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October 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. Not

sure when your renewal is due, please contact Rene Favreau, FSPC Treasurer (rene.favreau@gmail.com) to find out when. Membership info: <http://floridasuicideprevention.org/membership/>



NEWSWORTHY

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF YOUTH SUICIDE AIMS TO ENGAGE YOUTH IN EFFORTS

American Association of Suicidology, 09/5/19
 Link: <https://www.preventyouthsuicide.org>

The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) announced the launch of the new National Center for the Prevention of Youth Suicide (NCPYS) resource website (<https://www.preventyouthsuicide.org>). The NCPYS is an ongoing initiative of AAS driven by youth advisors and AAS's Youth Suicide Prevention Committee, including partnerships with the Boys and Girls Club of America, GoGuardian, Jasper's Game Day, and the notOK App, among others.

"The NCPYS has been providing information, resources, and guidance to youth, parents, civic organizations, and others since 2012," said Amy Kulp, M.S., Director of NCPYS.

National Center for the Prevention of Youth Suicide

NO CHILD LOST TO SUICIDE

“Thanks to our Youth Advisors and a committee of experts, we are directly engaging youth in our messaging and creating programs based on best practices and research. With the re-launch of the

NCPYS website and recruitment of additional Youth Advisors, we are renewing and broadening our efforts to prevent suicide and suicidal behaviors in young people.”

Most recently, the NCPYS partnered with Nationwide Children’s Hospital and Boys and Girls Club of America in Columbus, OH to launch an innovative suicide prevention training focused on supporting youth in out of school spaces. The purpose of the program is to educate club members about the warning signs of suicide, to empower them to respond if they observe these signs in themselves or others, to learn and practice effective coping strategies drawn from core DBT skills, and to develop a personalized coping plan to manage crises.

“The Youth Suicide Prevention Committee is comprised of a multidisciplinary team of AAS members including clinicians, educators, researchers, loss survivors and people with lived experience,” said Norine Vander Hooven, chair of the committee. “With the overall effort of this team to bring awareness, provide education, support, and assistance to those serving our youth combined with the voices and activities of the NCPYS, we are preventing suicide and suicidal behaviors in youth, teens and young adults.”

Over 47,000 people in the United States died by suicide in 2017. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death nationally, and it is the 2nd leading cause of death for youth aged 10-24.

ALSO NEWSWORTHY

VETERAN CARE COORDINATION NOW STATEWIDE

Link: <https://www.myflvet.com>

Link #2: <http://floridavets.org/florida-veterans-support-line-expands-statewide-at-1-844-myflvet/>

In 2014, the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay launched the Florida Veterans Support Line (1-844-MyFLVet) after recognizing a gap in support for the veterans in our community. The pilot program operated on a peer-to-peer model, meaning veterans could connect with other veterans while receiving necessary emotional assistance and community resources.

In 2018, through partnerships with the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs, the Department of Children and Families, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), we were able to expand the veteran specific line to cover the entire state of Florida.



Today, the Crisis Center’s veteran staff are working with veteran care coordinators based at 2-1-1 systems around the state. When a veteran calls the support line for assistance but requires additional help to handle their crisis, they can receive follow-up calls from a local veteran care coordinator to work with them as they navigate the available resources. After operating this model at the Crisis Center for several years, we were able to train the staff state-wide on the best practices for this service. Since Florida has the third largest population of veterans in the country, there is no shortage of vets in need of support. We anticipate in the coming years that we will continue to expand these services to ensure that no veteran in our state has to go through their crisis alone.

YET ANOTHER NEWSWORTHY ITEM

NEW IN WISQARS DATA VISUALIZATION: TRAINING VIDEOS AND MORE

Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/>

CDC's WISQARS™ (*Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System*) is an interactive, online database that provides fatal and nonfatal injury, violent death, and cost of injury data from a variety of trusted sources. Researchers, the media, public health professionals, and the public can use WISQARS™ data to learn more about the public health and economic burden associated with unintentional and violence-related injury in the United States.

WISQARS Data Visualization displays injury data in a new interactive, visual format. You can explore fatal and nonfatal injury data from 2001 to 2017. WISQARS Data Visualization offers new features and enhancements for exploring injury data:

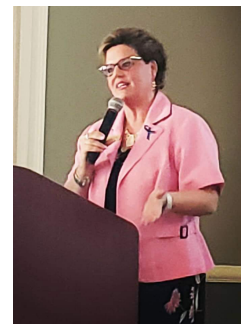
- Training videos for Fatal Injury Data Visualization
- Integrated menu between Fatal and Nonfatal Injury Data Visualization

Note: If you use data from this source, you may NOT report sub-national information for less than 10 deaths. For example, if you investigate Florida County level deaths by suicide, you are not permitted to report a county annual summary of fewer than 10 deaths (this is especially pertinent for rural counties).

FOR THE REST OF US

FSPC MEMBER PRESENTS SUICIDE PREVENTION IN DELAND

AdventHealth recently sponsored and hosted a full-day event, *Suicide Awareness & Prevention Seminar*, on Wednesday August 28 in Deland Florida. Kelly Sousa, FSPC Region 12 Director, was invited to present an informative suicide prevention presentation along with other notable speakers (i.e., Volusia County Sheriff Michael J. Chitwood, Dr. Saul Rivera, Miami University (Ohio), Ety Martinez, Seminole County Public Schools Social Worker). The audience included about 250 Physicians, Law Enforcement, & Clergy representatives. FSPC created a 6-page handout targeted to the three main groups attending the event.



As a result of her presentation, Kelly was contacted by Parish Nurse Ministry and invited to participate for a Seniors' Health Fair in October.

FSPC MEMBER INTERVIEWED ABOUT SCHOOLS TRACKING SUICIDE DEATHS

<https://www.abcactionnews.com/news/local-news/i-team-investigates/most-florida-school-districts-dont-track-student-suicides-i-team-investigation-finds>



FSPC Vice Chair, Stephen Roggenbaum was recently interviewed by ABC Action News regarding Florida school districts and tracking youth suicide deaths. Roggenbaum spoke as a representative of the *Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition* and mentioned the challenges that exist with tracking such information. The link above connects to the ABC television coverage along with a text article summarizing similar information.

MEMBER REPRESENTS FSPC AT CENTERSTONE'S LIFE;STORY DEPRESSION AWARENESS & SUICIDE PREVENTION RUN/WALK

Jody Smith and her son, Lee, represented FSPC at Centerstone's Life;Story Depression Awareness and Suicide Prevention Run/Walk in Sarasota on September 21. Jody indicated she was honored to represent Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition and host a table. Jody and her Lee arrived early (well before 6:30 am



on a Saturday) and strategically selected a table to host near the food vendors assuming that's where folks might congregate. They were not content to sit behind the table, and mingled in the crowd being able to hand out a large number of brochures & FSPC matchbooks (with the FSPC website listed) and speak with participants and spectators alike. There were over 1,000 runners at the event so FSPC got great exposure. A big Thank You to our active FSPC member, Jody, and her son, Lee.

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

THE NATIONAL ACTION ALLIANCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION RELEASES *FAITH LEADERS' GUIDE TO SELF-CARE AFTER A SUICIDE*

Link: <https://theactionalliance.org/faith-hope-life/take-action/provide-care-and-comfort>

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance) and its Faith Communities Task Force released a new video, *Faith Leaders' Guide to Self-Care After a Suicide*. This new resource highlights the importance of self-care among faith leaders and aims to equip them with tools to ensure their own well-being following a death by suicide. Informed by leaders from diverse faith communities and national suicide prevention experts, the video is part of the Action Alliance's Faith.Hope.Life. campaign—a national initiative that engages faith leaders and faith communities as partners in suicide prevention, and equips them with tools and resources to join the movement.

The video also complements another recently released *Faith.Hope.Life.* campaign resource, *Suicide Prevention Competencies for Faith Leaders*, which helps equip faith leaders with the capabilities needed to prevent suicide and provide care and comfort to those affected by suicide. The Faith.Hope.Life. campaign helps to integrate and coordinate suicide prevention across sectors and settings, including faith-based organizations and places of worship, a key goal of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention.

While faith communities are perfect suicide prevention partners, their leaders need support from those of us who know how hard this important work can be sometimes. Please join us on the Faith Communities Task Force in our efforts to enjoin these communities of faith and help their leaders take good care of themselves.

WHAT'S HAPPENING



October 19, 2019 - 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. *1st Annual Boost Your Brain Healthy Event* sponsored by FISP (Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention). Features Clark Flatt, Jason Foundation Founder. Broward College, Davie Central Campus (Building 10). Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com> search *Boost Your Brain* or call 954-384-0344 for more information.

November 23, 2019. *International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day*. Find an event near you at <https://afsp.org/find-support/ive-lost-someone/survivor-day/>

Thursday, February 27th 2020, *Florida Suicide Prevention Day at the Capitol*. Tallahassee. Mark your calendars now!

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://suicidiegriefresources.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 . . .

A GUIDE TO WORKING THROUGH THE GRIEF AFTER A LOSS BY SUICIDE

By Katie Hurley, LCSW & Medically Reviewed by Allison Young, MD
Everyday Health Website

Link: <https://www.everydayhealth.com/emotional-health/guide-working-through-grief-after-loss-suicide/>

The FSPC Newsletter plans to include portions/chapters of A Guide To Working Through the Grief After a Loss by Suicide over the next few FSPC Newsletters. Below are the Introduction & Chapter 1.

There is no easy prescription for recovering from the loss, but there are things you can do to better cope with and ease the pain.

People give you all kinds of advice when a loved one dies: "You have to go on with your life." "Your loved one would want you to be happy." "You are strong and brave and you can get through this." "You have to be strong for your siblings, children, and other loved ones." These words of encouragement are stated with the best intentions in mind. They are meant to convey comfort and optimism during difficult times.

Grief is overwhelming at best, no matter the cause of death, but loss by suicide is particularly complicated. Survivors of loss by suicide face the same painful emotions as others who grieve a loss, but they also have to cope with messy and complicated emotions, like guilt, shame, and anger, to name a few. They are forced to confront the stigma associated with suicide every time they answer a question about their loss.

It was 21 years ago that my father died by suicide, alone in his office on the last day of April. The initial shock that enabled me to go through the necessary steps to bid my father farewell was soon replaced with overwhelming feelings of guilt, despair, and utter disbelief.

I was 23 years old at the time, and nearly one year into the master of social work program at the University of Pennsylvania. I knew the symptoms of depression and the warning signs for suicide, but I never saw it coming. He didn't wave a single red flag before he died. I would grapple with that guilt for years to come.



Recent data shows that suicide is the 10th leading cause of death overall in the United States, the second leading cause of death among individuals between ages 10 and 34, and the fourth leading cause of death among individuals between ages 35 and 54. (1) Deaths by suicide are on the rise.

In her new book, *Life After Suicide: Finding Courage, Comfort, and Community After Unthinkable Loss*, ABC News Chief Medical Correspondent Jennifer Ashton, MD, examines this tragic epidemic and recounts her own first-hand experience with a tragic loss. Dr. Ashton writes about the personal trauma that she and her family experienced when her ex-husband died by suicide in 2017.

“This is a book about hope, and strength, and resilience, and growth, and how, with a lot of help and love, we found our way out of a darkness I was sometimes afraid might swallow us whole,” Ashton writes.

While there is no prescription for “getting over” loss, you will get through this. In time, you will find that you are not alone in this catastrophic loss, and connecting with others can help you feel less isolated. There are things you can do to better cope with the emotional turmoil that accompanies a loss by suicide. Grief is a journey that changes over time, but doesn’t necessarily end.

Many people benefit from psychotherapy as they work through their grief following a loss by suicide, while others take comfort in groups for survivors.

There is no right way to grieve this kind of loss, and no perfect words to ease the pain of those left behind. The following guide is intended to help survivors of suicide take the steps that work best for them and their loved ones.



Chapter 1: Understanding That Your Loved One’s Suicide Is Not Your Fault

There’s plenty of guilt to go around when it comes to picking up the pieces following a suicide. According to a review published in June 2012 in the journal *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, research has shown that in addition to the typical sadness and disbelief expected with all grief, overwhelming feelings of guilt, confusion, rejection, shame, and anger are prominent among survivors of loss by suicide. (2) There also tends to be an immense need to make sense of the loss.

Survivor’s guilt is a huge obstacle on the path to recovery. It’s natural to get caught up in intrusive thoughts telling you that you could have done or said this or that when confronting the [stress](#) of this kind of trauma, but it’s essential to remember that intrusive thoughts aren’t accurate thoughts. These thoughts don’t paint the complete picture.

Repeat after me: I am not responsible for my loved one’s suicide.

Write yourself a note. Text yourself reminders. Ask a close friend to remind you of this often. You are not responsible for your loved one’s death.

Coping With the 'What Ifs?'

The “what ifs?” will keep you up at night. They’ll sneak up on you when you least expect them. They’ll ruin what you think might finally be a somewhat regular day.

- What if I made that phone call?
- What if I didn’t start that fight?
- What if I didn’t file for divorce?
- What if I didn’t yell at my child over that poor grade?
- What if I had been more understanding?
- What if I paid more attention?
- What if I insisted on therapy?

The “what if” statements that trigger feelings of guilt are seemingly endless. The truth is, it’s easy to look back and hyper-focus on the perceived missteps along the way. When people look for errors, they generally find them. But the “what ifs?” following suicide are more like false accusations. The “what ifs?” force survivors to look inward in self-blame, thereby increasing the feelings of guilt and shame.

Make a List of the 'I Dids'

Chances are you gave your loved one a lot of support throughout your time together. Make a list of the ways you did support your loved one. Include both small and large acts of kindness and support. Tuck that list away somewhere safe and refer to it when the “what ifs?” sneak up on you again. By reframing your thought process to focus on how you did provide help and support, you give yourself permission to release the feelings of guilt.

Given that relationships are built on trust and support, it’s natural that surviving spouses and partners experience feelings of guilt about failing to see the signs or provide adequate support. The fact is that depression is often an invisible illness. Many people go about their day-to-day lives while fighting a silent battle that has very few physical symptoms. This is beyond the control of a spouse or partner.

Parents of children who die by suicide might experience feelings of guilt and self-blame related to their parenting: "If only I had been more supportive." "If only I had gotten help sooner." While parents do play an integral role in the emotional development of the child, they do not cause suicide. It is not the failure of the parent that results in child suicide, nor can parents assume the blame.

Siblings share their own unique bonds, and sibling relationships can ebb and flow. Young sibling survivors might experience self-blame if they recently had a fight, didn’t act in a kind manner, or teased their sibling. Older siblings might experience self-blame if they haven’t been in close contact, or meant to call or send a note. It’s important to help surviving siblings understand that they had no control over this loss.

Close friends can also experience feelings of guilt and self-blame. When life feels busy, it isn’t always possible to return every call or check on friends. While checking in on friends is always kind and helpful, one missed phone call or canceled coffee date is not the cause of suicide. As with spouses and partners, it’s very difficult for friends to spot the warning signs.

This Series on Working through Grief After a Loss by Suicide continues in the next few FSPC newsletters.

SUPPORT FSPC WHEN YOU SHOP

Amazon donates to FSPC, when you make an online Amazon purchase. Support FSPC by going to smile.amazon.com (you must start here and begin shopping from here to have your selected charity receive an Amazon donation) and register the *Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition* (FSPC) as your chosen charity. Then start shopping on Amazon (smile.amazon.com) & support suicide prevention.



FSPC NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Submit news, 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

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