

Man on the roof — 3rd time in two years

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headquarters. But police wouldn't go into more detail because the matter is too sensitive, said spokesman Sgt. Troy Dangerfield. "We can't put a cost on it at this time because he's a victim in crisis," Dangerfield said.

The man was taken to Psychiatric Emergency Services at S.F. General Hospital for evaluation.

Eve Meyer, executive director of San Francisco Suicide Prevention, couldn't say what was going on in this case because she didn't know the man on the roof. But she knows about tendencies.

"When people are suicidal they have tremendous pain," she said. "It's not visible — no blood, no bandages. But sometimes you can see it in their face."

Subconsciously, people back off from the suicidal, isolating them even more.

"They (suicidals) ask themselves why they should continue with the pain, and whether it can ever get better. People try to kill their bodies to kill the pain. At the same time they realize how final death is, and they are ambivalent.

"So they leave the decision to the universe. They drop hints to friends. If people are interested in helping with their pain, then they can choose that."

Suicides are planned or impulsive, she said.

"The planned is in the minority and difficult to stop. Impulsive is the majority. They find something and

dash for it, like the Golden Gate Bridge or a building top."

Giving them hope can save them, Meyer said.

"People think (the impulsive types) are just trying to attract attention, or they're being a nuisance. It has nothing to do with being nuisance but being in pain and someone giving you an answer about whether to live or die."

The emotional pain builds like pain does for someone holding a heavy telephone book out to their side with one hand. It's nothing in the beginning but unbearable in a half hour.

"A problem in our culture is that we think it only happens to inferior or weak or damaged people. And it's not true. It happens to anyone who has pain that can't be seen, and it can happen to anyone," Meyer said.

One sunny morning later in the month, two men outside Boeddeker Park remembered Sept. 3 and seeing the man on the roof that day.

"Oh, yeah, there were 50 to 60 people here," said Leophia Smith, an older man. "Made me late for a doctor's appointment."

"Made it so I couldn't drink here," said his younger friend with a pout.

Smith said some of the people in the park were yelling for the man to jump. But he didn't feel that way.

"He messed up my day," Smith said, "but I'm glad he didn't jump."

"Where's he now?" the friend asked.

"Oh, he went to the crazy house." ■

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PROP B WILL DOUBLE CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE COSTS

Prop B will double health care costs for thousands of children, spouses and domestic partners of San Francisco School, Community College, Superior Court and City workers—regardless of their ability to pay.

A SINGLE PARENT WILL PAY UP TO \$5,600 MORE PER YEAR

The real impact of Prop B on working families is staggering. Under Prop B, a single mother with one dependent could be forced to pay up to \$5,600 more per year for health care—in addition to the \$8,154 she already pays. Many other employees will see their costs more than double.

A CUSTODIAN WILL PAY AS MUCH AS THE TOP BRASS

Prop B forces the custodian making only \$40,000 per year to pay the same hike in health insurance premiums as the top brass, who could be making three times as much. Many of these workers are already struggling to afford health care, and this literally takes food off their table.

COULD COST SAN FRANCISCO \$100 MILLION IN FEDERAL HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Prop B was so poorly written, the Director of the San Francisco Health Care Service System has written it could make the City ineligible for more than \$23 million in federal funding for health care next year and up to \$100 million over the next four years.

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United Educators of San Francisco
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