Suicide Prevention

Editor’s Corner

Growing up I often saw my extended family, but the holidays marked an even more extravagant season. My sister and I expected our mom and aunts to make traditional treats reserved for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We made crafts and sang hymns. And although family gatherings always ended with being forced to watch a Lakers game, I loved those celebrations.

After college, I ended up working far from home. The first Christmas I was away from my family, I was homesick and cried while my friends joked about Festivus in another room. Another year, I was in New York City trying to get on a packed train out to my cousins’ home. When no one moved (because there was no space to move), I dejectedly bemoaned, “But it’s Thanksgiving.” Some poor, smooshed souls felt sorry for me and I was able to squeeze onto the train.

Then there were the first holidays after my grandparents died. I felt like I needed to be extra cheerful for my parents. Or the holidays that friends traveled home but I couldn’t, so the days passed like any other uneventful, lonely day.

This reminds me of the movie Inside Out. Sometimes we force ourselves to appear happy because that’s what we’re expected to do during the holidays. For many people though, it’s also a time of grief, homesickness, and loneliness. There are all sorts of suggestions for loneliness at Thanksgiving or grief during the holidays. It’s OK to feel sad and depressed. Once you acknowledge your feelings, it’s easier to address them.

Thanks!

Neetha
Start a Convo. Save a Life

In September 2016, DOH launched a youth suicide prevention social marketing campaign called Start a Convo. Save a Life in three target counties. The positioning statement for the campaign is:

“We want friends of a classmate who seems very depressed, hopeless or unusually angry, to know that it’s okay, even necessary, to ask if their friend is thinking of killing himself and that this courageous act can save the life of their friend. Having learned from interviews with the target audience that it is difficult for many youth to ask a friend during a conversation if that friend was thinking of killing himself/herself, we decided that our work would focus on getting this conversation started.”

The campaign is promoting the app, A Friend Asks from the Jason Foundation, through posters, and static and animated ads on Facebook, Instagram, and on mobile phones. They also did a cafeteria takeover (pictured above) and created a short video with two high school students on how one conversation saved a life. Contact the Suicide Prevention Works! program manager for more information.

Older Adults

Last year there were 1,170 suicides in Washington. Of those deaths, 18 percent were 65 years or older. However, older adults are often overlooked for suicide and depression screenings. The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) presented a segment on Reaching Older Adults. The video features Jo Anne Sirey, professor at the Weil Cornell Medical College Department of Psychiatry, who stresses the importance of integrating mental health into aging services programs, such as senior centers. The site also includes a one-page key points handout and a list of resources. UCLA is also using electronic medical records to study depression treatment with older adults.
National Violent Death Reporting System

In September 2014, Washington received Centers for Disease Control (CDC) funding to participate in the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), locally known as the WA-VDRS. Through working partnerships with local law enforcement, coroners, medical examiners, and state vital records offices, we are gathering a more complete picture of circumstances surrounding each violent death incident that occurs in Washington, including suicide. This information will be key to developing, guiding and evaluating local, state, and national violence prevention and intervention efforts.

While WA-VDRS data won’t be available until summer of 2017, many states have used NVDRS for years, including Oregon. This month the American Journal of Preventative Medicine published several articles on the National Violent Death Reporting System: Analyses and Commentary.

November National Observances

November is Native American Heritage Month, a time to celebrate and honor American Indian and Alaska Natives (AIAN) and tribal nations. Native communities have strong resiliency, and it is important to recognize their strengths and culture. In honor of Native American Heritage Month, the First Nations Development Institute created #NativeReads, a recommended reading list of Native American Children’s literature written by Native authors and vetted by a Native expert. The list also includes Ten Ways You Can Make a Difference.

Native Americans communities are often disproportionately impacted by suicide, especially among youth. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has several resources for working with native communities. They released a new publication, Preventing and Responding to Suicide Clusters in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities. They also have other resources like the AIAN culture card and To Live to See the Great Day That Dawns, a community-based approach to native youth suicide prevention.
November is also Diabetes Awareness Month. Medical conditions and limited physical functioning, including chronic and terminal illnesses, are risk factors for suicide. Research show a relationship between diabetes and depression and suicidal tendencies. Part of safety planning includes restricting access to lethal means, which can be difficult with diabetics and insulin. Here are some suggestions for caregivers. Learn more about the latest news and facts at STOP Diabetes.

Creating a Safety Plan

When someone acknowledges that they have suicidal thoughts, it is important to help them create a safety plan to reduce their suicide risk. SPRC has a Safety Planning Quick Guide for Clinicians, and the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and SPRC have a webinar on “Safety Planning and Means Reduction in Large Health Care Organizations.” Zero Suicide offers suggestions how to collaborate on a safety plan.

According to research, a safety plan should:

- Be brief, in the patient’s own words, and easy to read.
- Involve family members as full partners in the collaborative process, especially to establish their role in responding to patient crises.
- Include a plan to restrict access to lethal means, which is also balanced with respect to legal and ethical requirements under federal and state laws.
- Be updated whenever warranted.
- Be in the patient’s possession when she or he is released from care.

Mobile apps, such as MY3, can also be useful in a safety plan, so people can easily ask for help when they think about suicide. In her TedTalk, The Game That Can Give You 10 Extra Years of Life, Jane McGonigal presents a new, interactive approach to improving coping skills and resilience.
Postvention Resources

The latest data shows that about 135 people are affected by each suicide. Postvention efforts provide help and resources to people who may not appear to be affected or recognize the effect the suicide has on them. The Washington State Department of Health includes Washington grief support groups by county, and some postvention resources for schools and workplaces. The After a Suicide Resource Directory is a clearinghouse designed for people who provide programs and services to survivors of suicide loss, but which also is appropriate to share directly with people bereaved by suicide. Conversations Matter in Australia also offers suggestions on speaking with those bereaved by suicide. STOP Suicide Northeast Indiana created the Help & Hope brochure for survivors of suicide loss. Texas also has an example of a community postvention effort.

Update on Men and Mental Health

Last month’s newsletter included a focus on men in the middle years and mental health, and here is a brief update. SPRC released its report on Preventing Suicide among Men in the Middle Years: Recommendation for Suicide Prevention Programs. The report includes information on research, recommendations, and programs and resources.

Also, HuffPost UK launched a month-long campaign called Building Modern Men with guest editor and professional tennis player, Andy Murray. The site will “focus around men to highlight the pressures they face around identity, and to raise awareness of the epidemic of suicide.”

Book Quote

Media can often explain events and experiences so much more vividly than we are able to. In Thirteen Reasons Why, the character, Hannah, describes how her problems snowballed and led her to think about suicide.

“Like driving along a bumpy road and losing control of the steering wheel, tossing you—just a tad—off the road. The wheels kick up some dirt, but you’re able to pull it back. Yet no matter how hard you try to drive straight, something keeps jerking you to the side. You have so little control over anything anymore. And at some point, the struggle becomes too much—too tiring—and you consider letting go. Allowing tragedy... or whatever... to happen.”
Upcoming Conferences and Events

**November 1**
Webinar
*Promoting Positive Futures: Evidence Based Practices in Juvenile Justice and Behavioral Health*

**November 1**
Webinar
*The Power of Zero: A Systems Approach to Suicide Prevention*

**November 2-3**
Eugene, OR
*Mind Your Mind: Advancing Mental Health Wellness*

**November 3**
Online, #ElevateTheConvo
*Men and Health Twitter Chat
A Man's Journey: Learning Loving and Living Through Life's Challenges*

**November 5-6**
Culver City, CA
*Survivor of Suicide Attempts Support Group Facilitator Training*
Select the Trainings tab to register.

**November 6-8**
New Orleans, LA
*International Bullying Prevention Association Annual Conference*

**November 9**
Bellingham
*Washington State Leadership Panel: How ACEs and Resilience Research and Awareness Are Shaping Practice*

**November 10**
Bellingham
*Getting to Paper Tigers: Steps to Building A Trauma-Informed School*

**November 11-13**
Kirkland
*NAMI Family to Family Training* (application due Oct. 31)

**November 12**
Seattle
*Training in Suicide Care for Physicians*

**November 14**
Yakima
*Washington State Firearm Tragedy Prevention Network: Fall Meeting*

**November 15**
Portland, OR
*Working Minds Train the Trainer: Suicide Prevention in the Workplace*

**November 19**
Portland, OR
*2016 International Survivors of Loss Day*

**November 19**
Wenatchee
International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day
For more information contact The Compassionate Friends at 509-699-6227

**November 19**
Bremerton, College Place, Lynnwood, Seattle, Spokane, Fairfield AFB
*Survivor Day 2016*

**November 19-20**
Kirkland
*NAMI In Our Own Voice Training* (application due Nov. 7)

**November 30**
Seattle
*Forefront: Innovations in Suicide Prevention's 4th Annual Celebration*
December 2
Deadline for NIMH’s Request for Applications

December 5-7
Palm Springs, CA
2016 OJJDP Tribal Youth Conference
Walking with Youth: Trauma Informed, Culturally Based Justice and Healing Conference

December 7
Seattle
20th Annual King County Behavioral Health Legislative Forum

December 7
Deadline for Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Campus Suicide Prevention Grant

December 7-9
San Diego, CA
Positive Culture Framework (PCF) Public Training

December 8-10
Agua Caliente Reservation, CA
15th National Indian Nations Conference: Justice for Victims of Crime

December 12
Seattle, WA
safeTalk for Military and Veteran Service Providers

December 13
Seattle
Forefront’s Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR) Training

January 13, 2017
Application deadline for travel award
Military Suicide Research Consortium (MSRC) Pre-conference Research Training Day (held on April 26 before the AAS conference)

February 2-3, 2017
Orange Beach, AL
7th Annual National Peer Program Conference

April 26, 2017
Phoenix, AZ
Military Suicide Research Consortium (MSRC) Pre-conference Research Training Day (part of AAS conference) Travel award (deadline January 13, 2017)

April 26-29, 2017
Phoenix, AZ
American Association of Suicidology’s Suicidology at 50: Honoring the Past, Innovating the Future Call for papers (deadline October 31, 2016)

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

We invite all family members and community members To join us on
Saturday, November 19, 2016
3:00 PM to 5:00 PM
At the Wenatchee Free Methodist Church
Starting Point House
(NW corner of church property) 1601 Fifth Street, Wenatchee

As we light candles to honor our loved ones, And offer each other support.
Candles will be provided,
And light refreshments will be served.

DIET TRAINING CANDIDATES INCLUDE:
- INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE TRAINING OR EXPERIENCE IN PROVIDING SUICIDE INTERVENTION
- INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE FACILITATING SUPPORT GROUPS OR OTHER GROUP ACTIVITIES
- INDIVIDUALS WHO BELIEVE AND ATTITUDES ABOUT SUICIDE ALIGN WITH THE MISSION AND VALUES

COST OF TRAINING: $395 per person

Registration Link
https://bookeo.com/didihirschtraining

DOH 346-066 November 2016
# NAMI Washington State

**2016 NOVEMBER**

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- **See the [DOH Suicide Prevention Events page](https://www.doh.wa.gov) for more events.**
- If you would like to share an event, send information to suicidepreventionplan@doh.wa.gov.