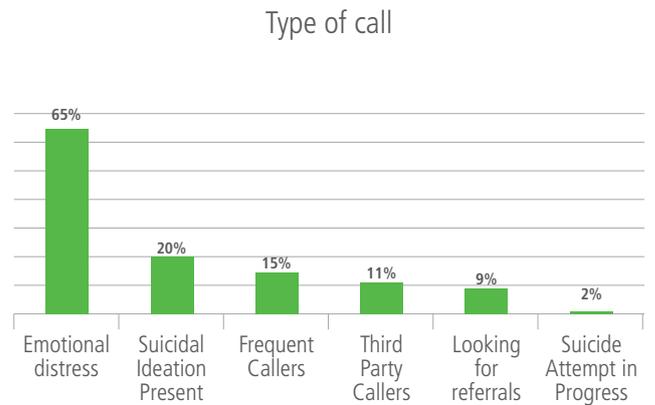
## EMBRACE LIFELINE STATISTICS

From August to November 2020, the Embrace Lifeline received **788 calls** from people in emotional distress and/or thinking about suicide.

The average age of callers in the last 4 months has been 24 years old, with the percentage distribution as shown below:



The most common type of call received in the past 4 months has been from individuals in emotional distress, with the details drawn out below:



## EMBRACE EVENTS

### Lebanese International Film Festival



The Lebanese Independent Film Festival (LIFF) has partnered with Embrace to launch the LIFF 2019 Festival edition. **The theme this year was centered on mental health.** This was an exciting opportunity for us to raise awareness on mental health and familiarize people with Embrace. The festival kicked off with an opening ceremony on September 11, and a closing ceremony on September 15, which included local and international jury members presenting awards and other surprises to the film winners. This year the LIFF received over 900 submissions from over 87 countries. The programming included selected films from the Toronto International Film Festival, the International Film Festival of Rotterdam, the Venice Film Festival, Cannes Film Festival, VISIONS du REEL, Etas Generaux du Film Documentaires and more that showcase diverse aspects of mental health and illness.

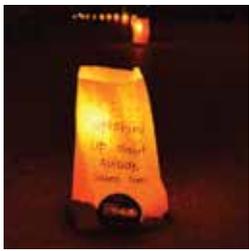




## EMBRACE EVENTS

### Into the Dawn Walk on September 8th 2019

On the occasion of World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10), Embrace held its annual "Into the Dawn" walk on Sunday September 8th 2019 as a suicide memorial walk. This advocacy initiative is intended to foster an environment of support for those affected by suicide. Every year, the walk aims to promote a peaceful and calm vibe, and guides participants through an experience where they are invited to reflect upon suicide within our community. The whole walk is 1km towards Raouche Rock with a memorial wall at the end to encourage people to leave positive messages and personal stories as keepsakes.



### Embrace Sponsors in 2019

#### Embrace Partners



#### Embrace Supporters



Connect to our social media platforms to stay informed with our events and updates.