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## September 2016 Newsletter FLORIDA SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

*A statewide, grassroots organization  
of survivors, crisis centers, & interested citizens*

### WHAT DID SHE SAY?

*"I agreed to continue to serve as Region 10 Director as I think I can effectively contribute to assisting folks at risk who reach out, connecting individuals to sources of help and support." Rene Barrett, FSPC Region 10 Director*

### NEWSWORTHY

**9-10-16**  
NATIONAL SUICIDE  
PREVENTION DAY



**TAKE 5**  
TO SAVE LIVES  
Take5ToSaveLives.org

**September 10, 2016 is World Suicide Prevention Day** and FSPC is asking everyone to Take 5 to Save Lives! Take5ToSaveLives is a public awareness campaign started and run by the National Council for Suicide Prevention to increase participation in World Suicide Prevention Day. By giving people the tools necessary to help save more lives, we hope to end the tragedy of suicide. What does it mean to Take 5 to Save Lives? Check out [www.take5tosavelives.org](http://www.take5tosavelives.org) to learn 5 steps you can take and in just 5 minutes! The steps include:

**1. LEARN THE SIGNS.** An expert-consensus list of warning signs was created to help people identify someone who may be in suicidal crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts. Learn the warning signs of suicide and other suicide prevention preparedness so you can help save more lives. Visit FSPC's website for info [http://www.floridasuicideprevention.org/learn\\_the\\_signs.htm](http://www.floridasuicideprevention.org/learn_the_signs.htm)

**2. JOIN THE MOVEMENT.** Just like other important causes, suicide prevention needs your voice. Add yours by joining the Take 5 social media pages and engaging in the conversation.

**3. SPREAD THE WORD.** One great way to end stigma is to talk about suicide prevention and share real life stories of living with depression, other mental illnesses and suicidal thoughts. We challenge you to share the Take 5 campaign with at least 5 other people!

**4. SUPPORT A FRIEND.** Knowing what to do when you are concerned about a friend who might be thinking about suicide is vital. The most important thing you can do is ASK. Learn the best ways to approach a friend who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts.

**5. REACH OUT FOR HELP.** There are many resources for those experiencing suicidal thoughts or a suicidal crisis. Know where to turn to if you or someone you know needs help.

There are two things we want you to know about this important issue and World Suicide Prevention Day: 1) Healing, help and hope happens, 2) We all have a role in preventing suicide. By sharing this message, your stories of hope and recovery, and by taking 5 minutes to learn about suicide, you will be making a difference in the world! Visit the toolkit section of the website for more information on how you can support and share the Take 5 campaign.

## IN FOCUS

*Get to know a Regional Director or Officer a little better in each newsletter.*



**Pam Mezzina** is FSPC Region 2 Director (Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf Homes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla, Washington). Pam has been a counselor for years previously working at Eckerd Wilderness Program (now Eckerd Youth Alternatives), Leon ARC (Advocacy & Resource Center), and currently as Bereavement Manager at Big Bend Hospice. She is actively involved in supporting members of the community through her efforts as Coordinator for the Trauma, Grief & Loss Coalition for Youth and the Suicide Prevention and Loss Workgroup in Leon County. She is also a co-facilitator for the Circuit II Trauma Informed Care Workgroup (soon to be PEACE 4 the Big Bend), and is an active member of Therapeutic Touch International.

In her role as Bereavement Manager at Big Bend Hospice, Pam receives many community calls asking for either individual or grief support following a suicide - too many calls. It is both Pam's nature and her training as a Social Worker to be an advocate. Pam realized she could not continue to receive these calls and not take action to help with prevention or try to touch lives of survivors. Pam learned about FSPC through participation in the Florida Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council and at Suicide Prevention Day at the Florida Capitol several years ago. Pam views the efforts of FSPC as essential to suicide prevention in the state of Florida. She reports that FSPC strives to advocate for change, and closely coordinate its efforts with the Florida Suicide Prevention Plan. She highlights the useful and easy access to resources and current statistics provided by the FSPC website. Pam hopes to lend energy, enthusiasm, and her skills to the goals set by the FSCP and coordinate opportunities for support and education in Region 2.

Pam also has experienced the loss of several close friends by suicide. One of these friends struggled with Bi-Polar Disorder for many years prior to his death. His family and all of his friends, including Pam, experienced the roller-coaster of his illness with him. They tried all they could to love, support, and keep him safe. Ultimately their efforts were not enough to save him. He was a beautiful human being, gifted in so many ways: funny, brilliant, creative, loving, an incredibly hard worker. He is missed to this day. His death helped Pam understand that

suicide happens to even the best of people. It also helped her understand that the way he died did not define nor diminish his life, but it sure did make it terribly painful, confusing, and complex for those left behind.

Pam annually coordinates Lighting the Darkness: An Evening to Remember Lives Lost to Suicide event that she counts as one of the highlights of her job at Big Bend Hospice. This service always falls the evening before the Day at the Capitol and is open to anyone from around the state that has lost a loved one to suicide. The evening includes music, a memorial slideshow, speakers, vendors, and most of all a welcoming and understanding group of survivors and supporters. If you are interested in attending, or would like a loved one to be included in the Memorial slideshow, please feel free to contact Pam.

Pam has a number of hobbies including: writing, hiking and nature, cooking and gardening. Pam is currently a volunteer at Lichgate on High Road working to preserve/maintain this site that is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places that includes a large, ancient, fairy-tale live oak tree. The tree is listed with the Live Oak Society. Prior to living in Florida, Pam resided in New York.

## **RESEARCH FOR THE REST OF US**

*Sometimes important research is filled with jargon, is hard to understand, or doesn't seem to make sense. We've tried to summarize research in common English language.*

### *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline helps callers at imminent risk for suicide*

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) is a network of 160 US crisis centers. Callers phone the Lifeline if they are worried about themselves or someone else in crisis or at risk of suicide. The authors looked at nearly 500 calls from individuals at imminent risk for suicide to the Lifeline. Call information was collected from eight call centers. The Lifeline's values include taking all necessary steps to keep the caller safe, and collaborating with the caller and emergency community services. The Lifeline's policy for callers at probable (i.e., imminent) risk for suicide or suicidal behavior includes crisis helpers actively engaging callers, dispatching rescue as needed, and collaborating with community and emergency services. This means the Lifeline's first priority is to work with the caller to reduce or eliminate danger if possible but also to send help if necessary.

Researchers found that for about three-fourths of calls from individuals at imminent risk for suicide, helpers were able to collaborate with the callers to keep them safe and, in a number of situations, dispatched emergency services with the callers' consent. For about one quarter of the calls from individuals at imminent risk for suicide, emergency services were sent to the caller's location without his/her collaboration. Factors that increased dispatch of emergency services without the caller's agreement included: many or strong reasons for dying combined with little stated sense of purpose, intoxication during call, and low engagement of caller with helper. This study shows that the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline helpers competently assess risk, seem to adhere to the Lifeline's values and policies, and serve on the frontlines of suicide prevention and intervention. (Summary by Marissa Day & Stephen Roggenbaum)

Gould, M.S., Lake, A.M., Munfakh, J.L., Galfalvy, H., Kleinman, M., Williams, C., Glass, A., & McKeon, R. (2016). Helping callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline who are at imminent risk of suicide: Evaluation of caller risk profiles and interventions implemented. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 46(2), 172-190. doi:10.1111/sltb.12182

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Week is September 5 – 11, 2016

Some events scheduled during National Suicide Prevention week:

A number of proclamations recognizing National Suicide Prevention Week in Florida (e.g., Judy Broward, Region 13 Director has requested one from her local governmental officials).

September 10<sup>th</sup> there will be a 5K *You are not Alone* run/walk at Cofrin Park in Gainesville to benefit the Alachua County Crisis Center.

Pensacola State College presents *Take 5 to Save Lives* with tables on campus during Suicide Prevention Week. Coordinated by Rachelle Burns, Region 1 Director and PSC faculty.

2nd annual *Bluebird Run & Walk for Brookie B.* sponsored by NAMI Tallahassee. This benefit includes a 5K Run/Walk and 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk for suicide prevention on Labor Day, September 5<sup>th</sup>.

Several *Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Training* sessions for middle school youth in Pinellas County on September 8<sup>th</sup> conducted by Betsey Westuba, Director, SunCoast Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Project.

*Family Coping with Suicide and Mental Health* on September 10<sup>th</sup> at the James A. Haley VA Hospital hosted by Tampa Bay Suicide Prevention Task Force. The focus is on creating healthy lifestyles, maintaining behavioral health wellness, and building life coping skills.

Florida's Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention (DCF) maintains a statewide calendar of events and may have additional listings for National Suicide Prevention Awareness Week:  
<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/mental-health/suicide-prevention>

## RESOURCES

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call **1-800-273- 8255** (*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline*)

*Crisis Text Line* – text “start” to 741-741

Florida's Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention (DCF):

<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/mental-health/suicide-prevention>

*National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention*: The Public-Private Partnership Advancing the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention:

<http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/resources>

*Faith.Hope.Life.* - Initiative of the Faith Communities Task Force of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. It is an opportunity for every faith community in the US, regardless of creed, to focus one Sabbath each year on the characteristics common to most faiths that also help prevent suicides. <http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/faithhopelife-0>

*NAMI Florida.* NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI Florida is the state organization and has 29 local Florida affiliates with volunteers who work to raise awareness and provide support and education:  
<http://www.namiflorida.org/>

Is there a local NAMI Chapter in my area? <http://www.nami.org/Local-NAMI?state=FL>

*Controlled Substance Public Disposal Locations.* Do expired drugs or medications you no longer use take up space in your medicine cabinet? Proper disposal can be one effective suicide prevention tool by eliminating access to lethal means. Many community-based drug *take-back* programs offer the best option for disposal. Many medicines have specific disposal instructions on their labeling or patient information leaflet: immediately flush down the sink or toilet, throw in the household trash, or other special disposal instructions once they are no longer needed. For disposal locations <https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s3>

### **AN EXTRA HELPING . . .**

2016 National Suicide Prevention Week open letter (and info-graphic) to College of Behavioral and Community Sciences at USF by Stephen Roggenbaum (FSPC Vice Chair).  
[http://cfs.cbcs.usf.edu/\\_docs/news/2016SuicidePreventionWeek.pdf](http://cfs.cbcs.usf.edu/_docs/news/2016SuicidePreventionWeek.pdf)

Big Bend Hospice Faith Outreach Newsletter with invited contribution *Clergy & Faith Communities Making a Difference* for National Suicide Prevention Week by Pam Mezzina (FSPC Region 2 Director).  
<https://www.bigbendhospice.org/uploads/NewsletterSummer2016.pdf>

### **FSPC MEMBERSHIP**

Join FSPC or renew your FSPC Membership at:  
<http://www.floridasuicideprevention.org/membership.htm>