

Pain Isn't Always Obvious

KNOW
THE SIGNS

suicideispreventable.org

Making the
Recommendations
for Reporting on
Suicide work in
small counties

November 14, 2012



Welcome!

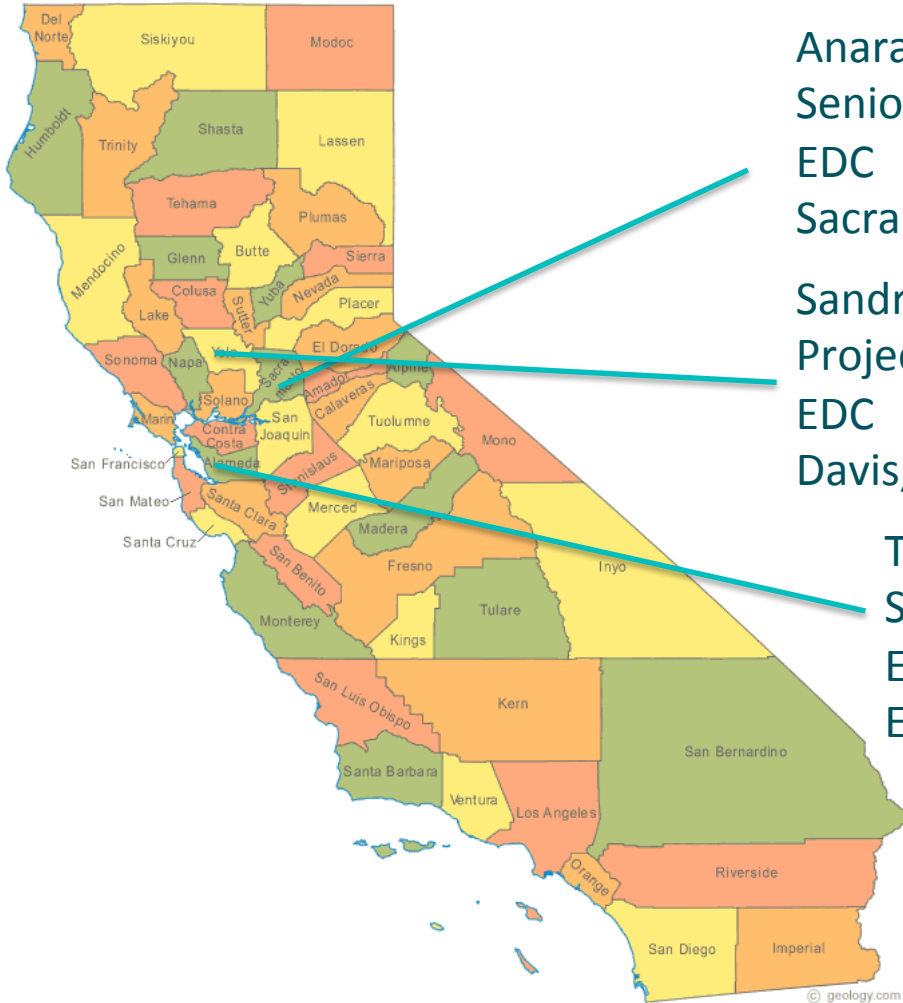
- Please mute your line
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The Know the Signs Campaign

Know the Signs >> Find the Words >> Reach Out

(Some of the) *Know the Signs* team



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EDC
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EDC
Davis, CA



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Suicide Prevention Program Specialist
EDC
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Who is receiving Small County TA?

20 counties receiving TA from **Know the Signs**:



- Amador
- Butte
- Calaveras
- Colusa
- El Dorado
- Glenn
- Humboldt
- Kings
- Lake
- Madera
- Mono
- Napa
- Nevada
- Shasta
- Sierra
- Sutter
- Trinity
- Tuolumne
- Yolo
- Yuba

Raise your hand

Did you participate in the
November 8th webinar on the
Media Outreach Toolkit?



Media Outreach Toolkit



- 3 copies sent to each county MH Director, PEI Coordinator, or other MHSA Coordinator
- Encouraged to share with your PIO or others who interact with news media
- Available in Resource Center on YourVoiceCounts.org

A Desired Outcome for the Campaign:

**More news media know about the
Recommendations for Reporting on
Suicide and how to adhere to them**

Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPORTING ON SUICIDE

IMPORTANT POINTS FOR COVERING SUICIDE

- More than 50 research studies worldwide have found that certain types of news coverage can increase the likelihood of suicide in vulnerable individuals. The magnitude of the increase is related to the amount, duration and prominence of coverage.
- Risk of additional suicides increases when the story explicitly describes the suicide method, uses dramatic/graphic headlines or images, and repeated/extensive coverage sensationalizes or glamorizes a death.
- Covering suicide carefully, even briefly, can change public misperceptions and correct myths, which can encourage those who are vulnerable or at risk to seek help.

Suicide is a public health issue. Media and online coverage of suicide should be informed by using best practices. Some suicide deaths may be newsworthy. However, the way media covers suicide can influence behavior negatively by contributing to contagion or positively by encouraging help-seeking.

References and additional information can be found at: www.ReportingOnSuicide.org.

INSTEAD OF THIS: ❌	DO THIS: ✅
• Big or sensationalistic headlines, or prominent placement (e.g., "Kurt Cobain Used Shotgun to Commit Suicide").	• Less reporting informs without sensationalizing the event (e.g., "Kurt Cobain Dead at 27").
• "John Doe left a suicide note saying..."	• "A note from the deceased was found and is being reviewed by the medical examiner."
• Including photos/videos of the location or method of death, grieving family, friends, memorials or funerals.	• Use school/work or family photo; include hotline logo or local crisis phone numbers.
• Describing recent suicides as an "epidemic," "skyrocketing," or other strong terms.	• Carefully investigate the most recent CDC data and use non-sensational words like "rise" or "higher."
• Describing a suicide as inexplicable or "without warning."	• Most, but not all, people who die by suicide exhibit warning signs. Include the "Warning Signs" and "What to Do" sidebar (from p. 2) in your article if possible.
• Investigating and reporting on suicide similar to reporting on crimes.	• Report on suicide as a public health issue.
• Quoting/interviewing police or first responders about the causes of suicide.	• Seek advice from suicide prevention experts.
• Referring to suicide as "successful," "unsuccessful" or a "failed attempt."	• Describe as "died by suicide" or "completed" or "killed him/herself."

Current version (2011)

Research based

Consensus based

Approved by Journalists

Nationally distributed

Available in English & Spanish

Found on www.YourVoiceCounts.org or www.reportingonsuicide.org

POLL

How satisfied are you with how your local news media are covering suicide deaths?

POLL

How satisfied are you with how your local news media are covering suicide *prevention*?

Why improve news reporting?

- News outlets are *community influencers*
- Decrease potential contagion
- Contributing to misinformation & stigma
- Missing opportunities to share resources & promote prevention

Recommendations: **DO...**

- ✓ ...Emphasize help-seeking
- ✓ ...Provide information on finding help
- ✓ ...Emphasize prevention
- ✓ ...List warning signs
- ✓ ...Seek advice and quote suicide prevention experts
- ✓ ...Highlight effective treatments

Recommendations: **DON'T...**

- ...Glorify or romanticize suicide
- ...Normalize suicide by making it sound common
- ...Use sensational language
- ...Oversimplify the causes of suicide
- ...Provide information about the suicide method

A real story about suicide

What are the implications?

... A man was found dead in San Andreas in a parking lot between Turner Park and Community Covenant Church

... “I saw blood trickling down from a hole in his right temple” – quote from bystander

... Sgt. Villegas was not able to release additional information

Some good examples!

Out of Darkness effort raises funds, awareness

Redding Record Searchlight, November 2012

... “People don’t realize it’s not just an impulsive decision... Most have talked about it before they do it” - Survivor

Woman’s body found in El Dorado Hills Town Center

Mountain Democrat, November 2012

How is California media doing?

- We analyzed over 200 California-based articles and TV broadcasts on suicide and suicide prevention between July and December 2011

*The Baseline Media Analysis Report is available on Your Voice Counts

What we found...

- **Doing well in:**
 - Using non-sensational language
- **Could improve in:**
 - Addressing warning signs & risk factors
 - Avoiding focus on a single event or “cause”
 - Avoiding descriptions of method and details
- **Lots of room for improvement in:**
 - Providing resources
 - Quoting suicide prevention experts

How can you use these Recommendations and support responsible reporting on suicide and suicide prevention?

Raise your hand

If you work for a county agency, are there restrictions on having contact with the media?



Preparing to use the Recommendations

- Identify someone who can be the contact for the media
- Become familiar with contents of the Recommendations and how they can be applied
- Develop your agency's prevention message, and make sure you know how to speak to it during interviews

Customize with local resources

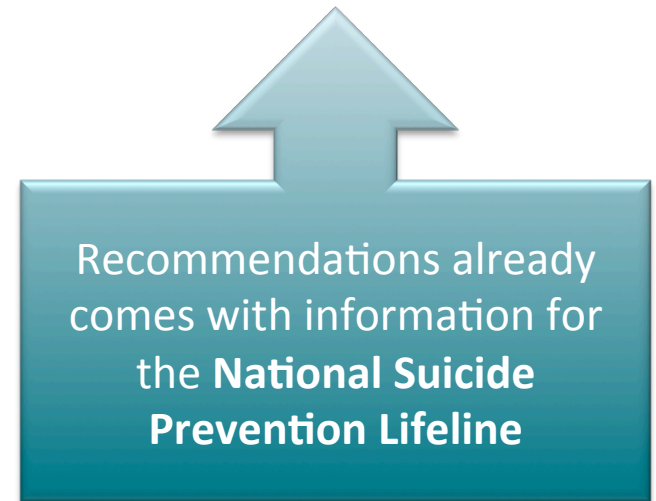
MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AT:

www.ReportingOnSuicide.org or the following local resources:

If you need help, contact **Suicide Prevention and Crisis Services of Yolo County: 1-530-666-7778**

THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE
800-273-TALK (8255)

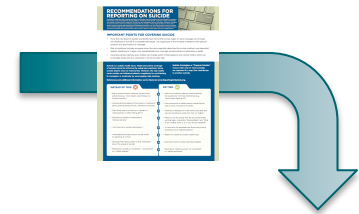
A free, 24/7 service that can provide suicidal persons or those around them with support, information and local resources.



Distribute broadly

The *Know the Signs* Campaign will distribute copies throughout the state

You can distribute copies to **your local media outlets** and encourage its use



Follow up with media outlets

- Are the Recommendations useful for the media?
- Do they require clarification?
- Remember to **praise** when media adhere to the Recommendations!
- Be mindful of **over-criticizing** – fostering partnerships and support systems for the media is key.

Three important tips

- 1) Have your message ready** along with evidence or background information to support it.
- 2) Be Proactive.** Get the local media interested.
- 3) Be available** to help meet media deadlines and **thank them** when they get it right. Or even close.

Media Outreach in Rural Areas

- Challenges:
 - Larger media outlets may dominate
 - Limited resources and services
- Advantages:
 - May be easier to form personal relationships
 - Less “competition” for coverage
 - Outreach beyond the news media can be even more effective

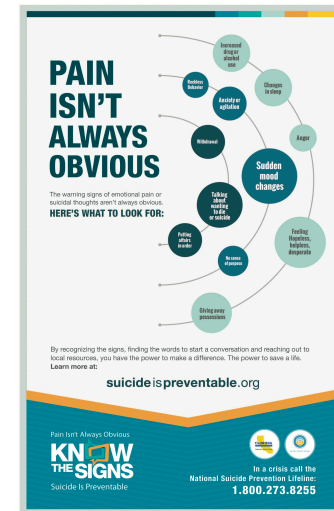
Consider your Target Audiences

- Identify the target audience you want to reach
- Have your message and tailored talking points ready
- Consider whether you are speaking directly to the audience (i.e., older white men) or their helpers (i.e., wives of older white men)

Thinking beyond the news media

Getting your message out

- Community events
- Signboards and bulletin boards
- Stores and social gathering places
- Insert
- Influential or inspirational community champions
- Newsletters, bulletins, and free papers

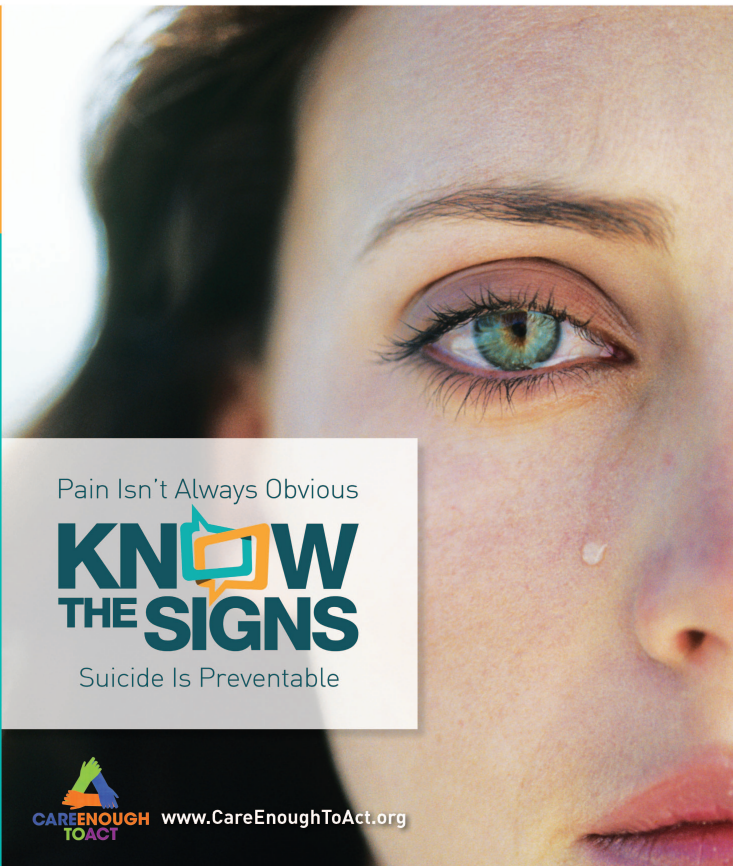


3 Template Articles

- Older Adults: *When “The Golden Years” Don’t Glow*
- Means Restriction: *Take Action – Save a Life*
- Rural Communities: *Lending a Helping Hand to Prevent Suicide*

What other article topics would you like to see?

Applying the Campaign Locally: Butte County



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Suicide Is Preventable



www.CareEnoughToAct.org

Butte County's Suicide Rates In State Context

CALIFORNIA SUICIDE STATISTICS, 2010:

- Suicide deaths: 3,823 (9.8/100,000).
- Non-fatal hospitalizations due to self-inflicted injuries: 16,425 (42.2/100,000).
- Non-fatal emergency department visits due to self-inflicted injuries: 28,735 (73.4/100,000).

BUTTE COUNTY SUICIDE STATISTICS, 2010:

- Suicide deaths: 51 (22.2/100,000).
- Non-fatal hospitalizations due to self-inflicted injuries: 159 (69.1/100,000).
- Non-fatal emergency department visits due to self-inflicted injuries: 275 (119.5/100,000).

CALIFORNIA SUICIDE TRENDS DOWNWARD:

- In 1991, the suicide rate was 12.3/100,000; in 2010, the suicide rate was 9.8/100,000.

BUTTE COUNTY SUICIDE TRENDS UPWARD:

- In 1991, the suicide rate was 17.6/100,000; in 2010, the suicide rate was 22.2/100,000.

All data collected from California Department of Public Health, Safe and Active Communities Branch.

The SUICIDE PREVENTION Task Force

CARE ENOUGH TO ACT WORKS TO REFRAME PUBLIC ATTITUDE ON SUICIDE



Betsy Gowan, manager of Program Development for Butte County Behavioral Health, has long recognized the need for a county-wide suicide prevention task force with a particular focus.

"If you are in imminent danger to yourself or others, inpatient psychiatric services are available," Gowan said. "But, if you're at that point where you're very depressed with long-term suicidal thoughts, there aren't as many resources." Gowan and her colleagues maintain that suicide needs to be looked at as a continuum—a progression of high-risk behaviors leading up to the final act that often seem like obvious warning signs in retrospect. While emergency services for individuals under extreme mental distress are a valuable resource, Gowan believes intervention earlier in the continuum is the best approach to avoiding tragedy.

"You have suicide completions and suicide attempts, but you have a whole range of behavior before that point," she said.

So after California established the Office of Suicide Prevention in 2006, Gowan and Anne Robin, director of Butte County Behavioral Health, saw an opportunity to take advantage of the statewide campaign and address local needs. However, creating a program that would get through to desperately depressed people in their darkest hour was a daunting task.

"For the past years, economics have combined with other stressors and life seems challenging to a lot of people, but how do you help those who are feeling so challenged and feeling so much pain that they want to end their life?" Gowan said. "Most people in this situation don't want to end their life; they want to end the pain."

"They formed a team of roughly 15 members from community agencies, including Out of the Darkness, Stonewall Alliance, Passages, Paradise's Project Vision, the Butte County Public Health Department and Enloe Hospital. The group decided to host a suicide summit at Enloe Conference Center in March of this year to gauge the county's interest in a full-time suicide prevention task force.

"I thought if we did really well, we would get about 100 people," Gowan said. "We filled [the conference center] and had to tell people they couldn't come in after a certain point. So, obviously, there was a big interest and need."

Toward the end of the conference, attendees split into groups to identify key issues. From those groups, the task force called individuals to join a steering committee, which

has since produced a mission statement, a logo and a name—Care Enough to Act. Moving forward, one of Care Enough to Act's biggest challenges will be encouraging open dialogue between individuals suffering from depression and their close family and friends.

"HOW DO YOU HELP THOSE WHO ARE FEELING SO CHALLENGED AND FEELING SO MUCH PAIN THEY WANT TO END THEIR LIFE?"

"People are afraid to talk about it, they're afraid to ask," Gowan said. "So, some of our goals are outreach, education and awareness, so people understand what the issue is, how to talk about it, where to refer people and that talking about it is OK."

Hesitance to broach the subject of suicide goes hand-in-hand with the stigma associated with mental-health disorders, Gowan said.

"People have deep thoughts that somehow, 'I'm a failure if I have this mental illness,'" she said. "People don't think that if they have cancer or diabetes, even though there are lifestyle changes you can make to prevent them. With mental illness, it still feels like something about our core personality is wrong."

For Robin, Care Enough to Act is a chance to spread the word throughout Butte County; help is available and there's nothing wrong with seeking it out.

"We can help the entire community because everyone is touched by suicide," she said. "We can offer some support to a much broader range of people through education, letting them know the warning signs and how to get help without having to go off the deep end."

CETA Members: Carol Childers, Mike Gonzales, Rich Davis, Betsy Gowan, & Kate McCracken



A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO CN&R

2 SUPPORTED BY BUTTE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND MHSA FUNDING | OCTOBER 18, 2012 | A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO CN&R

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Questions & Discussion

If you have a question, please type it into the “Questions” box or “raise your hand” by clicking the hand logo on your control panel





DEAR CALIFORNIANS,

Welcome to the Your Voice Counts Forum. The forum is part of a statewide suicide prevention social marketing campaign that is supported by county Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds to raise awareness of suicide, its causes, and how to help others and help yourself. Make your voice count! As a member of the Your Voice Counts Forum, you will have an opportunity to provide input on materials that are developed for the campaign, participate in workgroups and share information about suicide prevention activities in your community.



TRENDING

SEPTEMBER 20, 2012
FREE REGISTRATION! RSVP: Peer Support Services Conference-Sept 26, 2012 - Statewide/peers/professionals

SEPTEMBER 17, 2012
Campaign Website Launched

SEPTEMBER 06, 2012
NAMI Calls for Increased Investment in the Mental Health of Active Duty Military and Veterans

SEPTEMBER 05, 2012
"Just Let it Out" Online Suicide Prevention Program in Wyoming

SEPTEMBER 04, 2012
Law Enforcement Learns about Mental Illness to Save Lives

[MORE](#)

YOUR VOICE COUNTS FAQ

What is Your Voice Counts?

Your Voice Counts is a public forum with the purpose to engage Californians to have a voice in the development of statewide suicide prevention efforts.

Why Join Your Voice Counts?

As a member, you will have an opportunity to check out announcements and provide input on campaign materials for statewide suicide prevention efforts. Your perspectives are unique and powerful, and your input will help ensure that we are developing a social marketing campaign that meets your needs, and the needs specific to California.

How can I provide input?

There are several ways to make your voice count. To begin, review current [Input Topics](#) or join a [Workgroup](#) that matches your interests or expertise. We will alert you via email when new announcements and input topics are posted, or when a workgroup that matches your background or area of expertise is scheduled.

[SEE MORE](#)

WHO IS ON THE YVC FORUM?



Thank you!

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Please fill out
the
Evaluation!

Webinar will be archived on
www.yourvoicecounts.org