

# SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTIONS

## What Individuals can do ...

1. Encourage people in need to see their primary care physician for assessment and referrals for treatment.
2. Encourage survivors of suicide to participate in suicide prevention task forces, coalitions, focus groups, peer programs and special events in your community.
3. Volunteer to assist with and undergo suicide prevention training in community settings.
4. Support efforts to ensure children receive training in coping and communication skills in school. The curriculum must be modified as children mature to ensure applicability.
5. Support legislation to educate public school employees about youth suicide and prevention.
6. Encourage behaviors that strengthen resilience and form relationships.
7. Learn how to recognize the signs of depression, suicide, and drug abuse (including prescription drugs).
8. Share information with clergy, parents and others who are the first line of defense in responding to the needs of someone in crisis.
9. Help create awareness about the national hotline number 1-800-273-TALK and national public awareness resources.
10. Share information about the state's suicide prevention strategy as often and in many places as possible.
11. Share messages that help to de-stigmatize depression, suicide and mental illness so the public views them as an illness, not something to be ashamed of.
12. Be willing to work with a variety of organizations that advocate for suicide prevention.

## What Schools can do ...

1. Identify an assortment of effective public awareness and educational materials that can be used to carry the suicide prevention message into the schools.
2. Educate school administrators about the suicide prevention tools they can implement in their districts.
3. Apply for funding that supports the provision of mental and behavioral health services to students on high school and college campuses.
4. Form partnerships with national support and advocacy organizations for youth and young adults who are sexual minorities and obtain multi-language educational materials and speakers.
5. Ensure schools have "Where to Turn" books listing agencies to help all youth and their families.
6. Encourage youth survivors to help with peer groups in the schools.
7. Form student/peer groups to create awareness campaigns in schools.
8. Implement proven transition to independence programs for youth and young adults with emotional and behavioral difficulties that enable them to become independent and fully functioning adults.

9. Train students, parents, and school personnel to create educational environments that are free from all types of harassment and bullying.
10. Train school counselors to address the trauma issues associated with suicide.
11. Provide gatekeeper training to all school personnel who are in the first line of defense when responding to the needs of someone who is in crisis.
12. Establish Gay-Straight alliances in schools, run by faculty to provide support and to stop feelings of isolation and depression.
13. Implement screening methods to identify those who need intervention.
14. Get buy-in from school administrators, mental health professional, school teachers and personnel to increase receptiveness to suicide prevention programs and to explore the effectiveness of utilizing suicide risk screening throughout school districts.
15. Display the risk factors and protective factors in suicide prevention, as well as suicide prevention help line numbers throughout the school.
16. Offer and encourage the use of training programs that recognize school-site faculty and support staff as the first line of defense for students.
17. Ensure that university training programs prepare all school mental health professionals with the skills to prevent, assess risk, and intervene effectively with suicidal students.

## **What Coalitions can do ...**

1. Engage survivors of suicide and attempts in all state and local planning efforts.
2. Establish peer groups composed of suicide survivors to assist those at risk.
3. Assist with building regional networks throughout Florida where local providers, survivors, policymakers etc., can work together to move suicide prevention forward in their community.
4. Develop local action plans to implement specific goals and objectives of the state strategy.
5. Apply for funding to implement suicide prevention programs in statewide programs and schools, such as the high school Turning Hour Project.
6. Provide free gun locks as is currently done in Pennsylvania by the State Police, local police and Sheriff's.
7. Engage the media on advancing local suicide prevention efforts. Utilize SPAN USA's Engaging the Media Guide and SPAN USA Media Action Center to reach local media. Share your coalition's or task force's activities and successes. Distribute public service announcements such as "Suicide prevention is important because each new suicide puts others at risk; promote life as a solution. Stopping one suicide saves more than one life." Respond to pressing issues with letters to the editor. Construct a well-developed powerful message repeated over and over in many arenas and media sources.
8. Educate to stop discrimination and hate speech against minorities.
9. Create "Where to Turn" books listing agencies to help all youth and their families and place books in schools.
10. Find ways to utilize Florida's vast senior labor pool in suicide prevention activities.
11. Ask a well-known local person to be a spokesperson for suicide prevention in the community.
12. Adapt the Florida Substance Abuse Response Guide for use by local communities working on suicide prevention - its logic model really helps guide good decision making.

13. Use the Strategic Prevention Framework's 5-step process to continue to strengthen state planning so that resources are targeted where there is the greatest need and in a manner that tracks progress and measures outcomes.
14. Encourage programs that target special populations such as youth, sexual minorities, seniors and at risk populations.
15. Convene focus groups of suicide survivors and/or those who attempted suicide within a specific demographic group in a community to identify what was helpful and what would have been helpful.
16. Develop a comprehensive list of all types, locations and contact information for all suicide prevention gatekeeper programs to be made available on a website.
17. Identify a network of local trainers who can train various populations about suicide prevention in a variety of settings.
18. Integrate suicide prevention activities with other prevention initiatives that are currently ongoing in your community and around the state so you can utilize their resources and ensure that suicide is part of the broader prevention network.
19. Follow an implementation process (such as the Implementation Guide) that is based on proven implementation techniques.
20. Engage in regular (e.g., annual) planning efforts that are driven by suicide-related community data.
21. Systematically collect suicide data in each Florida community, and compile and analyze these data at the community level on an annual basis.
22. Develop a suicide prevention pocket card that would include the warning signs, risk factors, three questions to screen for suicide ideation, a what to do list, and a list of suicide prevention numbers.
23. Organize a community-awareness media campaign which includes suicide survivors in its development and targets a variety of sub-populations.

## **What State and System Leaders can do...**

1. Develop training for law enforcement officers who rescue missing children, primarily runaways to assess risk factors for suicide and provide resources for children and families.
2. Develop a statewide suicide prevention program for first responders that includes an anonymous crisis center phone line.
3. Develop local action plans to implement specific goals and objectives of the state strategy
4. Identify gaps in legislation to protect youth from being bullied and harassed.
5. Require continuing education on suicide prevention for professionals who work with the public.
6. Expand gatekeeper training (e.g., to the staff of community service organizations and corporations).
7. Identify all funding resources and conceptualize how we will spend them.
8. Implement programs that combine effective screening with treatment teams.
9. Develop new programs for working with juvenile offenders with substance abuse issues that are not punitive.
10. Create a council that represents all groups working in mental health and suicide prevention in Florida.

11. Create a resource directory of all suicide prevention efforts and resources around the state which is updated continually. (ODC created one for 2006)
12. Establish satellite offices in each region so there are local resources in each community.
13. Expand mental health services to children and youth in schools and after school programs.
14. Identify and support programs targeted to at-risk youth that are found to have a higher suicide rate than the Florida average for that demographic group.
15. Implement programs that provide shelter and education for lesbian/gay/bi-sexual/transgender youth and support for their parents.
16. Make human service agencies and hotlines aware of the resources available in the state.
17. Encourage gun shows and shops in Florida to distribute free gun locks and disseminate materials advertising the National Lifeline hotline number.

## **What Faith-Based groups can do...**

1. Prepare clergy, parents, and others who are the first line of defense, to respond to the needs of someone who is in crisis.
2. Offer the ASIST gatekeeper training to clergy to teach them how to respond to those in crisis
3. Implement programs and services that extend beyond immediate crisis counseling to help survivors of loved ones' suicides.

## **What Employers can do ...**

1. Support and encourage employees in need to see their primary care practitioners for assessment and referrals for treatment.
2. Make available an assortment of effective public awareness and educational materials that can be used to carry the suicide prevention message into the company locations.
3. Sponsor suicide prevention events and activities; provide personnel, funds and other needed resources.
4. Support the requirement of insurance companies to cover the cost of treatment for drug and alcohol addiction.
5. Ensure that company employees and health providers receive training in suicide prevention and trauma issues associated with suicide.
6. Offer free or low-cost trauma counseling and suicide prevention services.
7. Become educated on how to recognize and address depression in the workplace.
8. Reduce the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues in the workplace.
9. Implement voluntary screening to identify who needs intervention.

## **What Health Providers can do ...**

1. Learn and apply screening methods to assess for suicide risk and make referrals for treatment.

2. Support the requirement of insurance companies to cover the cost of treatment for drug and alcohol addiction as they would for type II diabetes (as an example).
3. Establish support groups run by trained therapists in hospitals for the purpose of assisting families of people who attempt suicide.
4. Display or share information on suicide prevention, suicide warning signs, and a list of support groups.
5. Train ALL medical personnel to handle the despair of seriously or terminally ill patients (including veterans and the elderly), which currently is left up to the untrained and overwrought caregiver/family member.
6. Highlight the role of substance abuse in suicide.
7. Share causative factors in children early on as a preventive measure.
8. Help to increase awareness of early onset disorders like mental health, substance abuse, and learning difficulties and the link to later suicidal thoughts, or ideations and attempts.
9. Implement screening methods to identify who needs intervention.

## **What Suicide Prevention Advocates can do...**

1. Support state and federal legislation to support mental health parity and other mental health and suicide prevention issues.
2. Support legislation that requires insurance companies to cover the cost of treatment for drug and alcohol addiction.
3. Advocate for funding to suicide prevention programs and activities.
4. Organize and encourage grass-root support for state and federal legislation to support mental health parity and other mental health and suicide prevention issues. Florida could use the SPAN Legislative Action Center
5. Share "IS PATH WARM" (suicide warning signs).
6. Create or join online forums connected with suicide prevention to promote efforts statewide and nationally.
7. Support legislation to educate public school employees about youth suicide.
8. Work to reduce the stigma and change the public attitude about suicide and mental illness.
9. Promote all of Florida's certified suicide prevention hotlines.
10. Use federal and national public awareness resources (e.g., SPRC and 1-800-273 TALK) and identify state and local avenues through which to disseminate them.
11. Utilize national efforts and plan local community activities around National Suicide Prevention Week.
12. Encourage the development of more state-funded alcohol and drug detox and treatment facilities like ACT.
13. Become familiar with <http://preventsuicide.fmhi.usf.edu> and other suicide prevention websites.
14. Help with distribution of the existing suicide prevention strategy and brochure
15. Conduct suicide prevention activities in a manner that is relevant to the culture of the target group (e.g., minorities, youth.)
16. Encourage individuals in need to see their primary care for assessment and referrals for treatment.