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Getting help early key to lowering suicide number

 PUBLISHED OCT 5, 2018, 5:00 AM SGT



Many may not agree with Mr Leo Hee Khian's arguments to keep Section 309 of the Penal Code for its educative and preventive role in deterring and reducing suicides in Singapore ([Why criminalising suicide is the right way to go](#); Oct 1).

There is also the worrying statistic of record-high elderly suicides.

It has been reported that the number of seniors aged 60 and above who took their own lives peaked at 129 last year, the highest since suicide tracking started in 1991. Seniors made up 36 per cent of the 361 suicides reported last year, compared with 29 per cent of the 429 suicides the year before.



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If the struggles of the elderly are not treated early enough, they may lack the mental capacity to make a rational decision. With appropriate treatment and support from family, friends and colleagues, they could live a productive life.

Therefore, I agree with the Penal Code review committee's approach that "treatment, rather than prosecution" is the appropriate response towards people who attempt suicide.

There are a number of family service centres, voluntary welfare organisations and mental health organisations that have programmes and services to help people with emotional issues, and their caregivers.

Let's be non-judgmental and help to shape Singapore to be a caring and inclusive society by encouraging our loved ones and friends to seek early help and updating them on the resources available.

Porsche Poh (Ms)