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December 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/>

MIS-INFORMATION IS A CHALLENGE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Recently a viral tweet circulated, shared by some celebrities and members of the news media, that contains misinformation around the impact that the pandemic is having on suicide rates. The tweet inaccurately states that suicide rates are up by 200%, *which is not correct*. In fact, back in August the CDC reported that while thoughts of suicide have increased two-fold from June 2019 to June 2020, *we do not* have evidence that suicide rates in the U.S. have risen over the past year.

While it is important for everyone to be aware of the Lifeline number (800-273-8255), it is not a good idea to be giving an impression of higher rates of suicide than we know to be accurate.

Research (see description below) discussing the relationship between beliefs about frequency of suicidal thoughts and attempts and risk for same, suggests we should take great care to not report higher rates than we know to be true. Perceptions (true or not) of higher suicidal behavior leads to actual higher



incidents of suicide-related behavior. Social norming appears to be a real and under-recognized problem around suicide reporting.

Reyes-Portillo, Lake, Kleinman, & Gould (2019) examined the relationship between adolescents' beliefs about the prevalence of youth suicide ideation (ideation descriptive norms) and suicide attempts (attempt descriptive norms) with self-reported suicide ideation and attempts. Adolescents who believed suicide ideation and attempts to be more widespread among peers (i.e., elevated ideation and attempt descriptive norms) were more likely to endorse suicide ideation and attempts. Correcting these misperceptions can be a helpful goal for suicide prevention programs.

AVAILABLE: 2020 – 2023 FLORIDA SUICIDE PREVENTION INTERAGENCY ACTION PLAN

Link: <https://www.myffamilies.com/service-programs/samh/prevention/suicide-prevention/index.shtml> (plan emailed out but should be posted soon).

Anna Gai, Director of the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention, has released the final *2020 – 2023 Florida Suicide Prevention Interagency Action Plan!* In addition to the Florida Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council's efforts, Ms. Gai offered a special thank you to her predecessor Dr. Sofia Castro, Rhonda Jackson (DOH), and the Suicide Prevention Interagency Action Plan Committee for their commitment, leadership, and assistance in the plan's development and finalization. The 2020 – 2023 Florida Suicide Prevention Interagency Action Plan will be Florida's roadmap for the next three years.

STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH SUICIDE LOSS



By Carla Stumpf Patton, EdD, LMHC

Suicide loss can bring overwhelming emotions and an insurmountable level of pain and grief, with endless questions about how and why this could have happened and can leave survivors wondering how they will ever get through this...but we can survive and take encouragement from others who have traveled this path before us. Here are some strategies that can help along the journey. **Take care of your basic needs, such as** getting regular sleep, proper nourishment and hydration, physical activity (which can give you an outlet for your grief), and attending to your medical and mental health. **Seeking grief support**

through peers, as well as professionals, can help with learning coping skills, connecting with others, and stabilizing and regulating overwhelming emotions. **Engage in activities and hobbies** that offer calming, creative outlets for grief. **Honoring and remembering your loved one** helps keep memories alive and can be powerful tributes to the life that was lived. **Practice self-compassion** and be gentle with yourself, patient with the process, go at your own pace, and take things one step at a time, one day at a time and, when need be, go back to the basics and focus on breathing to help manage strong emotions. **When you are ready, finding meaning and purpose** can help to grow and move forward along the grief journey, as you deserve to still experience joy, laughter, and love in your life. We all travel a different pathway in our grief journey, but as fellow survivors, we know this journey is too much for anyone to manage by themselves. We want you to know you do not have to do this alone, and healing your heart- where you can survive and perhaps even thrive again- is possible, and in turn can bring a renewed sense of strength and hope.

Dr. Carla Stumpf-Patton is the Senior Director of Postvention Programs at TAPS and is a subject matter expert in grief, trauma and suicide. She holds a Doctorate of Education in Counseling Psychology. She is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, National Certified Counselor, Certified Fellow Thanatologist and Certified Clinical Trauma Professional. Dr. Stumpf-Patton is the surviving spouse of Marine Corps Drill Instructor Sgt. Stumpf, who died by suicide in 1994, several days before their only child was born.

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

PROMOTE SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND SUPPORT

By Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Link: https://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/Suicide_Strategic_Direction_Full_Version-a.pdf



Social support and connection are key protective factors against suicide. Positive and supportive social relationships and community connections can help buffer the effects of risk factors in people’s lives. Programs and practices that promote social connectedness and support are one element of a [comprehensive approach to suicide prevention](#).

What Is Connectedness?

In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) adopted promoting connectedness as its strategic direction for preventing suicidal behavior.¹ The CDC defines connectedness as “the degree to which a person or group is socially close, interrelated, or shares resources with other persons or groups.”¹

Connectedness can include: 1

- Connectedness between individuals (e.g., friends, neighbors, co-workers)
- Connectedness among family members
- Connectedness to community organizations (e.g., schools, faith communities)
- The connection of groups (e.g., minority groups) to their cultural traditions and history

Connectedness and support can be enhanced through social programs directed at specific groups (such as older adults or LGBT youth), as well as through activities that support the development of positive and supportive communities.

Positive and supportive social relationships and community connections can help buffer the effects of risk factors in people’s lives.

Take Action

- Support the development of relationships between youth and positive adults in their lives (e.g., teachers, coaches).
- Help build positive attachments between families and organizations in the community (e.g., schools and tribal and faith-based organizations).
- Create and sustain peer-delivered services and support groups.
- Implement activities in educational institutions that help students increase and strengthen their social networks and connections.

It’s important to remember that not all social connections are healthy. Suicide prevention programs should promote programs and practices leading to positive and supportive relationships. Engaging in [data-driven strategic planning](#) can help you assess your needs and assets, set goals, review possible program options, and determine which interventions fit your situation and desired outcomes.

¹ *Reference:* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Strategic direction for the prevention of suicidal behavior: Promoting individual, family, and community connectedness to prevent suicidal behavior. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/Suicide_Strategic_Direction_Full_Version-a.pdf

MORE AVAILABLE RESOURCES

CONNECTEDNESS

Link: <http://gspin.org/connectedness>

Suicide prevention is an important public health strategy. There are a number of factors that put people at higher or lower risk for suicide, many of which are related to the concept of *connectedness*.

Connectedness is the degree to which a person or group is socially close, interrelated or shares resources with other persons or groups. Connectedness can lead to increased social contact, sense of belonging, sense of self-worth and access to sources of support. As a result, in times of stress, connected individuals have greater motivation and ability to cope adaptively in the face of adversity. Connectedness occurs

within and between multiple levels of the social ecology, that is between individuals, families, schools and other organizations, neighborhoods, cultural groups, and society as a whole.

For more information on the research behind connectedness as a protective factor for suicide prevention, check out the links to CDC info and other related articles below.

Links

- Promoting Connectedness to Prevent Suicide*
 Link: <https://edc.adobeconnect.com/a1002235226/p45z14gblmm/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal&proto=true> (A Webinar/Presentation from the CDC) - Evaluations of interventions directed toward preventing suicidal behavior have shown that promoting connectedness is a promising suicide prevention strategy. Connectedness to others, including family members, teachers, coworkers, community organizations, and social institutions, is an important protective factor. Positive relationships can help increase a person's sense of belonging, foster a sense of personal worth, and provide access to sources of support. During this webinar, participants will learn why and how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention made connectedness promotion a central focus of its suicide prevention efforts. In addition, presenters will describe programs that have promoted connectedness within specific populations including: older adults, American Indians and Alaska Natives, and African American youth.
- Promoting Individual, Family, and Community connectedness to Prevent Suicidal Behavior*
 Link: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/Suicide_Strategic_Direction_Full_Version-a.pdf - This document describes a 5 year vision for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) work to prevent fatal and non-fatal suicidal behavior. The strategic direction they propose is to prevent suicidal behavior by building and strengthening connectedness or social bonds within and among persons, families and communities.
- Preventing Suicide Through Connectedness*
https://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/ASAP_Suicide_Issue3-a.pdf (A PDF document from the CDC)
- Connectedness and Suicide Prevention in Adolescents*
<http://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/connectedness-suicide-prevention.pdf> (Article from the American Association of Suicidology) - Adolescent suicide is a major public health concern. Stressing the need for public health-based solutions, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified "connectedness" as one means of pursuing this agenda.
- Building and Strengthening connectedness to Prevent Suicide Among Veterans*
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/veterans-suicide-prevention_b_3378563 (Huffington Post Article)



WEBINAR (RECORDED):

PREVENTING SUICIDE & SELF-HARM AMONG BLACK YOUTH

By Children's Safety Network

Link: <https://www.childrensafetynetwork.org/webinar/preventing-suicide-self-harm-among-black-youth>

This recorded webinar from Children's Safety Network focused on the epidemiology of suicide and self-harm among Black youth, identified evidence-based and informed strategies for prevention, risk and protective factors, barriers to prevention and resources available to providers.

Although Black youth have historically not been considered at high risk for suicide and self-harm, current trends now challenge that. In 2019, The Congressional Black Caucus reported that "the suicide death rate

among Black youth has been found to be increasing faster than any other racial/ethnic group. In youth ages 10 to 19 years, suicide is the second leading cause of death, and in 2017, over 3,000 youth died by suicide in this age group. Over the past decade, increases in the suicide death rate for Black youth have seen the rate rising from 2.55 per 100,000 in 2007 to 4.82 per 100,000 in 2017. Black youth under 13 years are twice as likely to die by suicide and when comparing by sex, Black males, 5 to 11 years, are more likely to die by suicide compared to their White peers.” Further, the YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey, developed by the CDC) indicated that “suicide attempts rose by 73% between 1991-2017 for Black adolescents (boy and girls), while injury by attempt rose by 122% for Black adolescent boys during that time period. This suggests Black males are engaging in more lethal means when attempting suicide.”



This webinar focused on the epidemiology of suicide and self-harm among Black youth, identified evidence-based and informed strategies for prevention, risk and protective factors, barriers to prevention and resources available to providers. Dr. Crystal Barksdale of the National Institute of Mental Health discussed the most recent data on suicide and suicidal behaviors among Black youth. She described risk and protective factors for suicide and deleterious mental health outcomes. Dr. Rhonda Boyd of the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine presents barriers to intervention engagement among Black youth and current evidence for suicide prevention, including screening and treatment. She shared information regarding organizations and websites that are important resources for practitioners. Ellyson Stout of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center at Education Development Center moderated the webinar.

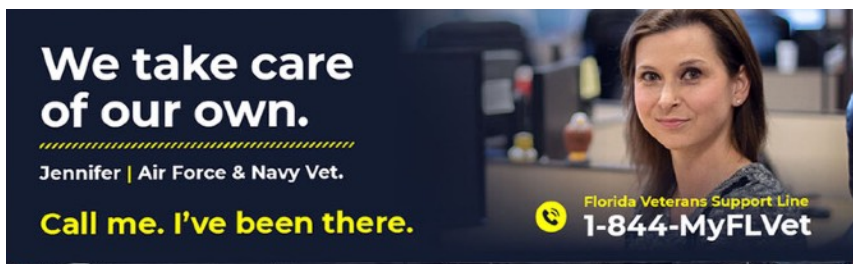
SUPPORTING FLORIDA VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

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

Phone: 1-844-MyFLVet (844-693-5838)

MyFLVet line launched in 2014, expanded statewide in 2018, and has served numerous veterans and their families. When a veteran calls **1-844-MyFLVet**, they will speak with someone who is trained to provide immediate emotional support. Calls are answered by a private, non-profit organization. Veterans can also be referred to both VA and non-VA resources, including non-profit organizations, community programs and local government services in their part of the state. Help is available regardless of discharge status.

If you or your loved one needs support or connections to community resources, call the Florida Veterans Support Line at **1-844-MyFLVet (693-5838)** and talk to a trained specialist. Many of them are fellow veterans. Available 24/7 every day, all conversations are confidential and judgement-free.



The Florida Veterans Support Line is powered by a network of local non-profit organizations who run Florida's 2-1-1 system, and is funded by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the Florida Department of Children and Families.

WHAT'S HAPPENING



April 22-24, 2021 (*next year*). American Association of Suicidology's (AAS) 54th Annual Conference. Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista, Orlando, Florida. Information coming at: <https://suicidology.org>

Check Florida's Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention's Event's Calendar for more of What's Happening statewide. <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/prevention/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>

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):

<https://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 ONLINE (Holiday, just because, etc.)



Donate 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

Please consider submitting 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>