



In its third year of operation, Embrace continues to make a significant impact on mental health care and suicide prevention in Lebanon. Along various mental health awareness initiatives, Embrace has been working on its biggest project to date and that is the establishment of the first National Suicide Prevention Helpline in Lebanon and the region.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HELPLINE HIGHLIGHTS

Embrace Fund's National Suicide Prevention Helpline (NSPH) has entered the final stage of development before its launching in the second quarter of 2017.

The National Suicide Prevention Helpline is a specialized telephone service that is envisioned to provide services including suicide risk assessment, collaborative intervention in life threatening suicidal emergencies, and referrals to community resources and treatment programs.

Embrace is currently finalizing the set-up of the call center for the helpline. The call center will be run by volunteer helpline operators, a clinical supervisor, a center manager, and an outreach officer. It will be equipped with state-of-the-art technology for receiving, handling, and managing calls. The call center's organization will facilitate intercommunication between staff. It will also be run in close collaboration and continuous communication with the Internal Security Forces in addition to various treatment centers during times of crisis.

In the first year of operation, the helpline will operate from 12:00 pm until 2:00 am.

The milestones accomplished in the past year towards the establishment of the NSPH are outlined below. Such an accomplishment would not have been possible without the help of our donors and partners.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HELPLINE HIGHLIGHTS

- National Suicide Prevention Helpline
- NSPH Workshop

EMBRACE IN THE NEWS What We've Been Up To

- Third Annual "Into the Dawn" Walk
- #Embrace the MYUSIC
- Embrace at Blom Bank Beirut Marathon 2016
- LOVE: Laugh on Valentine's Eve

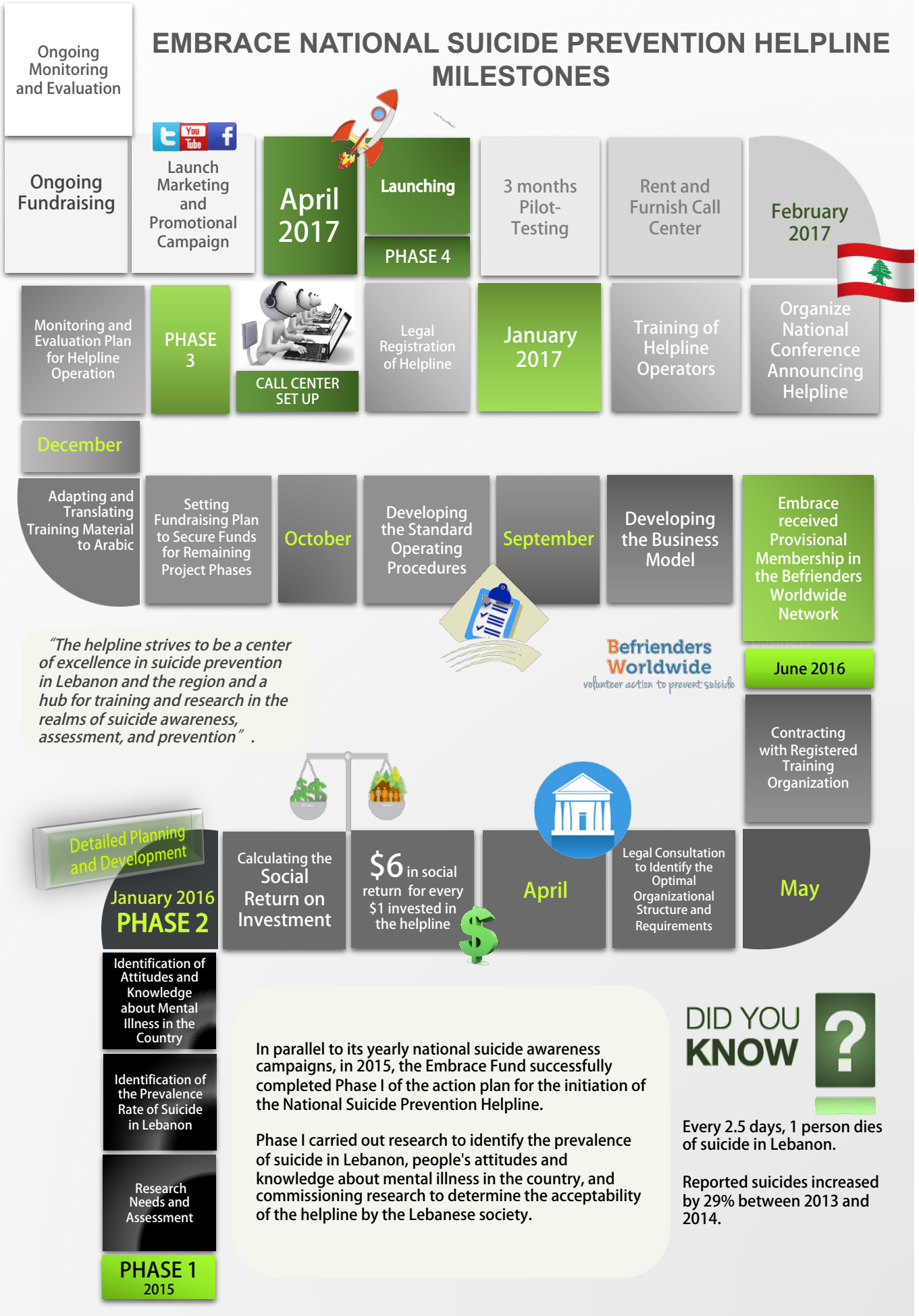
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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EMBRACE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HELPLINE MILESTONES



NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HELPLINE OVERVIEW

Philosophy

Following Embrace Fund's belief in the primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention of suicide, **the helpline service is meant to provide access to people in need and support them during times of crisis.**

We believe that those suffering from suicide should not be neglected nor abandoned.

As a result, the helpline serves as a support system, a referral starting point, and as a hub for collaborative interventions in case of suicidal crises.

The helpline adopts the duty to intervene to the best of its ability to prevent suicide from occurring in line with Article 567 of the Lebanese Penal Code.

Mission

In parallel with Embrace Fund's mission, **the helpline aims to ensure the respect and empowerment of individuals suffering from suicide, along with their ability to access appropriate care.** The helpline strives to **increase awareness about suicide** in Lebanon, to **support individuals suffering from suicide** and those bereaved by suicide, while also **creating a referral network of community resources** for intervention and treatment. The helpline seeks to achieve its mission **by engaging all stakeholders**, in collaboration with the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, and **creating alliances with community leaders**, emergency service providers, and policymakers.

The aforementioned leadership of such a project is only made possible through financial assistance received from stakeholders, and it is mainly based on various fundraising efforts.

Vision

The helpline strives to be a center of excellence in suicide prevention in Lebanon and the region. It also aims to become a hub for training and research in the realms of suicide awareness, assessment, and prevention.

NSPH WORKSHOP

In September 2016, the Embrace Fund held a weeklong workshop with an international expert on suicide prevention helplines, Dr. Brian Mishara. Dr. Mishara serves as the Director of the Center for Research and Intervention on Suicide and Euthanasia and Professor at the Psychology Department of Université du Québec à Montréal. Dr. Mishara brought in his expertise in setting up suicide prevention helplines across the globe. In Lebanon, he assisted the Embrace Fund in successfully establishing the first National Suicide Prevention Helpline in the region.

In consultation with Dr. Mishara throughout the weeklong workshop, the Embrace Fund finalized the standard operating procedures and all structural and operational frameworks for the helpline. Recruitment and training procedures of helpline volunteers were explored. Dr. Mishara will collaborate with the Embrace Fund and serve as a trainer of trainers and volunteers in February 2017.

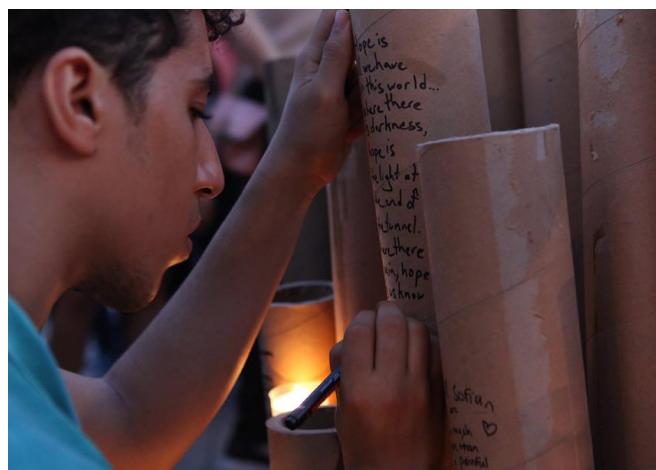


WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



Third Annual "Into the Dawn" Walk

On September 10, 2016, coinciding with the World Suicide Prevention Day, Embrace launched for the third year in a row, the "Into the Dawn" suicide memorial walk. "Into the Dawn" is an annual suicide memorial walk and an advocacy initiative launched by Embrace intended to provide a community support environment for those who have been affected by suicide. The walk aims to remember those who have been lost to suicide and acknowledge the pain of those left behind. More than 300 people woke up at 5 am to support this cause. Exceeding the numbers from previous years, the walk witnessed more individuals who joined in to embrace community members who have previously experienced suicide and who are driven to support this cause.

Amongst the people who joined were individuals who have themselves suffered mental illness or suicidal thoughts or even attempted suicide in the past. Families and friends who have lost someone to suicide, activists and members of the community who are affiliated with this cause; mental health professionals were also active participants. The walk ended with a candle-inspired memorial wall set up in front of the Raouche Rock where participants gathered to place photos, keepsakes, and/or names of those who were lost to suicide.



#Embrace the MYUsic

On July 26, 2016, Embrace held its summer fundraising event on the roof of MYU. Embrace's supporters danced the night away with three of Lebanon's amazing and talented artists and their bands, Joy Fayad, Nour Nimri, and Ralph Asfour who dedicated their time and effort to support Embrace's cause. All the event's proceeds were earmarked to support the first ever National Suicide Prevention Helpline  



LOVE: Laugh on Valentine's Eve

On the eve of February 12, 2016, Embrace held L.O.V.E, Laugh on Valentine's Eve, Stand-Up Comedy Show at Théâtre Béryte Université Saint-Joseph (USJ). This hilarious fundraising standup comedy, hosted by William Nasr, featured a lineup of talented comedians: Jad Bou Karam, a.k.a. OH MY JAD, Tony Dagher, and Elias Ghossoub. All the proceeds were raised to help support patient care and establish the National Suicide Prevention Helpline in Lebanon.



Embrace at Blom Bank Beirut Marathon 2016

For the fourth year in a row, Embrace joined the Blom Bank Beirut Marathon. Embrace fund's supporters are growing by the year. This year, the talented Lebanese actress, Rita Hayek supported Embrace's mission by participating in the 7K fun race to raise mental health awareness. Rita is passionate about the cause of mental health and believes it to be as important as one's physical health. She has chosen this year to support Embrace's project of establishing the first suicide prevention hotline in Lebanon.

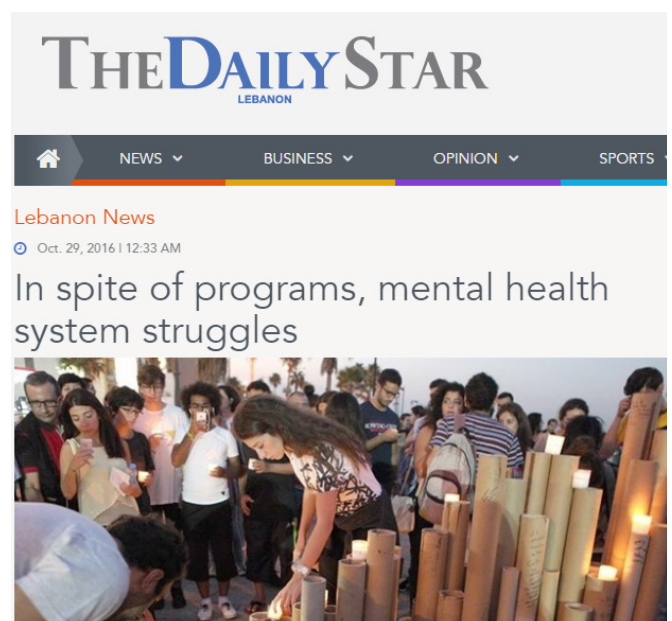


Embrace in the Spotlight

The Embrace Fund and its project to establish the first National Suicide Prevention Helpline in the region has been highlighted in the news:

"...In response to these [stigma associated with mental illness, availability and accessibility of mental health services] issues, NGOs, international organizations like the WHO, as well as the Lebanese government have attempted to address these problems in various ways.

A notable example of this is the work done by the Embrace Fund. Founded in 2013, the fund focuses both on educational campaigns – including national awareness campaigns and a planned suicide hotline – and subsidizing treatment for low-income patients." – The Daily Star, October 29th, 2016.



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تأخذ ظاهرة الانتحار منحى تصاعديا في لبنان، إذ تسجل، كل يومين ونصف اليوم، حالة انتحار جديدة بحسب الإحصاءات، وكل 5 ساعات تسجل محاولة انتحار، وتشير التقديرات إلى زيادة نسبة الانتحار فم

INTERNS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Nada El Jundi and Zahraa Al Sadr joined Embrace as interns of the psychology program at the Lebanese American University (LAU). They are both senior undergraduate students in psychology. Their internship experience comes as part of the Psychology in the Community course offered at the university.

Nada El Jundi

Q: What are your interests?

A: I'm mainly interested in research, particularly in the fields of neuropsychology and cognitive neuroscience.

Q: Why did you decide to join Embrace?

A: I joined Embrace as part of my "Psychology in the Community" course internship requirement. However, I specifically chose Embrace because I am passionate about mental health awareness and support, which portray Embrace's mission.

Q: What have you been working on at Embrace?

A: I've been assisting with various research activities, including but not limited to literature reviews, proposal writing, IRB applications, writing consent forms, identifying assessment tools, and composing semi-structured interviews. As for non-research-related activities, I've searched for funders, designed an infographic for social media, and prepared a Power Point presentation about self-care for practitioners.

Q: What is a key message that you would like to spread?

A: Mental illness is not a weakness.



Zahraa Al Sadr

Q: What are your interests?

A: My main interest in life is psychology. I am very lucky that my academic life revolves around something I really love and enjoy. However, in my free time, I enjoy reading books and watching movies.

Q: Why did you decide to join Embrace?

A: I decided to join Embrace because of its great reputation among the psychology community in Lebanon. Their great projects and continuous work for mental health awareness is something I always admired.

Q: What have you been working on at Embrace?

A: To responsibly represent suicide, I welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the workshop about development process for media figures in Lebanon. I enthusiastically collected current media reports on the topic and made an intensive search on mental illness, suicide, and guidelines for responsible media reporting of suicide. I was finally able to create a Power Point presentation and handouts for the workshop. In addition, I prepared some social media posts for Embrace's Facebook page.

Q: What is a key message that you would like to spread?

A: The key message that I would like to spread is that when choosing an internship site, try to choose one place that shares your vision. I consider myself very lucky to find my vision at Embrace. Joining Embrace, I had the chance to help and support individuals with mental illness, raise awareness, and dispel myths and misconceptions that surrounds mental illness.



DEPRESSION

In this issue, we are highlighting depression in our "Get to Know a Mental Disorder" series:

What is depression?

- Depression is a mood disorder.
- We all experience sadness from time to time, especially when we are passing through difficult circumstances. Depression, however, is more intense and long-lasting than ordinary sadness.
- Depression often interferes with a person's daily activities.
- Depression is one of the most common psychiatric illnesses. It can affect anyone.
- Women are almost twice as likely as men to suffer from depression.

What causes depression?

There is no single cause for depression.

- Depression might be caused by a dysfunction in the brain chemicals.
- Heredity might play a role as well. Family members are at a higher risk to develop the disorder than others.
- Environmental factors also put the person at a higher risk.

What are the most common symptoms of depression?

At least 5 of the following symptoms should be present for a minimum of two weeks. For an individual to be diagnosed with depression, his/ her symptoms usually cause significant impairment.

- Depressed mood during most of the day
- Diminished interest or pleasure in almost all activities
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Impaired concentration, inability to take decisions
- Decreased or increased sleep
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- A sense of restlessness
- Significant weight loss or gain

To know more about depression and the treatments available, please visit our Mental Health Resources page at: <https://www.embracefund.org/mental-health-resource/depression>

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Embrace continues to work towards its mission in Lebanon and cater to the financial needs of patients by providing assistance to underprivileged individuals who are unable to cover the costs of treatment.

Embrace relies on personal donations in order to continue its mission. No matter how little each donation is, it is a step towards saving a life.

To support Embrace's initiatives, donate:

Online

Donate a gift to Embrace Fund

https://secure.www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/AVB/onlinegiving/showGivingForm.jsp?form_id=186445&preview=1

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Account Name: American University of Beirut

Donation Account Number: 0-600224-115

IBAN: LB16 0115 0000 0000 0006 0022 4115

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