



## FSPC Officers

Chair	Judy Broward
Vice-Chair	Stephen Roggenbaum
Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	René Favreau

### FSPC REGIONAL DIRECTORS

**R1** Rachelle S. Burns  
(Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton)

**R2** Pam Mezzina  
(Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf Homes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla, Washington)

**R3** Ali Martinez  
(Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Putnam, Suwannee, Union)

**R4** Lisa Zeller  
(Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, St. Johns)

**R5** Myrtice Landers  
(DeSoto, Pinellas, Sarasota)

**R6** Betsey Westuba  
(Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco)

**R7** Tara Sullivan  
(Brevard, Orange, Osceola, Seminole)

**R8** Sue Opheim  
(Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee)

**R9** Doris Carroll  
(Palm Beach)

**R10** Rene Barrett  
(Broward)

**R11** Elizabeth Quizena  
(Dade, Monroe)

**R12** Kelly Sousa  
(Flagler, Volusia)

**R13** Judy Broward  
(Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion, Sumter)

**R14** Betsey Westuba  
(Hardee, Highlands, Polk)

**R15** Lindsay Slattery-Cerny  
(Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie)

## October 2018 Newsletter

### FLORIDA SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

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

#### ARE YOU A FSPC MEMBER?

Join FSPC, a statewide, grassroots organization of survivors, crisis centers, & interested individuals. Collaborate to advance suicide prevention efforts in larger numbers: get involved,

#### Join or Renew Your Membership



volunteer with local & state FSPC activities, & obtain free or reduced registration at FSPC events. Membership info:

<http://floridasuicideprevention.org/membership/>

#### FSPC NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Submit events, poems, reviews, & writings for FSPC Newsletter inclusion consideration. Be sure to follow safe messaging guidelines. Email Steve Roggenbaum, Vice Chair, at [roggenba@usf.edu](mailto:roggenba@usf.edu)

#### SUPPORT FSPC WHEN YOU SHOP

Amazon donates to FSPC, when you make an online (at Amazon) purchase. Support FSPC by

**amazon**smile

**You shop. Amazon gives.**

going to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and register the *Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition* (FSPC) as your chosen charity. So start shopping and support suicide prevention.

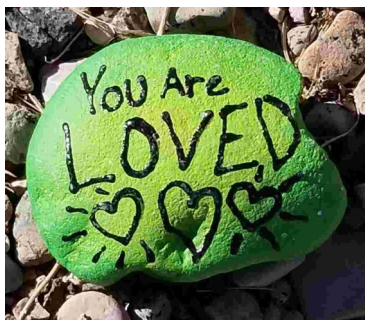
#### NEWSWORTHY

#### Kids Paint Hopeful Sayings Onto Rocks as Powerful Part of Suicide Prevention Walk

By Katy Anderson, September 2018, Babble.com, courtesy of Disney

Link: <https://www.babble.com/body-mind/rock-painting-suicide-prevention/>

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. On September 15, I attended the “Out of the Darkness Walk” organized by Reach4Hope and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) at Bicentennial Park in Cedar City, Utah. With over 400 registered walkers, our little town came together to raise more than \$14,000 for this important cause. The money raised for the walk went to the AFSP as well as the community for education and resources.



Beforehand, we wanted to get as many people involved as possible — especially kids. So we did something unique by having children paint inspirational messages of hope onto rocks that people could look at during the walk.

Rock painting has been around for a while, and can be a fun family activity. In my town, and many others around the country, kids and their families paint rocks and then hide them around the city for others to find. It's a way of brightening someone's day. There will even sometimes be Facebook groups or message boards where

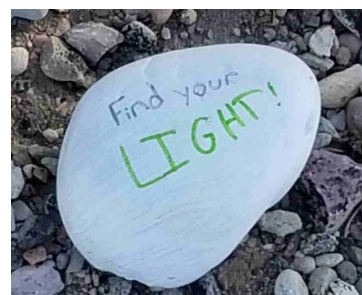
painters can leave clues as to where they hide their rocks and where those who locate them can report their findings.

My husband and I took our three boys to the rock painting event for the suicide prevention walk. It was not only fun, but it also gave us the opportunity to teach our boys about kindness and empathy. We asked them as they were decorating to think about what someone going through a hard time may want to hear, and let them know that they can make a difference to another person.

When it came time to attend the walk, I was pleasantly surprised at the turnout, and impressed by the speeches that were given — including one from professional cyclist T.J. Eisenhart. He spoke candidly about his own struggles with depression and his fears that he was “never good enough to excel” in spite of his successful career. His message was one of hope and love, as he expressed that “it’s okay not to be okay,” and that “speaking openly does not make us weak.” He says he has “come to love himself” and that loving ourselves means “you don’t give up on yourself.”

During the walk, I noticed many of the decorated rocks along the path, helping to brighten the way. Many walkers would stop to read the rocks, and some of the kids on the walk would pick up their favorites to carry around.

At one point, I met a group who told me they were there to support a loved one, Wesley, who had attempted suicide last year. Their love and support for Wesley was very apparent, and they even decorated a special rock for their group that they named “Wesley’s Warriors.”



Currently, my home state of Utah has the fifth-highest suicide rate in the country — it also recently ranked as the second happiest state in the nation. It can be a happy place, but for those who don’t “fit the mold,” it can be isolating and painful. Utah is like a glossy Instagram page — picturesque from the outside without telling the whole story.

Ultimately, no matter where we live, it’s up to us to face the difficult issue of the rising rates of suicide. It’s a difficult subject, one we may be hesitant to share with children, but we can involve them in raising awareness in age appropriate ways — like painting rocks with messages of happiness and love that bring hope to all who view them.

## ALSO NEWSWORTHY

### Ask, Care, Escort; Everyone Has A Part In Suicide Prevention

By James Branch, 94th Airlift Wing Public Affairs / Published September 18, 2018

Link: <https://www.dobbins.afrc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1637138/ask-care-escort-everyone-has-a-part-in-suicide-prevention/>

DOBBINS AIR RESERVE BASE, Georgia -- September is Suicide Prevention Month. It presents an opportunity to increase awareness on an issue that affects people, no matter the age, class, religion or gender.

Air Force leaders are committed to the well-being of their members. They take a great stance on suicide prevention and everyone has an important role to play to help those at risk. Common risks factors for suicide include relationship problems, feelings of loss or guilt, lack of social support, stress, and substance abuse problems.

"One suicide is too many," said Brig. General Richard Kemble, 94th Airlift Wing commander. "Be a sensor, and intervene at the lowest level if you suspect someone may do harm to themselves or others."

The Air Force has adopted Green Dot training, an interactive bystander approach to preventing suicides. It empowers individuals recognize warning signs, understand barriers, and intervene by directing, delegating or distracting.

Lots of people exhibiting a small behavior can equal a big impact, said Tandra Hunter, 94th Airlift Wing violence prevention integrator and Green Dot Program manager.

"If you see something, say something," she added. Hunter states that it's very important that leaders take the time to get to know their Airmen, and talking openly and honestly about emotional distress and suicide is ok.

"Talking will not make someone more suicidal or put the idea of suicide in their mind," said Hunter. "If you are concerned about someone, ask them about it. The ACE method, Ask, Care, Escort, is a great way to make that connection."

If you, or someone you know is thinking about harming themselves, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, and press 1, or the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK, and press 1.

Please join the Violence Prevention Office Wednesday, Sept. 26, for "Chat and Chew," an event that will provide an opportunity for individuals to speak openly about suicide and its effects on the community.

## IN FOCUS

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

**Lindsay Slattery-Cerny:** Region 15 Director (Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie counties). Welcome to our newest Region Director!

Lindsay grew up in Massachusetts, has lived in central and south Florida, and currently resides in Jupiter. She moved to Florida with her family when she was 9 years old. Lindsay volunteers to help rescue dogs find homes. It seems as if the two dogs in the picture have found their home! Her hobbies include jogging and knitting.

Lindsay and Doris Carroll (Region 9 & 15 Director) connected during a Veteran's Administration Suicide Prevention Summit. Doris introduced Lindsay to the FSPC and helped Lindsay become more familiar with the organization. Lindsay was already working in the area of suicide prevention and wanted to become more involved. Lindsay desires to help raise knowledge and





awareness of suicide prevention and crisis intervention along the Treasure Coast and Okeechobee counties. A BIG thank you to Doris Carroll for introducing Lindsay to FSPC.

Lindsay was previously a therapist working in child welfare and correctional settings. She currently works for the Florida Linking Individuals Needing Care Project (*FL LINC*) which is a joint effort from the University of South Florida, the Florida Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention, Florida Council for Community Mental Health, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network, and SAMHSA. Lindsay also works directly with Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network (Managing Entity for Southeast Florida) to assist with any suicide prevention efforts in Circuits 15 & 19. Lindsay travels from Palm Beach to the Treasure Coast and Okeechobee, training individuals in suicide prevention and crisis intervention, both professionals and members of the general community. A few of the agencies with which Lindsay has contact include: New Horizons of the Treasure Coast, Jerome Golden Behavioral Health Center, Florida Department of Health, Children's Services Council (tri-county), St. Lucie County School District, and NAMI of Palm Beach.

### IN FOCUS (part 2)

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



Delta Life Fitness- South Jacksonville and owner Chelsea Kroll organized the *first annual suicide awareness and prevention glow workout and walk* on September 9<sup>th</sup> on Jacksonville Beach.

Mental health and self care is more than time out for a pedicure or mimosa, it's protecting your mind from negative influences and thoughts and saying "no" to any

activity in your personal or professional life which causes you mental pain. Surround yourself with positive people who will encourage you to become the best version of yourself. We are on a mission to build a positive community of women and we hope you will join us in this effort. *Lisa Zeller, FSPC Region 4 Director* (fifth from right with sunglasses), participated.

### IN FOCUS (part 3)

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



Guy and Jane Bennett represented the FSPC at Centerstone's "Life;Story" 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Walk/Run event in Sarasota on Saturday 9/22/18 starting at 6 am. Yes, that's a sunrise – not a sunset in the photo. Guy and Jane shared suicide prevention information (FSPC newsletters, brochures, conference Save-the-Date, and more) with attendees, other vendors, and

Centerstone staff. Over a dozen folks signed up for the FSPC email list. FSPC is so lucky to have Guy and Jane share their commitment to





suicide prevention through volunteering and participating in FSPC events. They attended and wrote about their experiences at the 2018 *Florida Taking Action for Suicide Prevention Conference & DAC* in a previous newsletter (March 2018 - <http://floridasuicideprevention.org/newsletter/>).

## AVAILABLE RESOURCE

### The Parent Handbook on Childhood and Teen Depression

Link: <https://www.erikaslighthouse.org/the-parent-handbook-on-childhood-and-teen-depression-1/>

Many parents don't know the signs of teen depression or where to turn for help. Understanding exactly what's going on with your child, finding the right treatment, dealing with the schools, negotiating insurance issues – all are challenges that parents face when their child is suffering from depression.

The *Parent handbook on Childhood and Teen Depression* by Erika's Lighthouse is designed to help – with practical ideas written in an easy to read style, we are here to help you. This is a parent-to-parent guide and contains ideas that we have found helpful – ideas that we hope will be of some help to you as you deal with this difficult time in your family's life.

The 86-page handbook covers a significant amount of information including depression facts, and practical tips about your family and other in the home; your son/daughter in school; a primer on various interventions; and mental wellness strategies.

## ANOTHER AVAILABLE RESOURCE

### Suicide Safe: The Suicide Prevention App for Health Care Providers (Free from SAMHSA)

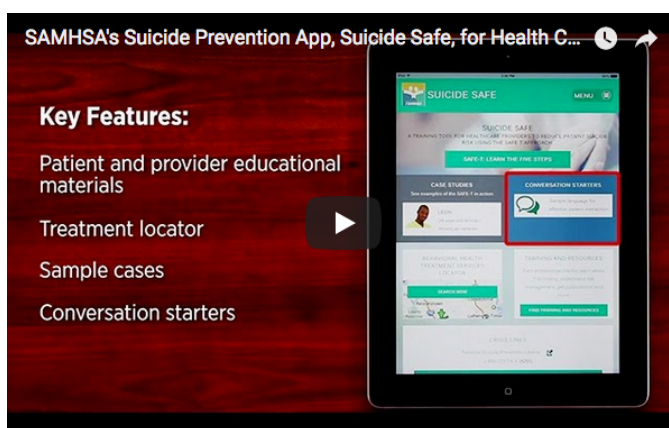
Link: <https://store.samhsa.gov/apps/suicidesafe/>

For individuals at risk of suicide, behavioral health and primary care settings provide unique opportunities to connect with the health care system and access effective treatment. Almost half (45%) of individuals who die by suicide have visited a primary care provider in the month prior to their death, and 20% have had contact with mental health services.

Suicide Safe, SAMHSA's new suicide prevention app for mobile devices and optimized for tablets, helps providers integrate suicide prevention strategies into their practice and address suicide risk among their patients. Suicide Safe is a free app based on SAMHSA's Suicide Assessment Five-Step Evaluation and Triage (SAFE-T) card. The five-step plan involves identifying risk factors and protective factors, conducting a suicide inquiry, determining risk level and interventions, and documenting a treatment plan.

SAMHSA's Suicide Safe helps providers:

- Learn how to use the SAFE-T approach when working with patients.
- Explore interactive sample case studies & see the SAFE-T in action through case scenarios & tips.
- Quickly access and share information, including crisis lines, fact sheets, educational opportunities, and treatment resources.
- Browse conversation starters that provide sample language and tips for talking with patients who may be in need of suicide intervention.
- Locate treatment options, filter by type and distance, and share locations and resources to provide timely referrals for patients.



- Suicide Safe, SAMHSA's free suicide prevention app, available for iOS® and Android™ mobile devices.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING



October 6, 2018 (10:00 am – 2:00 pm). *MindFest*. DeLand.

<http://www.eccwestv.org/mindfest>

October 31, 2018. Due date for submission of presentation proposals for *FSPC's Fourth Annual Florida Taking Action for Suicide Prevention Conference*. Presenters will be notified by mid-late January.

February 9, 2019 (*new date*) (7:00 am Breakfast; 8:00 am - 3:30 pm Conference). Miami-Dade Community College's *4th Annual Suicide Prevention Conference*. Nicklaus Children's Hospital - Main Auditorium, 3100 SW 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Miami. <http://www.nicklauschildrens.org/cme>

March 19 & 20, 2019. *FSPC's Fourth Annual Florida Taking Action for Suicide Prevention Conference* is a two-half day conference in Tallahassee.

## 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**

*Veteran's Crisis Line* **1-800-273- 8255**, press **1** & <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

*Resources for Survivors of Suicide Loss*. SAVE. Suicide Awareness Voices for Education maintains a resource list at: <http://suicidgrief.save.org/ResourceLibrary>

*Suicide Loss Survivors*. The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) hosts a webpage with listed resources for survivors of suicide loss at <http://www.suicidology.org/suicide-survivors/suicide-loss-survivors>

*Suicide Grief Resources*. Helpful information, tools, and links for people bereaved by suicide at <http://suicidgriefresources.org/>

STOP Suicide Northeast Indiana. (2016). *Help & Hope: For Survivors of Suicide Loss*. Retrieved from <http://www.stopsuicidenow.org/toolkits-now-available/>

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>

*Coping After Suicide Loss: Tips for Grieving Adults, Children, and Schools*. The American Psychological Association tip sheet. <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/suicide-coping-tips.pdf>

*The Steve Fund*. Dedicated to the mental health and emotional well-being of students of color.

<https://www.stevelfund.org/>

*Guide for Suicide Attempt Survivors after Treatment in the Emergency Department*. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) brochure for people who have received emergency department treatment for a suicide attempt. Includes tips on how to cope with thoughts of suicide and resources for finding help. The brochure is also available in

Spanish. <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/A-Guide-for-Taking-Care-of-Yourself-After-Your-Treatment-in-the-Emergency-Department/SMA18-4355ENG?utm>

*Guide for Taking Care of a Family Member after Emergency Department Treatment for an Attempt.* SAMHSA's brochure on caring for a family member after a suicide attempt which describes emergency department treatment process, lists questions to ask about follow-up treatment, and offers tips on how to reduce risk at home. The brochure is also available in Spanish. <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/A-Guide-for-Taking-Care-of-Your-Family-Member-After-Treatment-in-the-Emergency-Department/SMA18-4357ENG?utm>

*Guide for Emergency Department Providers on Caring for Suicide Attempt Survivors.* SAMHSA's brochure for emergency department providers on enhancing treatment for patients who have attempted suicide. It includes information on patient assessment, HIPAA regulations, and tips for communicating with family and other treatment providers. <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/A-Guide-for-Medical-Providers-in-the-Emergency-Department-Taking-Care-of-Suicide-Attempt-Survivors/All-New-Products/SMA18-4359?utm>

Anara Guard, previous Senior Advisor, California Statewide Suicide Prevention Campaign, recently shared the following Spanish-targeted resources on the AAS ListServ:

Five Signs of Emotional Suffering available in Spanish: <http://www.changedirection.org>

AFSP's loss survivor film, Family Journeys in Spanish (*For subtitles, click the CC button in the right-hand corner of the "Play" bar and choose Spanish in the dropdown*). Stream film at <http://www.survivorday.org/survivor-day-documentaries/>

Guide through grief: Mourning the loss of a loved one in Spanish and English [https://healthonline.washington.edu/document/health\\_online/pdf/Guide-Through-Grief-SP.pdf](https://healthonline.washington.edu/document/health_online/pdf/Guide-Through-Grief-SP.pdf)

Brochures, video and audio on these topics: anxiety, bipolar disorder, mental health, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, autism, postpartum depression, schizophrenia and suicide: <http://healthyroadsmedia.org/Listing.htm>

This radio spot is aimed at Latino parents, and encourages listeners to learn the signs and actions to take when a teenager is considering suicide. Developed for a California suicide prevention and mental health stigma reduction projects: <https://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/spanish-radio-que-harias-si-supieras-what-would-you-do-if-you-knew>

30-second TV spot aimed at Latino parents: <https://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/spanish-tv>

Brochure provides information about warning signs, how to find the words to offer support to someone and a link to the campaign website for resources. <https://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/suicide-prevention-brochure-spanish>

A film in Spanish, with English subtitles, that tells the story of a girl who notices signs of suicide in her friend Tyler and reaches out to support him and connect him with help. <https://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/directing-change-film-my-friend-tyler>

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

### **National Suicide Prevention Week was September 9 to 15: What Do We Still Need to Know and Do?**

by Dr. Scott Poland who lost his father to suicide and is a professor in the College of Psychology and the Co-director of the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office at Nova Southeastern University.

A recent report from the Center for Disease Control stated that from 1999 to 2016 suicide rates increased in every state except Nevada that had a very minor decrease. The highest suicide rate is



in Montana. Suicide deaths for Americans total approximately 45,000 every year increasing for virtually every age group, race and gender.

Suicide prevention week is designed to raise awareness of the warning signs of suicide, promote prevention resources, and to encourage Americans to talk about suicide prevention more. Asking individuals about suicide will not cause them to think about ending their life. However, if they are suicidal, it gives them a chance to unburden themselves and to know that help is available.

Everyone needs to know the 24-hour National Crisis Helpline. The numbers are 1-800-273-TALK, 1-800-Suicide, and the National Crisis Text line can be accessed by texting HOME to 741741.

The most common warning signs of suicide are the following:

- Statements about suicide, death and dying
- Giving away of prized possessions
- Dramatic changes in behavior
- Making out a will

Suicide is most often the result of mental illness such as depression. There are evidence-based treatments for all mental illnesses.

Americans also need to know the importance of means restriction. I would like to share this recent example. My cousin called me to share that his neighbor Bob, who has been depressed, was seen in the parking lot of his condominium holding a gun to his head. I asked if anyone had taken his neighbor immediately to an emergency room and the answer was no. My cousin said Bob suffered from advanced stages of Parkinson's disease. I asked my cousin if Bob was receiving any mental health treatment in addition to the medical treatment for his Parkinson's disease. My cousin responded that Bob was not receiving mental health treatment. Stating that it was unfortunate Bob had not been taken to the emergency room when he was suicidal, I asked if all guns had been removed from his home. My cousin reported that Bob's wife told him that the guns belonged to her husband and she did not have the right to remove them. My cousin asked, "what difference would it make if the guns were removed as Bob would find another way to die by suicide." I shared with him the research that when you remove the lethal means such as a gun or raise the barrier on a bridge that suicide rates go down. My cousin asked what he could do to help his friend Bob. I responded that Bob's physician needed to know about his depression and suicidal actions and it was necessary to remove the guns from his home. I'm pleased to report that Bob is now receiving the needed mental health treatment, guns have been removed from his home and he knows how to contact suicide prevention resources. I share this example to illustrate that suicide can be prevented.

I recently wrote the Crisis Action School Toolkit on Suicide for the state of Montana. Suicide is the leading cause of death for adolescents in Montana and it is my hope that a future generation of Montanans will know how to prevent suicide.

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

#### **Coping After Suicide Loss: Tips for Grieving Adults, Children and Schools**

By The American Psychological Association

*The American Psychological Association gratefully acknowledges psychologists Mary Alvord, PhD, Nadine Kaslow, PhD, Shane Owens, PhD, and Robin Gurwitsch, PhD, for their help with this fact sheet.*

Link: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/coping-after-suicide.aspx>

Death by suicide is always a tragic event. It can trigger a host of complicated and confusing emotions. Whether you are coping with the loss of a loved one, or are helping a child or adult navigate such a loss, these tools can help.

*How to cope when a friend or loved one dies by suicide*

Accept your emotions. You might expect to feel grief and despair, but other common feelings include shock, denial, guilt, shame, anger, confusion, anxiety, loneliness and even, in some cases, relief. Those feelings are normal, and can vary throughout the healing process.

Don't worry about what you "should" feel or do. There's no standard timeline for grieving, and no single right way to cope. Focus on what you need, and accept that others' paths might be different from yours.

Care for yourself. Do your best to get enough sleep and eat regular, healthy meals. Taking care of your physical self can improve your mood and give you the strength to cope.

Draw on existing support systems. Accept help from those who have been supports in the past, including your family, your friends or members of your faith-based community.

Talk to someone. There is often stigma around suicide, and many loss survivors suffer in silence. Speaking about your feelings can help.

Join a group. Support groups can help you process your emotions alongside others who are experiencing similar feelings. People who don't think of themselves as support group types are often surprised by how helpful such groups can be.

Talk to a professional. Psychologists and other mental health professionals can help you express and manage your feelings and find healthy coping tools.

#### *Talking to children and teens about death by suicide*

Parents, teachers, school administrators and other adults in a child's life often feel unprepared to help a young person cope with a death by suicide. These strategies can help you foster open dialogue and offer support.

Deal with your own feelings first. Pause to reflect on and manage your own emotions so you can speak calmly to the child or children in your life.

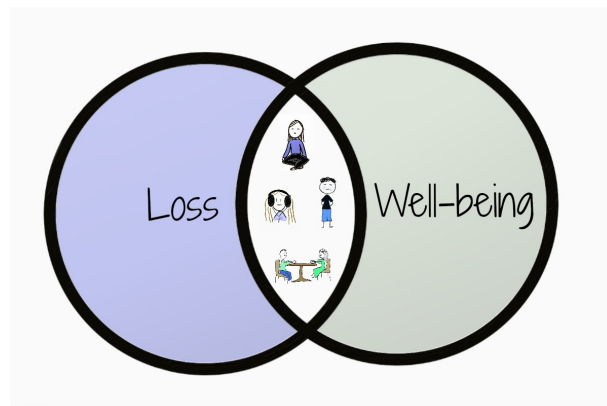
Be honest. Don't dwell on details of the act itself, but don't hide the truth. Use age-appropriate language to discuss the death with children.



Validate feelings. Help the child put names to her emotions: "It sounds like you're angry," or "I hear you blaming yourself, but this is not your fault." Acknowledge and normalize the child's feelings. Share your own feelings, too, explaining that while each person's feelings are different, it's okay to experience a range of emotions.

Avoid rumors. Don't gossip or speculate about the reasons for the suicide. Instead, when talking to a child or teen, emphasize that the person who died was struggling and thinking differently from most people.

Tailor your support. Everyone grieves at his or her own pace and in his or her own way. Some people might need privacy as they work through their feelings. Respect their privacy, but check in regularly to let them know they don't have to grieve alone. Other children might want someone to talk to more often. Still others prefer to process their feelings through art or music. Ask the child how they'd like you to help. Let them know it's okay to just be together.



Extend the conversation. Use this opportunity to reach out to others who might be suffering. Ask children: How can you and your peers help support each other? Who else can you reach out to for help? What can you do if you're struggling with difficult emotions?

### *Tips for schools*

Handle the announcement with care. Schools should not report the cause of a death as suicide if the information hasn't been released by the family or reported in the media. When discussing a student's death by suicide, avoid making announcements over the public address system. It's helpful if teachers read the same announcement to each classroom, so that students know everyone is getting the same information.

Identify students who need more support. These can include friends of a student who died by suicide, those who were in clubs or on teams with the deceased, and those who are dealing with life stressors similar to the stressors experienced by the deceased. Less obviously, peers who had unfriendly relationships with the deceased – including those who teased or bullied the deceased or were bullied by the deceased. These students may also have complicated feelings of guilt and regret that require extra support.

Prevent imitation. Researchers have found news stories that use graphic language, sensationalize the death or explicitly describe the method of suicide can increase the risk of additional deaths by suicide. When talking to children, avoid graphic details and focus instead on hope, healing and the value of the person when they were alive.

Minimize positive attention. Dedicating special events to the deceased can make him or her seem like a celebrity. Vulnerable children might see such attention and think suicide is a way to be noticed. Instead of memorials, consider acknowledging the death through events such as suicide awareness walks or campaigns.

Choose words carefully. To protect peers who may also have suicidal thoughts, avoid phrases such as "She's no longer suffering," or "He's in a better place." Instead focus on positive aspects of the person's life. Avoid the term "committed suicide," and instead use died by suicide.

Keep the lines of communication open. Help students identify adults they can trust and other resources they can draw on if they struggle with sadness or with their own suicidal feelings. Make sure students know where they can turn for help, not only after this loss, but in the months and years to come.

### *Finding help*

If you or a child in your life is grieving a death by suicide, a psychologist can help you express and manage your feelings and find healthy ways to cope. Clinical psychologists are professionals trained to identify mental, emotional and behavioral problems or challenges and find solutions for handling them. To find a licensed psychologist in your area, use our Psychologist Locator.

### *Resources*

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- American Association of Suicidology: Directory of Support Groups
- Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide

### **FSPC MEMBERSHIP**

New FSPC Membership or Renewal information available online at:  
<http://floridasuicideprevention.org/membership>