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December 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.

JOIN today!

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

FLORIDA TAKING ACTION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION 5TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition

The Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition (FSPC) announced FSPC's 2020 *Florida Taking Action for Suicide Prevention 5th Annual Conference*. Join FSPC and others February 25, 2020 (1:00 pm - 5:00 pm) & February 26, 2020 (8:30 am - 4:00 pm) at the Florida Sheriffs Association Training Center in Tallahassee. Apply to present at this statewide conference by December 6th. The link for 2020 FSPC Conference Proposal Submissions is: https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bf8ORX60P83kp0x

FSPC has reserved a limited block of rooms at Candlewood Suites Tallahassee (2815 Lakeshore Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312) for \$150-\$160 (single/double) per night just a few miles from the conference location. Call to reserve a room at the special rate: 850-597-7000 (use group name "Florida Suicide Prevention").

PREVENTION IN PRACTICE: UPSTREAM SUICIDE PREVENTION IN CONNECTICUT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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

In this five-minute video story, Heather Spada from United Way of Connecticut describes her state's effort to create and implement an upstream suicide prevention curriculum in elementary schools. Featuring Gizmo the therapy dog, Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health is helping elementary school staff effectively teach children about mental health, life skills development, and social connectedness.



NEW NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR WORKPLACE SUICIDE PREVENTION

Link: <https://workplacesuicideprevention.com/>

The American Association of Suicidology (AAS), American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), and United Suicide Survivors International (United Survivors) have launched a website with the newly released [National Guidelines for Workplace Suicide Prevention](https://workplacesuicideprevention.com/).

Many workplace mental health and wellness programs exist. Sometimes, due to internal stigma within these programs, the topic of suicide prevention is neglected. When we do not talk about it, we cannot address some of the unique challenges within suicide prevention, intervention and crisis response that are not covered in mental health and wellness programs. For example, while suicidal despair is often linked to mental health conditions it is also connected to job strain. Just getting workers to counseling is not enough; workplaces dedicated to suicide prevention must also examine their policies and culture to see what environmental determinants might be contributing to suicidal intensity.

While there exists some overlap among the mental health/wellness initiatives and suicide prevention, there are some differentiators within this document that justify this additional emphasis. We see our effort as complementary and collaborative with many of the other existing programs on workplace mental health and well-being.

Learn and explore the nine recommended practices at the link above.

FOR THE REST OF US

NEW FSPC REGION DIRECTOR



Payton Reid, FSPC Region 9 Director, has joined the FSPC as our newest Region Director. Payton replaces Doris Carroll who has served as region director and participated in the FSPC for many years. Payton is a Florida native although she has also lived in NYC for five years. Payton previously worked for HBH Youth Emergency Services Team (YES Team) doing mobile crisis in Broward county and currently works as a mental health counselor at Henderson Behavioral Health's adult crisis center in south eastern Florida. Payton is a member of the American Counseling Association and Florida Mental Health Counselors Association. When she was a teenager, a family friend completed suicide and it completely shocked her because he was such a vibrant man. That was the first time

she realized that many people are fighting a quiet battle alone. Since becoming a crisis counselor, she has had the opportunity to sit with numerous individuals (children and adults) through their most difficult days and as a result, she feels incredibly passionate about suicide assessment, suicide prevention, and reducing/removing the stigma and fear surrounding the word "suicide."

Prior to being a mental health counselor, Payton studied fashion and musical theatre. She considers herself a very creative individual, which she believes helps her be a better counselor. Payton wants to help reduce/remove the stigma of suicide. She hopes to utilize her skills and knowledge to help educate other professionals and the public about the importance of being able to talk about suicide in order to help prevent it.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

THE SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER'S A STRATEGIC PLANNING APPROACH TO SUICIDE PREVENTION

Link: <https://training.sprc.org/enroll/index.php?id=31>

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center has launched an updated and redesigned version of its online course, *A Strategic Planning Approach to Suicide Prevention*. This free, self-paced training can help identify issues and populations to focus on, select activities that can effectively prevent suicide, and prioritize efforts to achieve maximum impact. The course can be completed in two to three hours but one does not need complete the course in a single session.

This course teaches you to:

- Describe the suicide problem and its context.
- Choose long-term goals for a suicide prevention program.
- Identify key risk and protective factors to focus on.
- Select or develop interventions to decrease or increase these risk and protective factors.
- Plan an evaluation.
- Implement the interventions and the evaluation.
- Take further action based on the evaluation.

NOVA'S OFFICE OF SUICIDE AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION FALL NEWSLETTER POSTED

Link: <https://www.nova.edu/suicideprevention/forms/newsletter-fall-20191.pdf>

Nova Southeastern University's (NSU) Crisis Prevention Committee was formed in 2004 to develop strategies for preventing suicide and violence among the NSU community. In 2007, the NSU Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention was developed to support crisis prevention efforts, with a focus on suicide prevention. The team is comprised of faculty, staff, and students who are passionate about suicide and violence prevention. Read the Fall Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention newsletter at the link above.

WHAT'S HAPPENING



February 25 & 26, 2020, **Plan to Attend!** *Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition's 5th Annual Florida Taking Action for Suicide Prevention Conference*. Tallahassee. Mark your calendars.

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

March 15-18, 2020. The 33rd annual Research and Policy Conference on Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult Behavioral Health. Sponsored by the Department of Child and Family Studies at USF. Tampa. <https://www.cmhnetwork.org/tampa-conference/>

April 22-25, 2020. American Association of Suicidology's 53rd Annual Conference. Portland, Oregon. <https://www.aasconference.org>

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://suicidogrief.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://suicidogriefresources.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.stevelfund.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. Last month, we included Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Below are Chapters 4 and Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Learning How to Tackle the Harmful Stigma Surrounding Suicide

If you want to clear a room in an instant, mention suicide. People have all kinds of reactions to discussions of suicide and mental health, many of them blanketed in discomfort. We, as a society, don’t know how to talk about these isolating topics, so we tend to talk around them. But talking is exactly what

we need to do to destigmatize suicide and mental health and relieve survivors of the unfair burden of protecting the emotional reactions of those around them.

Watch Your Words

Words matter to suicide loss survivors. While a simple turn of phrase might not seem like a big deal, certain phrases can feel judgmental and isolating. If you are in the position of helping a loved one who suffered a loss by suicide, consider these changes in language:



- Use “died by suicide” instead of “committed suicide.”
- Only use the word “suicide” when you’re discussing suicide. Phrases like “social suicide” and “career suicide” can be hurtful to suicide loss survivors.
- Use “suicide attempt” instead of “failed suicide” or “successful suicide.”

Share Your Story

When the shock begins to subside, survivors of loss by suicide are left to put their lives back together and attempt to carry on. This is a heavy burden in the face of tragedy. Just as a person who loses a loved one to cancer needs to talk through his or her feelings, survivors of loss by suicide need to tell their stories, too.



Once you’ve learned to use the phrase “died by suicide,” begin talking to a trusted friend or family member. Start small. If you’re riding the waves of shock, say that. If you’re feeling anger or confusion, say that.

The more comfortable you feel opening up to your support system about your loss, the more you reduce the stigma within your social circle. You can widen that circle as you feel comfortable, but don’t push yourself. While some survivors of loss by suicide take comfort in joining advocacy groups and speaking about loss by suicide, others need more time to heal before sharing their stories.

Chapter 5: Knowing That Teens Are Affected by Suicide, Too

Many teens who attempt or die by suicide have a mental health condition that can make it difficult to cope with stressors such as failure, rejection, breakups, social issues, academic stress, and family discord. When teens lack coping skills or support systems to rely on when they’re struggling, they might have difficulty envisioning a solution to their problems.

There are red flags for teen suicide, but it’s important to remember that some elevated risks are difficult to detect. Many teens are adept at concealing their pain from their families and close friends.

Red flags include:

- Writing or talking about suicide, online or face to face
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Social isolation
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Increased risky or self-destructive behavior
- Giving away possessions
- Personality changes, including increased agitation, anxiety, or depressed behaviors

Talking to Teens About the Loss of a Friend by Suicide

There’s a common misconception that talking to teens about suicide can have the unintended consequence of encouraging suicide. This is a myth. In fact, breaking the tension and talking openly about suicide can actually help teens open up about it.

Often, teens are more comfortable talking about suicide and mental health than adults, but it’s different when teens are the survivors of loss by suicide. There’s no perfect way to discuss this kind of loss, but it is important to be honest, use direct language (don’t try to sugarcoat it), empathize, and be prepared for questions.

You can open the conversation by asking your teen a question, such as:

- Did your school talk about the death by suicide?
- How did you feel when you heard the news?
- Did any of your friends have reactions that surprised you?

- Do you ever feel depressed? Do you ever think about suicide?

This is not a one-time conversation. You should check in with your teen regularly and normalize the wide range of emotions your teen is likely to experience.

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

FSPC MEMBERSHIP

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