

Introduction

The alarming suicide rate of veterinarians is an unexpected wake-up call. We need to act. With so much in common, our professions can learn from one another, and we suggest ten strategies to address “unwellness”:

Source: <http://www.psychiatrictimes.com/couch-crisis/psychiatrist-veterinarian-and-emergency-physician-resolve-improve-mental-health/page/0/2>

Steps

1. Label our high rates of suicide, mental disorders, burnout, and xenophobia a national mental health care crisis and find the best ways to communicate this to the public and politicians.
2. Normalize self-disclosure of our own emotional problems; and convey as much compassion, validation, and mercy to one another as we do to our patients.
3. Expand psychiatry beyond integrated medicine into integrated veterinary medicine.
4. Consider the use of safe, accurate, and effective screening tools for suicidality, depression, trauma, burnout, racism, and resilience.
5. Help develop research-based interventions for conditions that may be less severe than DSM disorders.
6. Develop psychologically engaging communities via prevention, treatments, maintenance, self-actualization, community actualization, and disaster planning.
7. Include veterinary medicine with all the medical specialties in the National Academy of Medicine coalition that is working on wellness and burnout and, in turn, have psychiatry included in joint endeavors like the One Health Initiative, which is devoted to the well-being of people, animals, plants, and the environment.
8. Learn from emergency medicine that these problems will not be solved quickly but need an ongoing commitment.
9. Pull together conferences, books, small retreats, and related projects that include all healing professions and physician specialties, mental health care professionals, nurses, dentists, veterinarians, and other allied health caregivers.
10. Be active politically to advocate for leadership that embraces the mental health of mankind as its business.



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