



## Hope: The Key to Suicide Prevention

Alphonsus Obayuwana, MD, spent 30 years studying human hope leading to his thesis, *Unifying Theory of Hope, Peace and Life*. Dr. Obayuwana acknowledges that human life is full of struggles and challenges, and very unpredictable. Every person is burdened by uncertainties, worries, and anxieties, which collectively cause stress. As a result, personal peace of mind eludes many people, with some succumbing to depression and

even suicide because of unfulfilled needs and aspirations. Only those who have hope can cope well in the face of personal crises.

### ***Stress Stems from Five Domains***

- Self and self-esteem
- Family and friends
- Food and shelter
- Knowledge and information
- Spirituality

### ***Sources of Hope***

- A sense of personal wellness and relevancy, or self-esteem.
- The cooperation and recognition, approval or empathy of others.
- A reassuring sense of material sufficiency or a relative degree of economic contentment.
- Information, education and knowledge about self, work and immediate plight.
- A strong religious belief in an even-handed and all-powerful God.

Dr. Obayuwana found scientific proof that these five areas of essential human needs influence human hope. Individually and collectively, these serve as the most potent antidote to the stressors and uncertainties of life. When one or more of these is severely lacking, life can become meaningless, unfulfilling or so unbearable it ends by suicide. Therefore, Dr. Obayuwana concludes, hope is the answer to the suicide epidemic in our communities.

### ***What we can do***

- Build hope by promoting individual self-esteem.
- Provide support and acceptance to one another.
- Emphasize the difference between needs and wants.
- Share knowledge and information unselfishly.
- Subscribe to faith-based beliefs in a loving God in words and in action at every opportunity.

### ***Resources***

National Suicide prevention Lifeline 1.800.273.8255

National Institute of Mental Health <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>

The Sojourner's Truth <http://www.thetruthtoledo.com/story/2010/100610/suicide.htm>

For more information contact Marsha Rivas, Equal Access Ministries  
Diocese of Toledo 419-244-6711 [mrivas@toledodiocese.org](mailto:mrivas@toledodiocese.org)

