

Reaching those in times of need

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July 2019 Newsletter

FLORIDA SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

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

JOIN OR RENEW FSPC MEMBERSHIP!



Join FSPC, a statewide, grassroots organization of survivors, crisis centers, & interested individuals. Collaborate to advance suicide prevention efforts in larger numbers: get involved, volunteer with local & state FSPC activities, & obtain reduced registration at FSPC events.

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

SUPPORT FSPC WHEN YOU SHOP

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

smile.amazon.com and register the *Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition* (FSPC) as your chosen charity. Then start shopping on Amazon & support suicide prevention.



NEWSWORTHY

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE & SAFE MESSAGES FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH/WEEK

National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention release: 6/28/19
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boP1qaHd9vo&t=32s>

How we publicly communicate and talk about suicide can have a negative or positive impact. Research has found that certain types of public messaging about suicide can increase risk among vulnerable individuals. On the other hand, communications can also be a powerful tool to promote resiliency, encourage help-seeking, and highlight successful prevention efforts.

The Action Alliance's [*Framework for Successful Messaging*](#), highlighted during the webinar [Developing and Delivering Effective Suicide Prevention Messaging: We All Play A Role](#), outlines the key components to consider when messaging to the public about suicide, including: strategy, safety, conveying a positive narrative, and following applicable guidelines.

Strategy

The [strategy](#) component refers to the upfront thinking and planning that is done to help messages succeed and resonate with people. Some best practices when it comes to the strategy include:

- Consider the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your message (e.g., *who is my audience? what is my goal?*).
- Don't start with a particular channel or message in mind.
- Shift from 'communicating for awareness' to 'communicating for action' (e.g. include action steps your audience can take as a result of your message).

Safety

The [safety](#) component focuses on how to avoid potentially harmful messages and content. When it comes to safety, some best practices include:

- Screen content before sharing it.
- Be consistent in keeping safety in mind.
- Be mindful of safety when sharing stories about individual suicide attempts or deaths.
- Accurately convey suicide as a complex issue with no single cause (e.g., avoid messaging that implies there was a single cause, like bullying or PTSD, behind a suicide).
- Highlight solutions, rather than problems.
- Make sure data, if used, are strategic, safe, and prevention-focused (e.g., the number of people who sought help, or the number of people who reached out to support someone).
- Use non-stigmatizing language (e.g., died by suicide instead of committed suicide).



Action Alliance National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention
Framework for Successful Messaging

Positive Narrative

The [positive narrative](#) component is focused on increasing the frequency of public messaging that promotes the positive aspects of suicide prevention. Some best practices for following a positive narrative include:

- Highlight actions that people can take to help prevent suicide (e.g., *how people can [#BeThere](#) for someone who is struggling*).
- Reinforce that prevention works.
- Convey that resiliency and recovery are possible.
- Share that effective programs and services exist, and help is available.
- Avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes or misconceptions (e.g. avoid messages that focus on stigma, and instead share messages of hope and resiliency).

Guidelines

Once your strategy is developed, it's important to follow best practice guidelines. There are guidelines available for a variety of channels, settings, populations, and topics, which can be found [here](#).

As you continue planning for Suicide Prevention Month ([#SPM19](#)) this September, please take time to ensure your messaging aligns with these best practices and promotes hope, help-seeking, and resiliency. We all have a role to play in suicide prevention, not only during the month of September but all year long.

ALSO NEWSWORTHY

CASEY DESANTIS VISITS PANHANDLE TO ANNOUNCE MENTAL HEALTH AID

The aid will add counselors, telehealth resources and temporary housing to a region that is still struggling to pick up after the Category 5 storm carved a path of destruction through Florida's northwest.

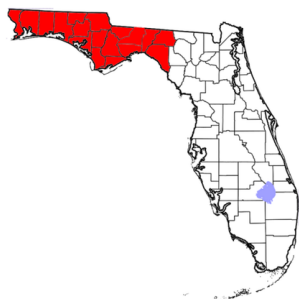
By Elizabeth Koh, June 26, 2019

Link: <https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2019/06/26/casey-desantis-visits-panhandle-to-announce-mental-health-aid/>

Florida is sending more mental health aid to the Hurricane Michael-stricken Panhandle nearly nine months after landfall, First Lady Casey DeSantis announced Wednesday morning, after local officials had warned that the region needs significantly more help to treat an uptick in mental health issues.

The aid adds counselors, virtual resources and temporary housing to a region that is still struggling to pick up after the Category 5 storm carved a path of destruction through Florida's northwest. But the aid, some leaders warned, only begins to address the long-running needs created by Michael's aftermath.

DeSantis' announcement Wednesday included a plan to implement telehealth — or access through technology and the Internet to healthcare services — in every public school in five affected counties to connect children to mental health services by the first day of school later this summer. The telehealth initiative is expected to reach 35,000 students in Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf and Liberty counties, she said.



It also included \$2.3 million that in the past few weeks was funneled to the Department of Children and Families through FEMA, which will increase outreach services and pay for some crisis counselors in an existing community program through 2020. The federal Department of Education has also awarded \$1.25 million for Bay County's school district to add licensed social workers and paraprofessionals to each school campus.

The state Division of Emergency Management, which directs FEMA money to various state and local entities, has secured 100 temporary trailers to distribute to people in need while more permanent housing solutions are found. And, in a nod toward the mental health needs that might be created by

future disasters, the division is also creating a new position to specifically deal with mental health response and recovery.

"While our needs are still great and ongoing, we are very grateful for the support we continue to receive," said Sharon Michalik, the communications director for the school district in Bay County, in a statement. She praised several components of the additional assistance, including the telehealth sites as "another piece of the mental health support puzzle we continue to try to solve for our students and their families."

"Our needs, however, continue to outweigh the support we have," she wrote. "We will continue to try to leverage all of the resources possible to serve our children, their families and our employees."

DeSantis, who has made mental health one of her priorities as first lady, was joined at a fire station in the Panama City suburb of Callaway by Mary Mayhew, the head of the state's health care agency; Chad Poppell, who runs the Department of Children and Families, and Jared Moskowitz, the state's emergency management director. "We're here, we will be here, we will continue to shine a spotlight on the needs of this area," promised Mayhew.

In Bay County local leaders have said a ballooning mental health crisis, particularly among children, has been taking root in the destruction left by the storm. Hundreds of schoolchildren have been referred for further mental health care, though the region faces a shortage of providers. Educators have reported children bursting into tears just at the sound of heavy rains and, in some extreme cases, suicide attempts on campus.

Some local providers, already strained, have reported losing 30% to 40% of their staff after the storm. School administrators in Bay had also feared that students on summer break would lack regular contact with staff and educators to check in on their mental well-being, though the district is still providing food through some schools during the summer months and local groups are arranging for summer camps.

The federal education money will help defray some of the costs in Bay County, though the district has previously said it would need about \$30 million to put a licensed clinician and a support team on each school campus.

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

Prevention in Practice:

Integrating Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention in West Virginia

Link: <https://www.sprc.org/news/integrating-substance-abuse-suicide-prevention-west-virginia>

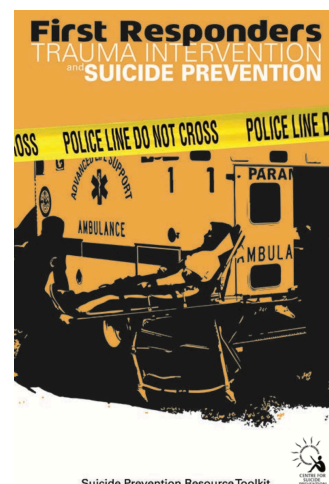
The *Suicide Prevention Resource Center* released a new audio story (four minutes) describing a statewide initiative to integrate West Virginia's substance abuse and suicide prevention efforts. This success story highlights the importance of partnerships and collaboration in effective suicide prevention and describes an innovative approach to addressing the link between suicide and opioids.

ANOTHER AVAILABLE RESOURCE

FIRST RESPONDERS TRAUMA INTERVENTION AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Link: <https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/migrate/library/First-Responders%27-Trauma-Intervention-Resource-Toolkit.pdf>

Developed by Canada's Centre for Suicide Prevention, this toolkit highlights the severity of the issue of PTSD among first responders and lists the risk factors and warning signs for trauma. It also discusses protective factors such as sense of community and coping strategies. In addition, it presents intervention strategies, including a successful peer support program in which officers who have experienced trauma provided support for other officers in need of help.



WHAT'S HAPPENING



July 6, 2019, 10:30 am (Eastern) (Saturday), *FSPC Annual Meeting* via conference call.

July 17, 2019, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Alachua County Crisis Center's *3rd Annual Youth Suicide Prevention Symposium*, Thomas Coward Auditorium, Gainesville. Registration Link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeX6RcafDM3O19BI29_8ENfy2sEV1VOKm1N-g5HLSIKjzg1XA/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1

August 21 - 23, 2019. *Florida Behavioral Health Conference*. Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek Resort. Register at <https://www.bhcon.org/page/Registration> - Rates increase 7/16.

September 8 - 14, 2019. *National Suicide Prevention Week* in the United States.

September 6 - 8, 2019. *2019 National Weekend of Prayer for Faith, Hope, & Life*. <https://theactionalliance.org/faith-hope-life/resources-materials>

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://suicidegrief.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://suicidegriefresources.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) (NEW Website Link):
<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/prevention/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>

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.stevfund.org/>

AN EXTRA HELPING . . .

IS SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU BEREAVED BY SUICIDE?

Link: <https://www.sane.org/information-stories/facts-and-guides/is-someone-close-to-you-bereaved-by-suicide>

When someone takes their own life, family and friends can experience intense grief. This understandably affects how people are able to cope. Friends and colleagues who acknowledge this grief, listen, and offer support can make a big difference in helping people learn to deal with the loss.

When the person who died had a mental illness, family and friends often experience additional grief. It is common for people to feel confused, guilty, or even a sense of relief that the person is no longer suffering. They may also feel angry and disappointed that services have let them down. Because of stigma, they may feel they can't talk about either the mental illness or suicide, adding to feelings of isolation.

Grief may also be experienced when a friend or family member is missing for a long time, but with the additional stress of not knowing if the person will return. If you know the family or a friend of someone missing long-term, the information in this factsheet could help you to support them.

Common responses when someone is bereaved

'I don't know what to say'

If you're not sure what to say, ask 'How are you feeling today?' Tell the person you're not sure what to say. Being honest will help to build trust.

Try to listen 80% of the time and talk 20% of the time.

Avoid making unhelpful statements such as 'it's God's will' or 'things happen for a reason.'

'I don't want to make it worse for them'

The person might cry or not cry. One isn't necessarily better than the other.

By allowing the person to express their grief, you will be helping. Nothing you do can take away the sadness, but it is important to be there for them.

The way the person expresses grief may be different from the way you would express it. Don't take anger personally.

'They have lots of family and friends around — they don't need me'

People with lots of friends and family still need support from others. It's important to have grief acknowledged by friends and colleagues so the person doesn't begin to feel isolated.

'There is nothing I can do — they need help from a professional'

You can do things that a professional person can't, like going for walks, cooking a meal, remembering the birthday and anniversaries of the person who died, or just being there.

'I'm not sure what to say about the mental illness'

Ask the bereaved person how they feel about this. Reassure them you're happy to talk about mental illness if they want. Find out some information so you know something of what the person may have been experiencing. Be compassionate and understanding about difficulties the illness may have caused in their relationship, and encourage them to talk to a bereavement counsellor if they are not coping or do not feel they can talk to anyone else.

What you can do

- Be compassionate — show care and concern and allow the person to talk about their loss.
- Listen and be patient. Grief lasts longer than a few weeks or months.
- Talk naturally about the person who has died and don't be afraid to speak their name.
- Let them know that it's natural to be feeling the way they are.
- Offer practical support, like cooking a meal, dropping the kids at school or allowing flexible working hours.
- Suggest activities that you know they enjoy. They might not feel ready to participate, but it's important to offer.
- Help make appointments and arrange to get them there.
- Find out about support services, and help with making calls and searching for information online.

Where to find more information and support

- Talking to others who have been through a similar experience can be a great help. There are support groups for the bereaved in each state. Contact the services listed below for more information.
- The internet can be a good way to access information and support, particularly if the person feels too upset to see people face-to-face or travel. Use authoritative websites like the ones listed below.
- If you feel the person isn't coping, encourage them to talk to a health professional such as a GP, grief counsellor or someone at their community health service. Although grief is natural, sometimes it is too difficult to deal with and may trigger other health problems.
- Children who are bereaved may need special support to help them cope. For more information contact [Kids Helpline](http://kidsaustralia.org.au) on 1800 551 800.

Looking after yourself

Be prepared for possible emotional effects you may feel when supporting a bereaved person, including:

- greater awareness of your own losses in the past
- worry about your own possible losses in the future
- anxiety about your own mortality

It is important to look after yourself and be aware of how supporting a friend or colleague may affect you. Talk to a trusted friend or seek help from a health professional if you find you are not coping.

FSPC MEMBERSHIP

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