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May 2020 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/>

AN EXTRA HELPING . . .

HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE WHO HAS LOST A LOVED ONE TO SUICIDE

By Elizabeth Boyle; Crisis Intervention Specialist (November 13, 2019)

Families First (Indiana) Website

Link: <https://www.familiesfirstindiana.org/how-to-support-someone-who-has-lost-a-loved-one-to-suicide>

The death of a loved one is difficult under any circumstances, but a loss by suicide is unique in many ways. Suicide often comes as a great shock to a family without recognizable warning signs. Unfortunately, suicide carries a stigma that can cause the family feelings of shame and can cause those around them to avoid the issue and not reach out. These factors can severely complicate the grieving process.

Death by suicide isn't as rare as many would like to think. According to the American Association of Suicidology, there

are 36,000 suicides annually in the US. They estimate that for every suicidal death, there are at least six survivors. Based on that estimate, approximately 6 million people have lost a loved one to suicide in the past 25 years. This makes it likely that we will personally know a survivor of suicide loss at some point in our lives.

So, How Can We Support Someone We Care About Following A Loss By Suicide? The American Foundation For Suicide Prevention Makes The Following Suggestions:

1. Refrain from saying “I know how you feel.” Instead, something like, “I don’t know what to say: I have no idea what you’re going through, but I care about you and I want to be here for you,” will be more honest and meaningful.
2. Read about suicide loss. You’ll better understand what they are experiencing, and in the process might discover helpful information you can share with them.
3. Don’t wait for them to ask you for help; they may be too deep in their grief to realize what they need. Rather than saying, “Let me know if I can help,” do something specific for them, like shop for groceries, offer to babysit, bring dinner to their home, etc.
4. Help connect them with other suicide loss survivors through International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day, AFSP’s Survivor Outreach Program, and bereavement support groups. When appropriate, consider offering to accompany them to an event so that they don’t feel so alone.
5. Many people find that professional counseling helps them deal with their grief in a healthy way. Help your friend search for a therapist, schedule appointments, etc.
6. Don’t be afraid to speak the name of the person who died. Your friend will be grateful for the opportunity to reminisce.
7. Knowing what to expect and learning from someone else’s experience can help both you and your friend get through the more difficult times.
8. Just be there. Sit with them. Watch TV or a movie. Listen to music. Go for a walk together.
9. Be patient. This experience has changed their life forever. The weeks and months following the funeral, when the initial shock wears off and the full reality of what has happened sinks in, may be the toughest for them. Continue to check in, and let them know you are thinking of them, that you’re there for them, and that you want to listen.
10. Most importantly, be sure to remind your friend of their self-care needs: get plenty of rest, eat nutritiously, etc.

On a final note, Families First’s Crisis and Suicide Intervention Service (CSIS) encourages refraining from saying that the loved one “committed suicide.” The word “commit” has very negative connotations, such as committing a sin or a crime. Instead, we recommend saying that they “suicided” or “died by suicide.”

NEWSWORTHY

NATIONAL WEEKEND OF PRAYER FOR FAITH, HOPE, & LIFE

Link: <https://theactionalliance.org/faith-hope-life/national-weekend-of-prayer>

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention’s (Action Alliance) *National Weekend of Prayer for Faith, Hope, & Life* (May 15-17) is an annual event during which faith communities all around the country pledge to join in prayer for those who have been touched by suicide, those who are dealing with mental health concerns or feelings of hopelessness, and those who love and care for them.



With the novel coronavirus pandemic affecting the entire country, and physical distancing mandates in place in many communities, faith leaders and faith communities have an especially important role to play in supporting those who may be struggling. The *National Weekend of Prayer* offers resources to help communities wherever they pray—at home, online, alone, or with others. Join the movement to empower faith communities nationwide to support those who are struggling and to promote hope, resiliency, and recovery.

- *Pledge*. Pledge today to join the National Weekend of Prayer, and encourage others to pledge too.
- *Plan*. Plan how you will incorporate the National Weekend of Prayer into your online services, groups, classes, outreach, and other efforts. Check out our sample prayer tools and other resources for ideas on how to address the topic in sensitive and caring ways.
- *Promote*. Share information early and often with your members about your organization's participation in National Weekend of Prayer. Post your community's prayers for Faith, Hope & Life to social media using the hashtag #PrayFHL.

ANOTHER NEWSWORTHY ITEM

FLORIDA COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY SUICIDE PREVENTION GRANTS IN ACTION

Florida is fortunate to have a number of superb institutions of higher learning. Some of the entities have secured suicide prevention funding through the Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Garrett Lee Smith three-year grants. FSPC will highlight these grants (most currently in progress) over the next few newsletters:

ROLLINS COLLEGE, WINTER PARK, Connie Briscoe; The Rollins College Suicide Prevention Project will increase institutional capacity to implement, sustain, and improve effective identification, intervention and prevention services for students at risk for the development of suicidal behavior, serious mental illness, and/or substance related overuse or injury. The primary purpose of this project is to build necessary infrastructure to allow the Rollins Wellness Center to effectively respond to an alarming rate of suicidal ideation and mental illness among students on campus. While this project will aim to address the entire campus' vulnerability to suicide and substance use disorders, there are several populations identified as being particularly vulnerable. These include a growing number of students of color; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students; student veterans; and those with pre-existing mental health conditions. The project's overall goal of building a comprehensive, collaborative, well-coordinated, and evidence-based approach to suicide prevention will be achieved through six key activities over the three-year period:



- (1) creating a network infrastructure to link Rollins College with appropriate care providers from the community;
- (2) training gatekeepers (students, faculty, and staff) to respond effectively to those at-risk for suicide
- (3) administering effective voluntary screenings and assessments;
- (4) providing outreach and information to promote suicide prevention efforts, encourage help-seeking, and increase awareness of crisis resources;
- (5) providing mental and substance use disorders prevention and treatment services to college students by employing appropriately trained staff; and
- (6) developing and supporting evidence-based and emerging best practices, including a focus on culturally and linguistically appropriate care.

The activities undertaken will support an estimated 3,200 college students, staff, and faculty annually and over 5,000 students throughout the life of the project. The project will focus on the following core strategies: development of an advisory board of on- and off-campus care providers and experts in suicide and mental health; enhancing the existing QPR Gatekeeper program, including the addition of supplemental gatekeeper programs (i.e., Mental Health First Aid); increased promotion of screening tools

currently in place; implementation of universal screening for depression, anxiety and suicide ideation at all Rollins Wellness Center appointments; and extensive outreach aimed at increasing help-seeking, decreasing high-risk behaviors such as binge drinking, and increasing awareness of resources. The project will also conduct focus group research with students from identified high-risk populations to increase awareness and understanding of the unique needs, barriers and protective factors of, and most effective strategies for reaching these targeted students. Lastly, the project will adopt evidence-based practices focused on the mental health and well-being of college students of color and train all Wellness Center mental health providers to engage in culturally competent, best practice treatment of suicide, severe mental health and substance abuse.

VALENCIA COLLEGE, ORLANDO, Benjamin Lion: Valencia College seeks funding to develop a Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT), an initiative that will: 1) Define a behavioral intervention plan to include a multi-disciplinary communication and escalation plan per campus, along with training for faculty and staff to identify questionable student behaviors early on, an intervention approach rather than a reactive response. 2) Build a more robust crisis identification system and response infrastructure, with the goal of triangulating multiple sources of data into one reporting system and structure 3) Launch a student campaign to teach students about identification and intervention of mental health and substance abuse disorders. This three year project, based on a triage model, aligns with the Comprehensive



Approach to Suicide Prevention, a model advocated by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC). Valencia College is a multi-campus designated Hispanic Serving Institution and high minority college, with 29% of students being first generation. The College serves veterans, international students, students with disabilities, LGBT+, and homeless students. In addition to serving the general college population, the proposed project actively involves participants from such vulnerable populations, at risk for increased suicidal ideation or action. Measurable project goals are:

Goal #1: Create a behavioral intervention plan to include a communication and escalation plan per campus, along with training for faculty and staff to identify student of concern behaviors.

Goal #2: Increase data-sharing and improve communication across multiple locations via a campus-wide incident reporting system. Provide gatekeeper training on the new system.

Goal #3: Improve student understanding of mental health issues, identification and intervention strategies, and knowledge of resources available.

All program activities and outcomes will be provided for the National Outcomes Evaluation, along with recommendations to further increase mental well-being and decrease incidents of student crisis, suicide, and substance abuse at Institutes of Higher Education across the nation.

PEN PAL PROJECT:

TACKLING MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19 ONE PIRATE AT A TIME!



By Julia Riser, TRIO Tutor, Pensacola State College (PSC); Part of PSC's Pirates CARES Project

During this time of isolation and solitude I, like many others, have been struggling with mental health issues due to the lack of human contact. I've found this to be particularly hard because I am so active on my campus and find great comfort in helping others and making a difference in peoples lives. I found myself slipping further into the depths of depression and anxiety, becoming something other than the usual self that is bubbly and bright. But despite this, I decided to fight back! I could not talk face-to-face with the people I love and care for but why should that stop me from spreading joy and making a difference? With this newfound energy I started the Pen Pal Project! I have about twenty to twenty-five people, students and non-students, who participate in this card and "happy mail" giving mission. I've done this because I realized that through my own need of contact, that others might need it just as much as I do.

I have been able to make this a service project with two of my campuses clubs, the Robinson Honors Program and the Theta Chi Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK). With these organizations help we're being able to help more of our fellow Pirates and Pirate family through the means of something once thought antiquated: a letter or card! Giving hope and laughter to those who might need a little happy pep in their day due to these unprecedented times. My hope is that other people will see this, hear of this and make it their own personal mission to send out happy mail. And then maybe the world will be a little bit brighter during these months of social distancing.

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

ROADMAP TO LEADING OTHERS TO RESILIENCE DURING TOUGH TIMES

By Sally Spencer-Thomas

Link: <http://SallySpencerThomas.com/#ElevateTheConvo>

Roadmap to Leading Others to Resilience During Tough Times

3 Key Steps in Crisis Leadership to Help Bolster Mental Health

1. Listen Deeply and Often

Facilitate Town Hall meetings, take a pulse surveys, conduct anonymous interviews, and then feedback the data -- "We are listening: Here is what you told us"



2. Educate

When people are enduring toxic stress, their brains go into fight, flight and freeze mode. Help them FOCUS instead by educating them on what to expect and validating a range of emotional and cognitive experiences. Remind them of their resilience through past hardships.



3. Take Action

Empower them to help themselves by teaching coping skills and connecting to resources. Encourage them to help others they care about. Find ways for them to serve the common good.



Remember: Crisis situations are overwhelming because they are unpredictable, dangerous and out of control

ANTIDOTE TO CRISIS =

- Predictability: What can they expect?
- Safety: How can you enhance psychological safety?
- Control: When can you offer choices?



www.SallySpencerThomas.com | #ElevateTheConvo

WHAT'S HAPPENING



May 3 - 9, 2020. Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. *Bringing Children's Mental Health Into Focus: Perfect Vision in 20/20*. Nationwide.

May 6, 2020. 12:00 noon. Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology presents webinar: Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility featuring Scott Poland, Ed.D.

Register at: https://nova.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WOz3SYx1TuK0-cnClySsPQ?_x_zm_rtaid=EqHI_FVGTYa_ZIS8DjOnXw.1587922276946.ce6bac8e710480d787d2664b4815030c&_x_zm_rtaid=763

[_x_zm_rtaid=EqHI_FVGTYa_ZIS8DjOnXw.1587922276946.ce6bac8e710480d787d2664b4815030c&_x_zm_rtaid=763](https://nova.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WOz3SYx1TuK0-cnClySsPQ?_x_zm_rtaid=EqHI_FVGTYa_ZIS8DjOnXw.1587922276946.ce6bac8e710480d787d2664b4815030c&_x_zm_rtaid=763)

[1587922276946.ce6bac8e710480d787d2664b4815030c&_x_zm_rtaid=763](https://nova.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WOz3SYx1TuK0-cnClySsPQ?_x_zm_rtaid=EqHI_FVGTYa_ZIS8DjOnXw.1587922276946.ce6bac8e710480d787d2664b4815030c&_x_zm_rtaid=763)

May 7, 2020. *National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day 2020*. SAMHSA Webinar: Combating Social Isolation for Seniors during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Thursday 5/7/20 1:00 - 2:30 pm. Register at:

<https://www.event.com/events/national-older-adults-mental-health-awareness-day-2020-combating-social-isolation-for-seniors-during/registration-d01fb4dae7ef4b86ac28a240b5e8262d.aspx?fqp=true>

August 19-21, 2020. *Florida Behavioral Health Conference 2020 conference* at Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek. Presentation submission accepted until 2/28/2020 at <https://www.bhcon.org/page/CFP>

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):

<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/>

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>