



FSPC Officers

Chair	Stephen Roggenbaum
Vice-Chair	Jane Bennett
Treasurer	Myrtice Landers
Secretary	Vacant

FSPC REGION DIRECTORS

R1 Rachele S. Burns
(Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton)

R2 Pam Mezzina
(Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Homes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla, Washington)

R3 Ali Martinez
(Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Putnam, Suwannee, Union)

R4 Lisa Zeller
(Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, St. Johns)

R5 Jody Smith
(DeSoto, Pinellas, Sarasota)

R6 Susan Morgan
(Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco)

R7 Tara Sullivan
(Brevard, Orange, Osceola, Seminole)

R8 Sue Opheim
(Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee)

R9 Payton Reid
(Palm Beach)

R10 Phil Bulone
(Broward)

R11 Margaret Di Gennaro
(Dade, Monroe)

R12 Kelly Sousa
(Flagler, Volusia)

R13 Manuel "Manny" Guevara Ruiz
(Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion, Sumter)

R14 Jemima Douge
(Hardee, Highlands, Polk)

R15 Lindsay Slattery-Cerny
(Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie)

July 2023 Newsletter FLORIDA SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

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

FSPC ELECTIONS RESULTS & ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY!

By Stephen Roggenbaum, Chair, FSPC

Link: <https://floridasuicideprevention.org>

- Annual FSPC Meeting held Saturday, June 10 at 11:00 am (EST).
- Election results for FSPC Officers:

Annual Meeting Summary: The FSPC Chair summarized select accomplishments and status of the FSPC including; continuation of Facebook page, monthly e-newsletters, annual statewide suicide prevention conference, website growth (statistics), and support and participation with events and organizations around the state. Our three new Region Directors were introduced (Phil Bulone R10, Manny Guevara Ruiz, & Jemima Douge R14, , tentative 2024 conference dates offered, and the newly elected officers were announced. FSPC Chair recognized the dedicated and outstanding service over the past several years of Myrtice Landers (Secretary & Treasurer) and Jane Bennett (Chair & Vice Chair).

Election Results: 2023-2024 officer positions were announced for: Chair, Vice Chairs (2), Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers are elected to a 1-year term.

Chair - Steve Roggenbaum
Vice Chair - Rachele Burns
Vice Chair - Sabina Zunguze
Secretary - Matt Dobson
Treasurer - Bill Wright

FSPC WANTS YOU (TO VOLUNTEER)!

By Stephen Roggenbaum, Chair, FSPC

Link: <https://floridasuicideprevention.org>

The Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition (FSPC) is currently represented by numerous wonderful ambassadors. Officers and

Regional Directors serve as a contact for various Florida regions providing information, responding to inquiries, networking with local contacts, & advocating for effective prevention initiatives.



You can join FSPC, run for office, or volunteer to serve as a Region Director. A person does not necessarily need to live in the Region he/she represents but is aware of the services and opportunities available while serving as a resource point person. An interested individual can also assist a current Region Director as he/she becomes more comfortable contributing and supporting suicide prevention through FSPC.

If interested or for more information, please contact Steve Roggenbaum (roggenba@usf.edu). See first page of newsletter (box at left) for Regions and associated counties.

REMEMBERING AND WRECKING IT! IN FORT LAUDERDALE



By Phil Bulone, PhD, FSPC Region 10 Director (Broward County)
Florida Registered Mental Health Counselor Intern
Mental Health America of Southeast Florida - LOSS Team of Broward County Director
Website: <https://floridasuicideprevention.org/about/>

This spring, South Florida loss survivors participated in two therapeutic group activities. In April, a Remembrance Ceremony was held at Butterfly World, the largest butterfly park in the world.

35 survivors toured the park together, reflected and journaled about their loss experience, and held a candle lighting ceremony. Seven candles representing the following themes were lit: Transformation, Remembrance, Grateful, Grace, Love, Peace, and Hope. Survivors cried, and laughed, as they shared memories and presented objects from their loved ones. A butterfly pupa was given to each survivor to keep for about a week. Upon hatching, survivors released the transformed butterfly from their home. Excitement spread as texted photos of new life were shared among the survivors. Survivors described the experience as “heartfelt”. Survivors worked through some closure, unfinished business, and fostered a renewed sense of community. They felt less isolated and less anxious about attending groups in-person, since many activities have been on Zoom during the pandemic.



Another activity, inspired by Jackie Rosen, loss survivor and co-founder of FISP – Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention helped survivors safely express anger from their grief and loss experience. A few months back Ms. Rosen shared how she and her husband would throw ice at the side of her house, to release their anger. In May, survivors took the throwing ice idea to the next level and gathered at a smash



room - WRECK IT! Ft Laudy, to break things. The activity began with psychoeducation on anger and grief where 25 survivors “faced, named, and felt” their anger in a therapeutic and safe way. Survivors then suited up and smashed tv’s, computers, appliances, plates, and lots of glass items with sledgehammers, crowbars, and baseball bats. They were invited to write about their anger on these items before smashing them. Emphasis was placed on a healthy release; never rage or violence as an expression of anger. Two survivors opted out of the activity, as they were not comfortable or felt the need to express any anger.

Participating survivors expressed relief. One survivor was surprised, “After all this time, I realize I might not be as angry as I think I am or think I should be”. Another survivor shared, “This was the first time in three years I felt something, like the Grinch with a dull, faint ticking in my heart, even if it is just a small amount of feeling, I felt something”. Another survivor shared how therapeutic it was to break alcohol bottles, because “my husband stopped drinking for a while and then he started again and that was when he died by suicide”.

Engagement in therapeutic activities helps survivors make meaning of their lives and offers a liberating and restorative experience. Loss survivors in South Florida look forward to more activities in the Fall.

SUICIDES AND HOMICIDES AMONG YOUNG AMERICANS JUMPED EARLY IN THE PANDEMIC, STUDY SAYS.

Mike Stobbe, Associated Press

Link: <https://apnews.com/article/suicide-homicide-children-teens-cdc-39f78929068ba52336b6dcccfd6289eb5>

Article excerpts below. *Clink on link above to read entire article.*

NEW YORK (AP) — The homicide rate for older U.S. teenagers rose to its highest point in nearly 25 years during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the suicide rate for adults in their early 20s was the worst in more than 50 years, government researchers said Thursday.

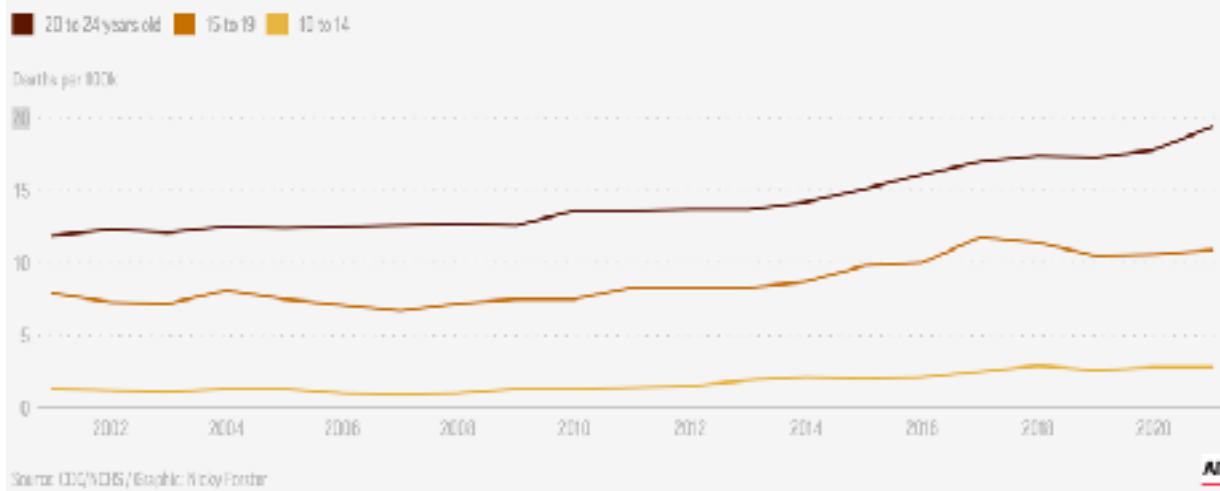
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [report](#) examined the homicide and suicide rates among 10- to 24-year-olds from 2001 to 2021.

The increase is alarming and “reflects a mental health crisis among young people and a need for a number of policy changes,” said Dr. Steven Woolf, a Virginia Commonwealth University researcher who studies U.S. death trends and wasn’t involved in the CDC report.

Experts cited several possible reasons for the increases, including higher rates of depression, limited availability of mental health services and the number of guns in U.S. homes.

Suicide and homicide were the second and third leading causes of death for 10- to 24-year-olds, after a category of accidental deaths that includes motor vehicle crashes, falls, drownings and overdoses. Other researchers have grouped the data by the method of death, and concluded that [guns are now the biggest killer](#) of U.S. children.

Suicide rates for young adults are rising



THINGS THAT HELP LOSS SURVIVORS

Alliance of Hope for Suicide Loss Survivors

Website: <https://allianceofhope.org/find-support/things-that-help/>

Things That Can Help

Someone once said after losing a loved one to suicide, “everything helps a little, but nothing helps a lot.” This may be true. We do know however, from research as well as subjective survivor reports, that some things seem to help a little more than others.



Alliance of Hope
for suicide loss survivors

Information

Following suicide, people respond in many different ways. There is no one “right or normal” way to respond, although there are many commonalities in the reactions of survivors. Survivor responses are influenced by their relationship to the deceased, the circumstances surrounding the death, their own genetic predispositions and life experiences, as well as other current stressors in their lives.



While some people may not be profoundly affected, others may experience traumatic, debilitating, and complicated grief. They may even begin to feel suicidal themselves. You can learn more in the [Survivor Experience Emotions & Challenges](#) section of our website. You can also find helpful books in our [bookstore](#).

Communicating

Talking with those you trust – your friends, family, doctors, mental health professionals, and faith leaders – can be very helpful. As you move forward, you may find that some people understand what you are going through better than others. Don’t hesitate to set healthy boundaries in order to take care of yourself. You don’t need to share details with everyone who asks about what happened. If you feel uncomfortable sharing, you might say:



“It’s just too painful for me to discuss this right now.” or “I’d love to spend time with you discussing other things – that would be really helpful to me right now.”

Another powerful method of approaching conversations about your loss is to have an already prepared short statement about what happened to your loved one. You can read more about creating a narrative and staying in control of the conversation [here](#).

Community

Seeking out groups and communities that provide hope and feel supportive can be extremely helpful. You might try an in-person support group in a location near you. The [Alliance of Hope community forum](#) functions like an online support group which you can access 24/7, in the comfort of your own home. (It cannot provide crisis intervention.) There is an enormous amount of wisdom, strength, and love in our forum community. You do not have to walk this path alone.



Individual Grief Counseling

Survivors commonly experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), intense emotions, conflicted feelings about the death, guilt, blame, social stigma, financial issues, and other unexpected challenges in relationships.

Having someone to talk with who is trained in traumatic loss can be very helpful. Look for a grief / trauma counselor who has experience with people bereaved by suicide. Don’t be afraid to ask about their training and experience. You can also access personalized support through the Alliance of Hope. We provide [counseling and distance consultations](#) designed to strengthen the foundation for healing.



Herbs and Medication

Loss by suicide is a traumatic shock, particularly if one witnesses the death, discovered the body, or saw and heard things they wish they hadn’t. Sometimes, these reactions are so debilitating that survivors cannot function.

The decision to use herbs or medication is a personal one. There is no one “right way.” You alone will know what feels right.



If you are considering medication, we recommend seeking the help of a psychiatrist (rather than a general practitioner) and informing yourself about possible side effects. Self-medicating with

drugs or alcohol can be dangerous, and greatly increase depression. It can be common after a traumatic loss to want to “check out,” isolate, or medicate the pain, which is why taking even ‘one small step’ to be kind to yourself, or seeking compassionate support, offers a healthy path to renewed hope and healing.

Exercise, Yoga, Meditation, Massage and Being in Nature

Research shows that when we exercise, our bodies release more endorphins and we increase oxygen throughout the body. Endorphins interact with the receptors in the brain to reduce perception of pain and can make us feel less tired and depressed.



Some people may use exercise to process grief, but physical activity need not be strenuous. In fact, it can be meditative or a calming experience. For example: walking, swimming, or a bicycle ride can all be at a slow, comfortable pace versus pushing oneself hard. Whether slow or fast-paced, physical movement makes us feel better.

Yoga, meditation, and spending time in nature also have positive effects on the brain, body, and mood. If you’re not up for going to a class, you can find programs online.

Help other loss survivors. Let us know what has been helpful for you in your grief journey by sending an email to roggenba@usf.edu We could compile/create a Florida-oriented list of supports for loss survivors.

TAKE ACTION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION (EVERYONE)



The Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention and Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council have teamed up to create a series of concerted effort by all members and with our community support and participation hope to make a difference in Florida. These Action Steps are often referred to as a Quarterly Challenge (since each action is the focus for three months).

The current Action Step which everyone can support and join is to **Share Options for Care**. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline offers free, confidential short-term crisis counseling for someone experiencing emotional distress. Studies have shown that after speaking with a trained crisis counselor, most 988 Lifeline callers are significantly more likely to feel *less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful*. However, ongoing care is important too. The Collaborative Assessment for Suicidality (CAMS), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) are three treatment options for targeting suicidality.

VISIT FSPC’S FACEBOOK PAGE

Source: Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/997344794378650>

Lisa Zeller, FSPC Region 4 Director and Myrtice Landers, FSPC Treasurer have been curating the FSPC Facebook page for over two years now. Have you visited the page yet? FSPC has over 283 Facebook page members but the site is open for view. Are you one of the 283? Visit today.

The site is NOT a crisis site and NOT monitored 24/7 so users are encouraged to use other resources such as 988 for immediate times of distress and crisis. However, Lisa and Myrtice have posted valuable information and resources (website list of support groups, annual conference information) and responded to posts & queries by users. Thanks so much to Lisa and Myrtice, FSPC is lucky to have them onboard.

STATEWIDE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION HIGHLIGHTS RESOURCES



By Anna Sever, M.S., Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Florida Department of Children and Families

Link: <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/prevention/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>

Decreasing the Stigma Associated with Suicide:

Promote safe messaging: Please use safe messaging, replacing terms like “committed suicide” or “completed suicide” with “died by suicide”. This helps us think about suicide in the same way as any other health condition like dying from cancer or heart disease rather than a moral problem, choice, goal to achieve, or a crime. Using safe messaging promotes help seeking behavior and respect for the individuals who are currently battling suicidal ideation, have lost their lives to suicide, as well as their families and loved ones.

More information on safe messaging can be found here: [Suicide Prevention - Florida Department of Children and Families \(myflfamilies.com\)](http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/prevention/suicide-prevention/index.shtml)



Sharing Available Resources and Upcoming Suicide Prevention Events:

Ensure that all of the great work done in our state is not siloed, yet we are funneling a comprehensive listing of suicide prevention trainings and events. The Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention is working to ensure that this information is regularly updated. Please see the instructions on the suicide prevention website at <https://www.myflfamilies.com/suicideprevention> if you have an upcoming suicide prevention event that you would like to share across the state.

Resources for individuals experiencing a suicidal crisis

If you are having thoughts of suicide, call the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255/ 988. Text **HOME** to 741741 to be connected to a trained Crisis Counselor at the Crisis Text Line.

To reach the Florida Veterans Support Line, dial 1-844-693-5838

To learn more about resources available in schools, visit www.fldoe.org/mental-health

For suicide prevention resources, visit <https://www.myflfamilies.com/suicideprevention>

Follow the hashtag #StopSuicideFL on social media to learn about statewide suicide prevention activities and initiatives.



WHAT'S HAPPENING - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month - September 2023.

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Day - September 10, 2023.

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

RESOURCES



If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call **9-8-8** (*Crisis and Suicide Lifeline*) or **1-800-273- 8255** (*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline*).

Crisis Text Line – text “start” to **741-741**

Veteran's Crisis Line **9-8-8** or 1-800-273- 8255, **press 1** & <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition Facebook/Meta page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/997344794378650>

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 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://suicidgriefresources.org/>

STOP Suicide Northeast Indiana. (2016). *Help & Hope: For Survivors of Suicide Loss.* Retrieved from <https://www.stopsuicidenow.org/toolkits>

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.stevelfund.org/>

Supporting Children who are Grieving a Death by Suicide Toolkit at <https://nacg.org/resource-library/>

Naseha Muslim Mental Health Hotline: 1-866-627-3342 (available 9AM – 6PM PST)

AMALA Muslim Youth Hopeline: 1-855-952-6252 (available 6PM – 10PM PST except Tuesdays & Thursdays)

Find a *Muslim Mental Health Provider* in your area here: <https://muslimmentalhealth.com/directory/>

Muslim informational toolkits: <https://www.thefyi.org/toolkits/>

To access *Muslim Suicide Response Trainings and Manual:* Maristan.org

Resources on AAS website for people with *Autism:* <https://suicidology.org/resources/autism-resources/>

FSPC NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Please submit news, events, poems, & writings for FSPC Newsletter inclusion consideration. Be sure to follow safe messaging guidelines. Email Steve Roggenbaum, Chair, roggenba@usf.edu

JOIN OR RENEW FSPC MEMBERSHIP

Join FSPC, a statewide, grassroots organization of survivors, crisis centers, & interested individuals. Collaborate to advance suicide prevention efforts; get involved, volunteer with local & state FSPC activities; & obtain reduced registration at FSPC events. To join or find out when your renewal is due, please contact Matt Dobson, FSPC Secretary (roger.dobson@flhealth.gov). Membership info: <http://floridasuicideprevention.org/membership/>

