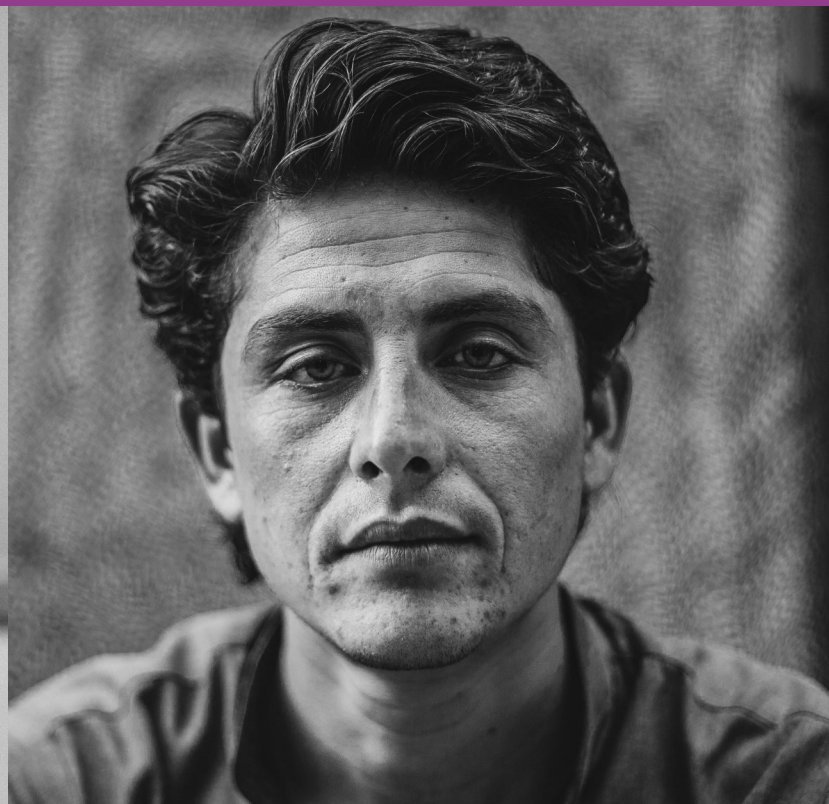
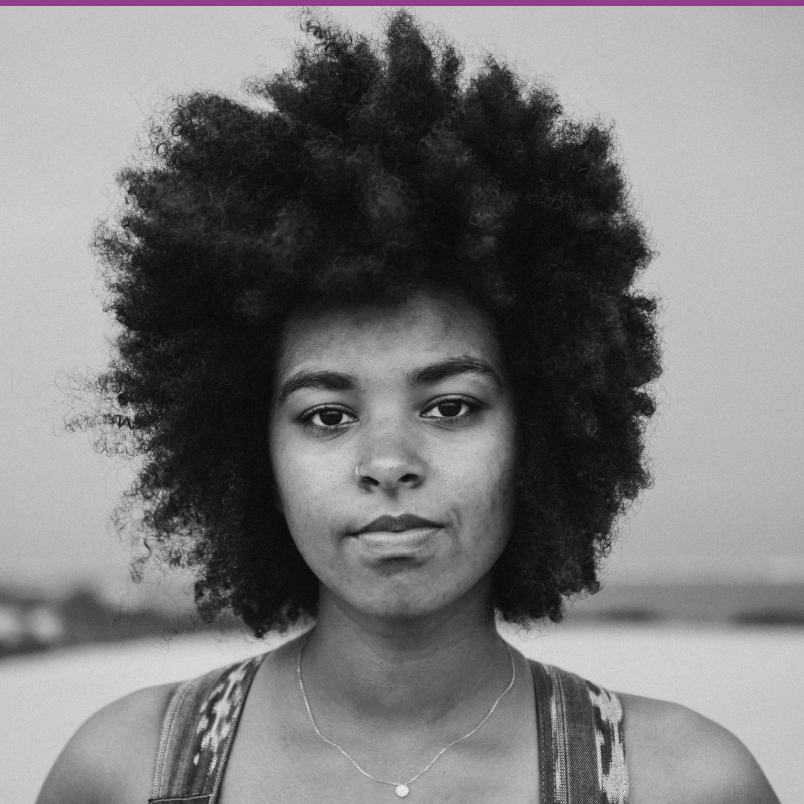




SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

SEPTEMBER 2019



September is Suicide Prevention Month

Throughout the United States, individuals and organizations are stepping up to recognize September as **Suicide Prevention Month**, the week of September 8-14 as **National Suicide Prevention Week**, and September 10th as **World Suicide Prevention Day**.

The goal of annual suicide prevention observances is not to prevent suicide on a specific day, week, or month, but rather to encourage wide participation in educational activities that draw attention to the problem of suicide and advocate for prevention efforts.

This year's theme, ***Working Together to Prevent Suicide***, is particularly fitting as we think about all of the collaboration happening within our communities and throughout the commonwealth. As part of Governor Wolf's recently announced Suicide Prevention Task Force, multiple state agencies and organizations are working together for the first time on the Pennsylvania statewide suicide prevention plan, and stakeholders will be attending listening sessions in communities around the state to share their knowledge and experiences with state leaders.

Over the past two decades, suicide rates have risen dramatically across all age groups and in nearly every state, including Pennsylvania. In order to implement more comprehensive approaches to suicide prevention, we need to engage diverse stakeholders from multiple systems to work together, in addition to engaging individuals with lived experiences and their families. Our efforts must incorporate training and education, awareness and stigma reduction, methods for early identification and referral, data collection and research to support evidence-based interventions and treatment, supports for healing after a suicide loss, lethal means reduction, and media partnerships to promote safe messaging. We must begin to think more broadly about suicide prevention, recognizing the need to reduce suicide risk factors and to build protective factors like social connections and healthy coping strategies.

We all play a vital role in preventing suicide and saving lives. Suicide knows no boundaries, meaning it can and does affect everyone. By providing a special month dedicated to prevention, we can amplify the unique voices of those affected by suicide and make it known that it is okay to reach out to help and to reach out for help.

This informational packet includes ideas and suggestions for activities to help build awareness within your community.

Thank you for stepping up for suicide prevention and taking action to help save lives.



Brief Suicide Statistics

United States (CDC, 2019):

- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death nationwide.
- In 2017, 47,173 Americans died by suicide.
- In 2017, there were an estimated 1,200,000 suicide attempts.
- On average, approximately 129 Americans die by suicide every day.
- There is one death by suicide in the United States every 11 minutes.

Pennsylvania Statistics (CDC, 2019; Pennsylvania Department of Health, 2019)

- In Pennsylvania, on average, one person dies by suicide every four hours.
- In 2017, 2,023 people died by suicide in Pennsylvania.
- More than six times as many people died by suicide in Pennsylvania in 2017 than in alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents.
- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in Pennsylvania:
 - 2nd leading cause of death for ages 15-34.
 - 4th leading cause of death for ages 35-54.
 - 8th leading cause of death for ages 55-64.
 - 17th leading cause of death for ages 65 & older.

*These are not just numbers. They are mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, family members, neighbors, loved ones, and community leaders who have, for one reason or another, temporarily lost hope. By **working together** this September, we can prevent suicide.*



Words Matter

Open discussion about suicide is critical to prevention, intervention, and postvention. How we talk about these subjects makes a difference. Here are some tips that may help when engaging in courageous conversations.

- Avoid using judgmental language.
- Use objective terms for suicidal events, such as “death by suicide” or “non-fatal attempt.”
 - Avoid using the words “commit” or “complete” suicide. The phrase “committed suicide” is usually associated where suicide is considered a sin or a crime, which suicide is neither. Using the words “completed suicide” conveys success or accomplishing something good, which suicide is not. The proper term for someone who has taken their own life is “died by suicide.” Also acceptable is “killed him/herself” or “took their own life.”
- Avoid presenting suicide as an inevitable event or oversimplifying the cause.
- Avoid glamorizing deaths by suicide.
- When discussing the frequency of suicide, always emphasize the importance of every single life.
- Always provide information for assistance.

For additional information on safe messaging:

- [Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide](#): This guide important points for covering suicide, “do’s and don’ts” for safe reporting, and suggestions for online media/message boards/bloggers. Additional information can be found at <http://reportingonsuicide.org/>.
- [Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention](#): Evidence-based recommendations from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC).
- [Framework for Successful Messaging](#): The National Action Alliance has provided this framework for public messaging (e.g., posters, PSAs, social media, websites, etc.) to ensure that suicide-related messages are safe, strategic, positive, and in line with best practices.



Ideas for Suicide Prevention Awareness

- Place inspirational signs around your school, workplace, or town.
- Host an educational training such as Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Suicide Prevention for Gatekeepers Course, Mental Health First Aid, or Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).
- Host a screening of *Suicide: The Ripple Effect*, a documentary showcasing the story of Kevin Hines, who at the age of 19, survived an attempt of suicide.
- Hang signs with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Number (1-800-273-8255 (TALK)) or Crisis Text Line (Text 'PA' to 741-741) around your school, workplace, or town.
- Light a candle on September 10th to remember a loved one or to remind yourself that you matter.
- Work with your county commissioners to proclaim September as Suicide Prevention Month (see example at the end of packet).
- Attend Capitol Awareness Day in Harrisburg, PA on Wednesday, September 25, 2019, hosted by Prevent Suicide PA.
- Share winning posters and videos from the Prevent Suicide PA Annual PSA Contest for high school students to help spread awareness. (see <http://psa.preventsuicidepa.org/>)

The following national and international associations have developed resource guides containing additional lists of activities and ideas that can be implemented across settings:

- Cycle Around the Globe: Help raise awareness for Suicide Prevention
- International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP): [Suggested activities](#).
 - IASP also developed guidelines on [how to Write a World Suicide Prevention Day Press Release](#).
 - [IASP Facts & Figures](#).
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: [Suicide Prevention Month Ideas for Action 2019](#)



Social Media

Sample Social Media Posts (to be copied or adapted):

*Today is World Suicide Prevention Day. Reach out to a friend and let them know you care.
#JanaMarieFoundation #PreventSuicidePA*

*This year's World Suicide Prevention Day theme is "Working Together to Prevent Suicide."
We want you to know that there are resources available and people who want are here
for you. If you or a loved one is in need of crisis support call 1800-273-TALK (8255) (or
you can insert local crisis number). #JanaMarieFoundation #PreventSuicidePA*

*Today is World Suicide Prevention Day – Working Together to Prevent Suicide. There is
always help available. Visit <https://janamariefoundation.org> to learn more.
#JanaMarieFoundation #PreventSuicidePA*

*Did you know Facebook has a way to reach out to a friend who may be in crisis? If you are
concerned about a post you can contact your friend directly, or have Facebook send
them a message that help is available. Learn more here: <https://www.facebook.com/fbsafety/photos/a.197686146935898.42079.125459124158601/1041262189244952/?type=3&theater> [specific to Facebook] #JanaMarieFoundation #PreventSuicidePA*



Crisis Resources

National:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or visit <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- Crisis Text Line: **TEXT 741-741** or visit <http://www.crisistextline.org/>
- The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386 or visit <https://www.thetrevorproject.org>

Pennsylvania:

- [List](#) of Crisis Intervention contact information by county.
- [County Task Force Resources](#): By county, available contact information is provided for crisis, the Suicide Prevention Task Force, local chapter of AFSP, and other local mental health/suicide prevention resources.

National and State Organizations

National:

- American Association of Suicidology (AAS): <http://www.suicidology.org/>
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP): <https://afsp.org/>
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC): <http://www.sprc.org/>

Pennsylvania:

- Jana Marie Foundation: <http://www.janamariefoundation.org/>
- Aavidum: <http://aavidum.com>
- Prevent Suicide PA: <http://preventsuicidepa.org/>
- Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS): <http://pnsas.org/>



Sample Proclamation

An official signing of a proclamation by your county commissioners is a great way to publicize the kick-off for Suicide Prevention Month and the activities that will be taking place throughout the month. Below is sample proclamation verbiage:

Suicide Prevention Month 2019 / Suicide Prevention Day, September 10, 2019

WHEREAS, suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in the state of Pennsylvania, one person dies by suicide every four hours, making it the second leading cause of death for ages 15-34 and the 4th leading cause of death for ages 35-54.; and

WHEREAS, nearly five million people in the United States have lost a loved one to suicide; and

WHEREAS, each member of our community is valued and irreplaceable; and

WHEREAS, talking openly about stress and psychological health builds trust, reduces barriers to care, and enables early intervention; and

WHEREAS, local and statewide suicide prevention efforts should be developed and encouraged to the maximum extent possible, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the [COUNTY] Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim September 2019 as “Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month” and September 10, 2019 as “Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day” in [COUNTY].



About Jana Marie Foundation

Jana Marie Foundation harnesses the power of creative expression and dialogue to spark conversations, build connections, and promote mental wellness among young people and their communities. The organization envisions communities working together to knock down walls and transform emotional distress into resilience and hope. Jana Marie Foundation is located in Centre County, Pennsylvania.

<https://janamariefoundation.org>

About Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Grant

The Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Grant is a five-year federal SAMHSA grant awarded to the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) at the Department of Human Services. The project targets youth ages 10-24 and provides awareness, training, and screening activities to increase identification and improve continuity of care for youth at risk of suicide.

<https://www.preventsuicidepa.org/gls/>

About Prevent Suicide PA

Prevent Suicide PA supports those who are affected by suicide, provides education, awareness, and understanding by collaborating with the community to prevent suicide, and reduces the stigma associated with suicide. The organization envisions having a Commonwealth where every life is valued, that everyone has the support necessary to get help when needed, and that hope and healing abounds in every person.

<http://preventsuicidepa.org/>

About Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistant Services (PNSAS)

The mission of the Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance Services is to provide leadership for developing a safe and drug-free environment and mental health wellness in schools and communities across the commonwealth. Barriers to learning will be removed and student academic achievement will be enhanced through collaborative prevention, intervention, and postvention services.

<http://pnsas.org/>

