

Pain Isn't Always Obvious

**KNOW
THE SIGNS**

suicideispreventable.org

Making Headlines:

Promoting suicide prevention with your local news media

November 8, 2012



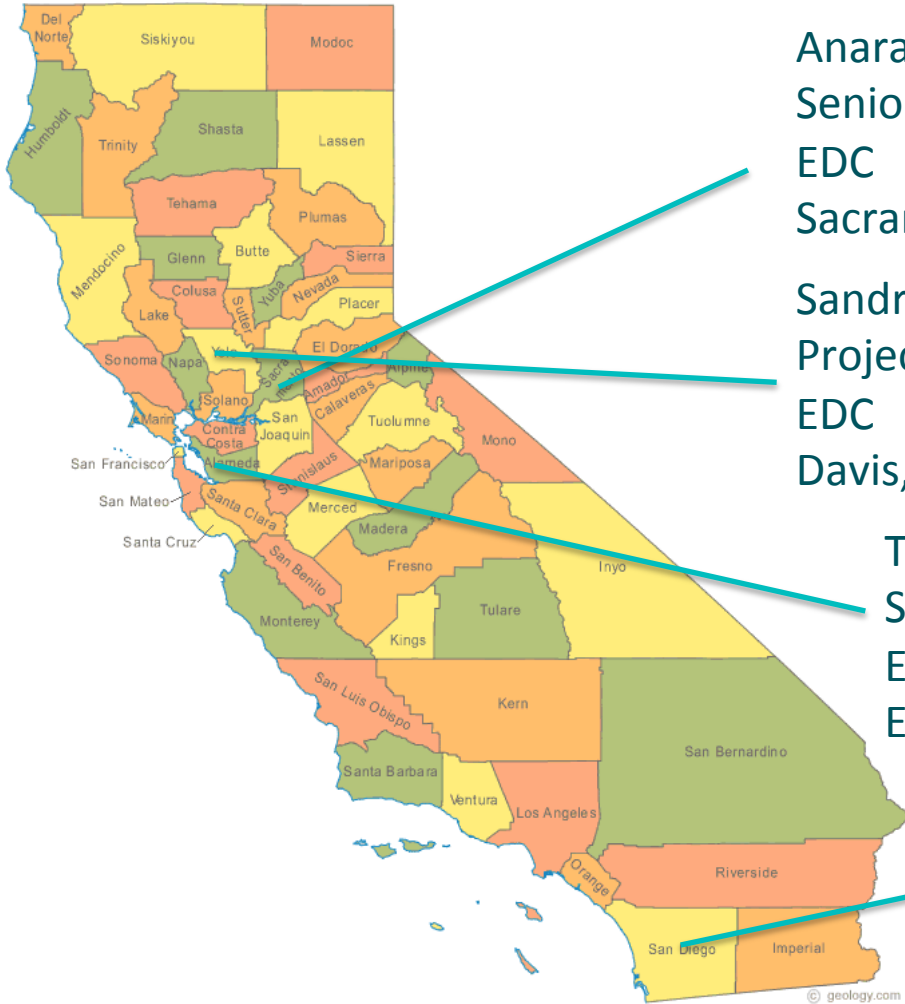
Welcome!

- Please mute your line
- 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



We will address questions at the end of the presentation

(Some of the) *Know the Signs* team



Anara Guard, MLS
Senior Project Director
EDC
Sacramento, CA



Sandra Black, MSW
Project Manager
EDC
Davis, CA



Theresa Ly, MPH
Suicide Prevention Program Specialist
EDC
Emeryville, CA



Sherry LeCocq
Public Relations Account Manager
AdEase
San Diego, CA



Webinar Overview

- Desired Outcome of Media Outreach
- Media Outreach Toolkit Component Overview
 - Info Sheets & Sample Articles
 - Making Headlines: A Guide to Engaging the Media in Suicide Prevention
 - Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide
- Other tips for outreach
- Butte County's use of the Media Outreach Toolkit
- Your Voice Counts (quick) overview
- Q&A

Desired Outcome

More news media know how and adhere to the recommendations for reporting on suicide

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPORTING ON SUICIDE

Developed in collaboration with: American Association of Suicidology, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Canterbury Suicide Project - University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand, Arnerberg Public Policy Center, Columbia University Department of Psychiatry, Connecticut Suicide Prevention, International Association for Suicide Prevention, Task Force on Media & Suicide, Medical University of Vienna, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Institute of Mental Health, New York State Psychiatric Institute, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Suicide Awareness Voices of Education, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and UCLA School of Public Health, Community Health Services

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.

Suicide Contagion or "Copycat Suicide" occurs when one or more suicides are reported in a way that contributes to another suicide.

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

INSTEAD OF THIS: ❌

- Big or sensationalistic placement (e.g., "Kurt Cobain Commit Suicide").
- "John Doe left a suicide note."
- Including photos/videos of death, grieving family.
- Describing recent suicide as "skyrocketing," or other hyperbole.
- Describing a suicide as "without warning."
- Investigating and reporting on crimes related to reporting on suicides.
- Quoting/interviewing family about the causes of suicide.
- Referring to suicide as a "failed attempt."

DO THIS: ✅



Strategies:

- Distribute reporting recommendations
- News media forums
- Media Outreach Tool Kits and trainings to county spokespeople and PIOs
- *Directing Change* High School PSA Contest

How you can engage in the Campaign

- Help support news reporting on suicide
 - Adherence to Recommendations
 - Increased coverage of suicide prevention activities
- Work with local media
 - Many counties report that local media is often “silent” on the problem of suicide, promoting stigma
- Utilize tools to engage with the media to promote prevention messaging

Media Outreach Toolkit



- 3 copies sent to all counties (10/21)
- Sent to MH Director, PEI Coordinator, or other MHSA Coordinator
- Encourage you to share with your PIO or others who interact with news media
- Available in Resource Center on YourVoiceCounts.org

Media Outreach Toolkit

Components

- Cover letter
- Making Headlines: Guide to Engaging the Media
- Know the Signs Campaign Talking Points
- Know the Signs Campaign Overview
- Preparing Speakers with Personal Stories
- 3 template articles

Campaign Talking Points

- To ensure accuracy with the latest available data
- To ensure consistency at the state and local level
- About the Campaign, supporting facts, suicide stats and facts, the warning signs, Find the Words breakdown, website and crisis line call to action

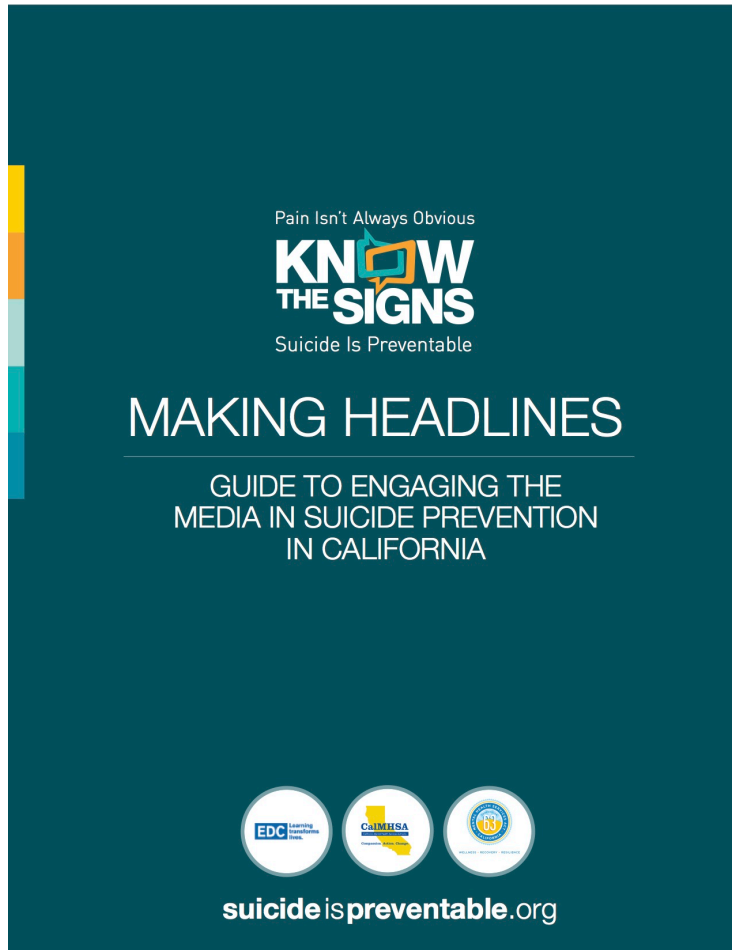
Preparing Speakers with Personal Stories

- Suggestions for finding potential speakers
- Considerations for choosing a spokesperson
- Tips for preparing a spokesperson

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*

Making Headlines Guide



- A “how to” guide and resource
- Adapted from Suicide Prevention Resource Center materials
- Tailored for California and the Know the Signs campaign

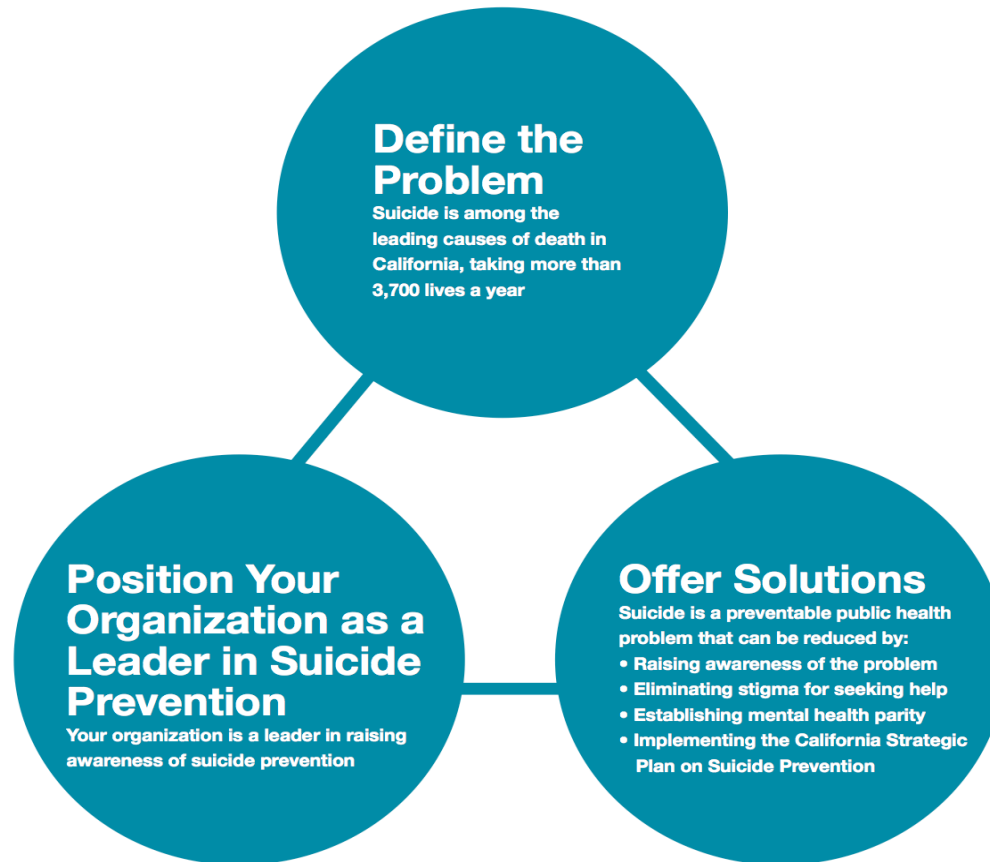
The importance of your prevention message

- The media can be a powerful tool to promote prevention
- Effective coverage can:
 - Reduce the risk of contagion
 - Educate the public about warning signs and how to help
 - Raise awareness of life saving resources
- Follow the guidelines for safe and effective messaging

Your Suicide Prevention Message should consider how to:

- Emphasize help seeking and providing resources
- Promote awareness that suicide is preventable
- List warning signs as well as protective factors
- Highlight effective treatments for mental health problems

Using the Message Triangle



Tips for Developing Effective Messages

- Be clear, concise, and specific
 - *“Many suicides are associated with underlying mental health or substance abuse conditions. The good news is that there are effective treatments in our community.”*
- Use vivid but appropriate analogies
 - *“More Californians die every year by suicide than in motor vehicle crashes, yet more Californians know that wearing a seat belt can decrease their risk of dying in a car crash than know the warning signs and risk factors of suicide.”*

Tips for Developing Effective Messages

- Consider what is “newsworthy”
 - Tie your message in to an event or topic already receiving media attention, or to legislation or policy changes under consideration
- Back up your message with evidence
 - Compelling examples such as personal stories can be even more effective than hard data

Consider your Target Audiences

- Effective messages consider:
 - WHO you are trying to reach
 - WHAT they need to know
 - WHY it is important to them
- Develop different sets of talking points that address difference audiences
- Have your message and talking points ready

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

Why improve news reporting?

- **Contagion:** The process by which a vulnerable person is influenced towards suicidal behavior through the knowledge of another person's suicidal act
- **Spreading misinformation**
- **Missing opportunities to share resources**

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

Some real headlines... What are the implications?

“Cyberbullied teen commits suicide”

New York Daily News, Oct. 12, 2012

“Do Rich Neighbors Cause Suicide?”

US News and World Report, Oct. 23, 2012

“The US Army Can’t Stop Soldiers
From Killing Themselves”

The Atlantic, Oct. 12, 2012

A Good Example!

The woman had heard on the news about the man in Wilmington who murdered his wife and five children and killed himself after the couple lost their jobs, and now she feared it could happen to her family.

Fortunately, she also had heard on the news about Los Angeles County's mental health hotline.

Her call on Thursday was fielded by mental health coordinator Maricela Velasquez, who spent 50 minutes on the phone listening to a horror story of our times. About the woman losing her job in October, her husband getting laid off last month. And about the domestic violence in their past.

WHERE TO SEEK HELP:

- Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's 24-hour crisis hotline is 1-800-854-7771.

The department's Web site is dmh.lacounty.gov

- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).

The Web site is suicidepreventionlifeline.org

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

*Media adherence 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

What can you do to increase media adherence
to the Recommendations and support
responsible reporting on suicide and suicide
prevention?

Step 1: Customize with local resources


MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AT:

www.ReportingOnSuicide.org or the following local resources:

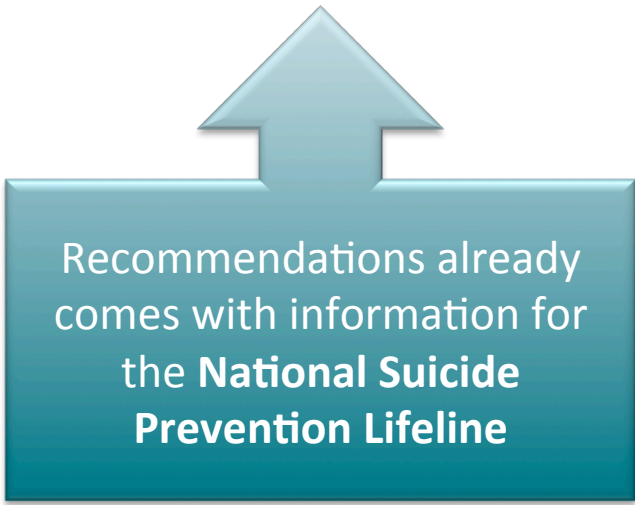
Call **1-415-781-0500** anytime to speak to a crisis counselor at San Francisco Suicide Prevention.

**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.



Counties can include their own information, such as a **local crisis hotline** or **another local resource**

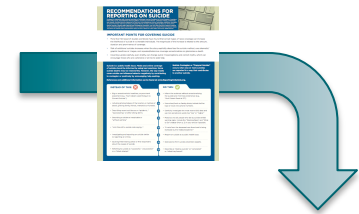


Recommendations already comes with information for the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Step 2: 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



Step 3:

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.

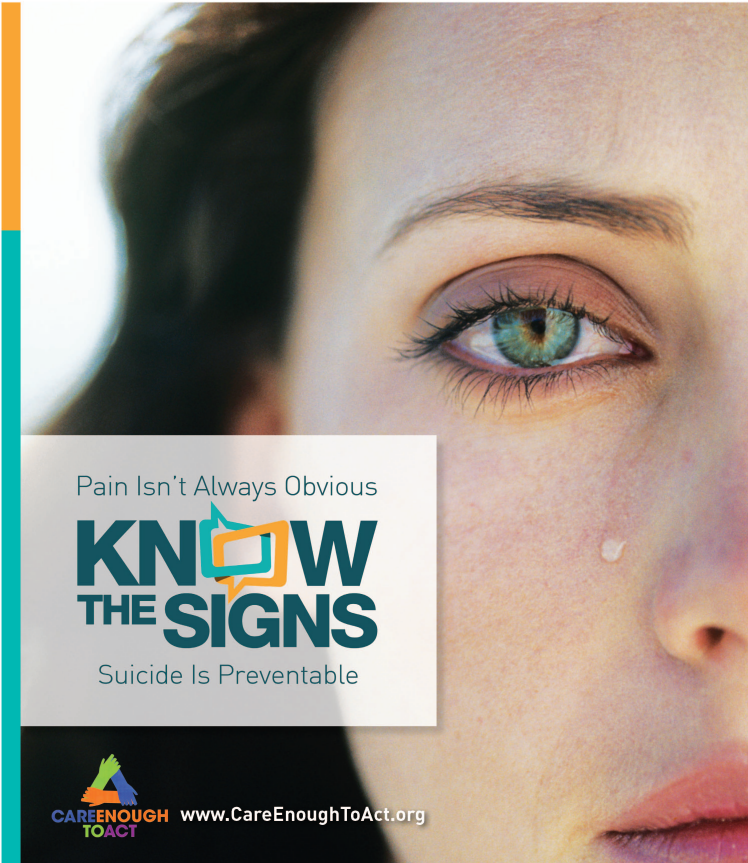
Conducting Outreach to News Media

- HOW? Pro-active or re-active?
- HOW? Press release or media advisory
- WHO? Are there restrictions in your agency on who can contact the press?

Three important tips

- 1) Think like a journalist.** Who will be interested in this story? Why will they read or watch it?
- 2) Be available** to help meet deadlines.
- 3) Thank them** when they get it right. Or even close.

Applying the Campaign Locally



Pain Isn't Always Obvious

KNOW THE SIGNS

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, in-patient psychiatric services are available." "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.



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

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?





[Home](#) > [Log In](#)

LOG IN

SIGN IN TO YOUR VOICE COUNTS ACCOUNT

USERNAME OR E-MAIL ADDRESS: *


PASSWORD: *

[Forgot your Password?](#) Remember Me

[LOG IN](#)

DON'T HAVE A YOUR VOICE COUNTS FORUM ACCOUNT YET?

[REGISTER](#)



WELCOME TO YOUR VOICE COUNTS!

View [Edit Panel](#)

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. [Announcements](#) are posted for the suicide prevention social marketing campaign, as well as for many other suicide prevention and mental illness stigma reduction efforts around the state. Before you leave the forum today, please [invite a friend](#).

CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCEMENTS


- 
SEPTEMBER 17, 2012
 Campaign Website Launched
<http://www.Suicideispreventable.org>
- 
AUGUST 29, 2012
 Directing Change High School Student Video Contest Launched!
<http://www.directingchange.org>

[MORE](#)


OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 
SEPTEMBER 20, 2012
 FREE REGISTRATION! RSVP: Peer Support Services Conference-Sept 26, 2012 - Statewide/peers/professionals
[Flier](#)
[Agenda](#)
- 
SEPTEMBER 06, 2012
 NAMI Calls for Increased Investment in the Mental Health of Active Duty Military and Veterans


INPUT TOPICS

- 
OPEN UNTIL SEPTEMBER 18, 2012
 Review and vote on outreach poster and brochure
 The outreach poster and 8-panel brochure can augment suicide prevention outreach in your community. Once finalized, the materials can be used as is or customized (e.g., with your county's crisis phone number). Please review each of the two draft posters and two draft brochure versions (pdfs) below and vote on your preferred option for each. In addition, please provide comments using the private feedback button. Final versions of the poster and brochure in English and Spanish will be available later this month, and additional languages later in the Fall.

[GIVE INPUT](#)

- 
OPEN UNTIL SEPTEMBER 18, 2012
 Review and vote on campaign billboard
 Please review the two pdfs below and vote on your preferred billboard option. You can also provide feedback using the private feedback

ACTIVE WORKGROUPS

- 
OPEN UNTIL OCTOBER 08, 2012
 Outreach to Men
Desired Members: Men, especially ages 35 to 55, and those who are in a position to reach out to men
 The purpose of this workgroup is to discuss materials and strategies to reach men and/or those close to them.

[JOIN](#)

[MORE](#)

WHO IS ON THE YVC FORUM?



BRUCE MCANALLY



KAREN



RESOURCE CENTER

NEED HELP?



Contact us for questions and technical assistance.

FILTERS

ALL (37)

DATA & REPORTS (2)

COUNTY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS (1)

MEDIA OUTREACH (9)

OFFICE SUITE (BUSINESS CARDS, FLYERS, PPT TEMPLATES) (5)

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES (1)

ENGLISH (18)

SPANISH (1)

RESOURCE CENTER

Know the Signs is a statewide suicide prevention social marketing campaign with the goal to prepare more Californians to prevent suicide by encouraging them to know the warnings signs for suicide, find the words to offer help to someone they care about and reach out to local resources. The campaign further aims to increase awareness among the news media about how to safely report on suicide and provide communities' with tools to advocate with their local media. The campaign website is: www.suicideispreventable.org

We are going to be adding resources in the next few weeks, so if you don't find what you are looking for yet, please check back later. Campaign materials will be added as they are finalized later this month and in October.

All of the campaign materials can be downloaded and distributed in California free of charge for the duration of the campaign, however use restrictions apply to some of the materials. In these instances a license agreement needs to be signed to acknowledge understanding of these restrictions.

To get started, choose "all" or a category in the left border to view available materials. The materials are in print/production ready format, and many can also be customized with your local crisis number or website. Please feel free to contact us at info@yourvoicecounts.org with any questions about how to use and customize the materials or to just let us know that you are planning to use them!

For technical assistance, contact us: info@yourvoicecounts.org

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



Thank you!

Anara Guard
aguard@edc.org



Theresa Ly
tly@edc.org



Sandra Black
sblack@edc.org



Sherry LeCocq
sherry@adease.com



Please fill out the
Evaluation!

Webinar will be archived on
www.yourvoicecounts.org