

TSPN CALL TO ACTION

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MAY 2016

TENNESSEE SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK



TSPN STAFF REFLECT ON THIS YEAR'S AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDODOLOGY CONFERENCE

TSPN staff attended the American Association of Suicidology's annual conference, held March 31-April 2 in Chicago, presenting several presentations showcasing TSPN's achievements within and contributions to the suicide prevention movement. This year's AAS conference was probably the largest ever, with 1,500 people coming to the Palmer House downtown to discuss the latest developments in the field of suicide prevention. TSPN's exhibit at the event was a popular attraction at the conference, and it allowed Network staff to make valuable organizational and outreach contacts.



Above: TSPN Executive Director Scott Ridgway (right center) and East Tennessee Regional Coordinator Amy Dolinsky (left center) pose with Carol Graham (left) and Maj. Gen. Mark Graham, USA (ret.) (right), who facilitated an extremely popular workshop during this year's conference.

As part of the pre-conference for this year's conference, Executive Director Scott Ridgway presented a well-attended half-day workshop outlining the foundation and function of TSPN, tracing its evolution from a small grass-roots movement into a national model for state-supported suicide prevention efforts. He detailed the importance of cultivating a devoted core group of volunteers, alliances with state departments and legislators, a diversified funding stream, and a long-term sustainability plan in helping a group like TSPN grow and thrive over the years. He also explained how TSPN has adapted its approach to meet the needs of a diverse population and use emerging technologies to its advantage. "I always feel privileged to attend these conferences, especially when I have the opportunity to spotlight the work we're doing in Tennessee and help people in other states reach out and save lives. We're already thinking of ideas we can present and topics we can discuss at next year's event," Ridgway said.

Below: a flyer promoting TSPN's exhibit at the event, which featured a raffle of assorted TSPN marketing materials.

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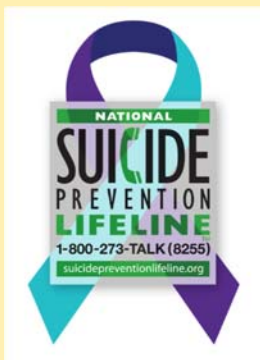
Dolinsky, along with Middle Tennessee Regional Coordinator Samantha Nadler attended a two-day pre-conference workshop where they received training in the facilitation of suicide attempt support groups. The workshop was hosted by staff from Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services out of Culver City, California, home of the nation's first suicide hotline. "The support group is an eight-week closed group that offers a safe, non-judgmental place for people to talk about the feelings that led them to attempt suicide and the impact that their attempt had on their lives," Nadler explains. The group participating was the largest one trained to date at an AAS conference. The first day was devoted to reviewing the need for support for suicide attempt survivors. Participants also reviewed the concepts, guidelines, and core values of the group as well as the necessary qualifications for facilitators. The second day focused on facilitation techniques and support group structure. Both days involved intensive role-play exercises to practice individual intake and facilitating group discussion.



Zero Suicide Coordinator Misty Leitsch had the opportunity to meet with others at the conference and discuss Tennessee's statewide Zero Suicide Initiative. Many attendees were impressed by the presentation made by Major General Mark Graham, USA (ret.) and his wife Carol. After losing one son to combat in Iraq and another to suicide, the Grahams have become leading advocates in the area of veteran mental health and suicide prevention. "I was incredibly moved by their message. To hear first-hand their story was a beautiful experience," Leitsch recalled.

TSPN staff are already developing plans and ideas for AAS's 50th annual conference, planned for April 26-29, 2017, in Phoenix. We look forward to providing you with a report on what promises to be a particularly active and powerful conference in a future edition of the *TSPN Call to Action*.

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TSPN INAUGURATES NEW TASK FORCE IN SOUTHEAST REGION

The first meeting of TSPN's Bradley-McMinn-Meigs-Polk Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force took place on April 13, with about 30 people in attendance.

"This meeting represents the culmination of a vision two years in the making," said TSPN Advisory Council Chair Tim Tatum (and chair of the new Task Force) during introductions. "As someone who lives in one of these counties and works in another, I can tell you firsthand how much this group is needed."

Participants at this meeting, held at Tennova Healthcare's Pine Ridge Treatment Center in Cleveland, included delegates from local school districts, law enforcement agencies, health departments, and medical examiner's offices. Camelot Care, Centerstone, Cherokee Health, the Helen Ross McNabb Center, and the Mental Health Cooperative were among the mental health agencies represented at this first meeting.

TSPN Executive Director Scott Ridgway provided an overview of suicide statistics in the counties covered by the new Task Force, which generally run higher than state and national averages. He also outlined the Task Force's anticipated public health approach to suicide prevention and specific strategies, including the promotion of

- the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) as a community resource
- the Gun Safety Project to local firearm retailers and firing ranges
- suicide prevention curricula within area schools
- suicide prevention training and assessment to professional and civic groups
- support for people who have lost loved ones to suicide

Future meetings of the group will convene on the second Wednesday of each month at 11:30 AM at Pine Ridge Treatment Center within Tennova Healthcare, located at 2800 Westside Drive Northwest in Cleveland, ZIP 37312. (See the regional calendar on page 5 of this publication for a list of future meeting dates.)



TSPN Executive Director Scott Ridgway (center) offers an overview of the organization to Task Force Members as TSPN Advisory Council Chair Tim Tatum looks on (photo courtesy of Jonathan Smith).

TSPN INTRODUCES COLLEGE SUICIDE PREVENTION BROCHURE

TSPN has introduced a new publication in its line of population-specific brochures, this one addressing suicide risk in college students.

"Saving College Student Lives in Tennessee" is derived in large part from the research of Sandra Perley, Ed.D, MSN, RN, Associate Professor of Nursing at Columbia State Community College and a member of TSPN's Advisory Council. The brochure is dedicated in her honor. (More information on her research is available in the March edition of the *TSPN Call to Action*.)

Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among college-age adults (ages 18-24). Research shows that in any given year, 6% of college students consider suicide, with 14% of those students ultimately attempting suicide.

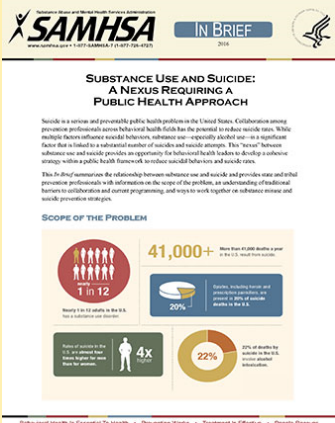
Factors contributing to suicide risk in college students include academic stress and financial concerns--indeed, almost one-third to half of college students who consider suicide cite stress related to money or coursework as a contributing factor. Other potential risk factors include problems with parents and social isolation. Additionally, certain populations of college students such as LGBTQI students, veterans, minority students, students who do not live on campus, and students who have known someone who died by suicide are at a higher risk for suicide and suicide attempts.

This brochure joins several others TSPN provides at regional conferences, local health fairs and community events, and suicide prevention training sessions. Each brochure in TSPN repertoire is available for free printing and download on the TSPN website (<http://tspn.org/brochures-2>).

Funding for the brochure was provided under a grant number: 1U97SM061764-01 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.



SAMHSA PUBLISHES BRIEF ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND SUICIDE



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has published a brief on the connection between substance abuse and suicide, and how state and tribal officials can collaborate on substance abuse and suicide prevention strategies. "Substance Use and Suicide: A Nexus Requiring a Public Health Approach" was published in March.

The connection between suicide and substance abuse has been well-researched. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, roughly 22 percent of suicide deaths involved alcohol intoxication, and opiates (including heroin and prescription painkillers) were present in 20 percent of suicide deaths. A diagnosis of alcohol or drug misuse is associated with suicide risk 10 to 14 times greater than the general population.

The policy brief acknowledges logistical and professional barriers which have prevented collaboration between substance abuse and suicide prevention professionals in the past. At the same time, the brief stresses the need to come together on this issue given the strong association between these two phenomena and their shared risk and protective factors.

The document recommends a multi-faceted, population-based approach to determine the extent of the problem in the community, identify existing substance abuse and suicide prevention efforts, begin a dialogue between the stakeholder agencies, and translate their combined recommendations into policy, program development, and funding initiatives. It also calls on substance abuse professionals to familiarize themselves with the warning signs of suicide, and vice versa.

"Substance Use and Suicide: A Nexus Requiring a Public Health Approach" is available for free download via the SAMHSA online store at <http://1.usa.gov/23s5kiU>.

AAS LAUNCHES WEBSITE FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL, MH PROVIDERS

The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) recently launched a new website for National Guard and Reserve members, their families, and the mental health providers who serve them. USMilitaryMatters.org provides access to free online webinar trainings and other resources.



Service members and their families can participate in webinars on post-traumatic stress disorders, problem-solving, stress inoculation training, challenges associated with military life and transitions, and getting and seeking help. Mental health providers can earn up to 18 free credit hours by participating in webinars on military culture, the impact of military life on families, and military sexual trauma. Webinars on posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, sleep problems, suicide, and substance abuse are also available, tailored to professional and non-professional audiences.

The site also offers links to other resources for service members and families, such as MaketheConnection.net, which offers stories of life events and recovery tailored to veterans, and [Blue Star Families](http://BlueStarFamilies.org), which provides free resources, services, and opportunities to military family members.

The webinars and trainings provided by USMilitaryMatters.org are made possible by a cooperative grant agreement between the Department of Defense (DoD), the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) and AAS, in cooperation with the National Center for Veterans Studies, to conduct programs and trainings in suicide prevention, outreach, and education for the National Guard, Reserves, their families, and mental health providers.

SPOTLIGHT: CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY BLUEPRINT



The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, in partnership with the Carson J. Spencer Foundation, and RK Mechanical have released *A Construction Industry Blueprint: Suicide Prevention in the Workplace*.

Construction ranks among the top nine occupations with the highest risk for suicide, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The *Construction Industry Blueprint* calls upon construction executives to make suicide prevention a health and safety priority and provides guidelines for suicide prevention activities in the industry.

“Demanding physical work, coupled with the stresses of seasonal employment and minimal access to mental health care, often create a workforce vulnerable to mental health challenges like depression, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts,” explains Sally Spencer-Thomas, CEO and co-founder of the Carson J. Spencer Foundation, in a February 16 article in the *Engineering News-Record* regarding the document.

It guides managers through an exploration of risk factors common within the industry, such as sleep disruption caused by long or

irregular hours, as well as protective factors such as access to employee assistance programs. The document also explains how managers can proactively respond to mental health issues and crises in the workplace.

The *Construction Industry Blueprint* is available for free download on the National Action Alliance’s website (bit.ly/1KtAVrk).

CONCUSSIONS LINKED TO LONG-TERM SUICIDE RISK

Recent research out of Canada suggests people who suffer a concussion are three times the risk for suicide years after the initial injury—and the risk is especially acute if the injury happens over the weekend as opposed to a weekday.



Researchers identified about 230,000 concussion patients over a 20-year period, following them over several years. The suicide rate among these patients was 31 per 100,000 population, three times the rate for Canada at large. On average, the suicide happened about six years after the injury.

People who suffered concussions over the weekend (Saturday and Sunday) were even more likely to die by suicide years later, at a rate four times higher than the general population. The difference may be related to the medical attention received after the injury. Weekday head injuries often occur on the job and are more likely to be referred to the emergency department—especially when treatment is compensated by an employer. But head injuries on the weekends are more likely to result from sports and recreation. “If you want to get back up and back in the game, no one will stop you, and some of your teammates or your coaches might even encourage that,” explained Dr. Donald Redelmeier, senior core scientist at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Toronto and senior author for this study.

The association between head injury and suicide risk has been previously noted in combat veterans and professional athletes. It is believed that concussive injury, especially if repeated, can alter brain chemistry, increasing the risk of mood disorders and suicidal behavior. The study authors recommend that physicians and family members watch for suicide warning signs in people who have suffered concussions, even if the injury happened several years previously.

The citation for this study is as follows: Fralick, M, et al (2016). Risk of suicide after a concussion. *Canadian Medical Association Journal* doi: 10.1503/cmaj.150790. Available URL: <http://bit.ly/1NI7Lae>.

TSPN REGIONAL CALENDAR

No December meetings are scheduled unless otherwise marked. Dates marked in **bold and in Majorelle blue** indicate alternate meeting dates intended to accommodate state holidays or other previously scheduled events.

East Tennessee Region

monthly, 3rd Thursday, 12:15 PM
Third Floor Conference Room, Cherokee Health Systems, 2018 Western Avenue, Knoxville, 37921
May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, no meeting in September, October 20, November 17, no meeting in December

Memphis/Shelby County Region

monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 11:30 AM
Memphis Crisis Centers Training Facility, 70 North Pauline, Memphis, 38105
May 17, June 21, July 19, August 16, no meeting in September, October 18, November 15, no meeting in December

Mid-Cumberland Region

monthly, 2nd Thursday, 9:30 AM
TSPN central office, 446 Metroplex Drive, Suite A-224, Nashville, 37211
May 12 (held at Your Heart on Art), June 9, July 14, August 11 (location TBD), no meeting in September, October 13, November 10 (location TBD), December 8

Northeast Region

monthly, 4th Thursday, 9:00 AM
Frontier Health, 1167 Sprattin Park Drive, Gray, 37615
May 26, June 23, July 28, August 25, September 22, October 27, and **November 17**

Rural West Region

monthly, 3rd Wednesday, 10:30 AM
Fourth Floor, West Tennessee Healthcare Building, 1804 Highway 45 Bypass, Jackson, 38305
May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17, no meeting in September, October 19, and November 16

South Central Region

monthly, 1st Wednesday, 11:00 AM
Behavioral Healthcare Center, located at 1400 Rosewood Drive, Columbia, 38401
May 4
Conference Room A, South Central Regional Health Office, 1216 Trotwood Avenue, Columbia, 38401
June 1, July 6, August 3, no meeting in September, October 5, November 2, and December 7

Southeast Region

monthly, first Thursday, 11:30 AM
Mental Health Cooperative of Chattanooga, 801 North Holtzclaw Avenue, Suite 101, Chattanooga, 37404
May 5
Omni Community Health, 1635 Chestnut Street, Chattanooga, 37408
June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, and December 1

Upper Cumberland Region

monthly, 4th Thursday, 9:00 AM
Volunteer Behavioral Health, 1200 Willow Avenue, Cookeville, 38502
May 26, June 23, July 28, August 25, no meeting in September, October 27, **November 17**, and December 22

Intra-State Department Meetings

2 PM-4 PM
TSPN central office, 446 Metroplex Drive, Suite A-224, Nashville, TN 37211
May 11, August 10, and November 9

Advisory Council

June 29-30 (Montgomery Bell State Park Inn, 1000 Hotel Avenue, Burns, 37029)
September 14 (Trevecca Community Church, 335 Murfreesboro Road, Nashville, 37210)

Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention for Hickman-Perry Counties

monthly, 4th Friday, 12:00 PM (lunch served at 11:30 AM)
Conference Room, St. Thomas Hickman Hospital, 135 East Swan Street, Centerville, 37033
May 27, June 24, July 22, August 26, no meeting in September, October 28, **November 18**, no meeting in December

Bradley-McMinn-Meigs-Polk Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 2nd Wednesday, 11:30 AM
Pine Ridge Treatment Center, Tennova Healthcare, 2800 Westside Drive Northwest, Cleveland, 37312
May 11, June 8, and July 13

Blount County Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention Alliance

monthly, 1st Friday, 12:00 PM
Boys and Girls Club Meeting Room, Fort Craig Elementary School, 520 South Washington Street, Maryville, 37804
May 6, June 3, Executive Committee meeting in July, August 5, September 2, October 7, November 4, and December 2

Davidson County Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 4th Tuesday, 3:00 PM
Large Conference Room at Mental Health Cooperative, 275 Cumberland Bend Drive, Nashville 37228
May 24, June 28, July 26, August 23, no meeting in September, October 25, **November 15**, no meeting in December

Giles County Suicide Prevention Task Force

quarterly, 3rd Monday, 10:30 AM
Giles County Career Center, 125 South Cedar Lane, Pulaski, 38478
June 20, September 19, and December 19

Montgomery-Houston-Humphreys-Stewart Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 3rd Friday, 9 AM
Youth Villages, 651 Stowe Court, Clarksville, 37040
May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19, September 16, October 21, November 18, December 16

Rutherford County Suicide Prevention Coalition

monthly, 1st Tuesday, 5:15 PM
TrustPoint Hospital, 1009 North Thompson Lane, Murfreesboro, 37129
May 3, June 7, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 1, and December 6



TSPN Executive Director Scott Ridgway (right) poses for a photo with Kevin Hines, a leading figure within the lived experience movement and author of *Cracked, Not Broken*, an account of his suicide attempt and recovery that has become a seminal text in the movement.

County	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bradley	14 (14.1)	11 (11.0)	15 (14.8)	13 (12.8)	12 (11.7)
McMinn	5 (9.6)	11 (20.9)	9 (17.2)	10 (19.1)	10 (19.0)
Meigs	4 (34.0)	0 (N/A)	3 (25.6)	2 (17.2)	2 (17.1)
Polk	6 (35.7)	1 (6.0)	2 (12.0)	3 (18.0)	3 (17.9)
Tennessee	932 (14.7)	938 (14.6)	956 (14.8)	1,017 (15.7)	945 (14.4)
Nation	38,364 (12.8)	39,518 (12.7)	40,600 (12.9)	41,149 (13.0)	42,773 (13.4)

This chart displays suicide rates for the last five years within counties covered by the new Bradley-McMinn-Meigs-Polk Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force, as compared to state and national rates (data sources from the Tennessee Department of Health and the American Association of Suicidology).

ADVISORY COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

If you are interested in getting involved with TSPN on a local level or have other questions, contact the chairperson of your region as indicated by the map provided below:

East Tennessee region

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anneyoung@cornerstoneofrecovery.com

Memphis and Shelby County

Pastor Waring Porter
(901) 233-2175

wporter@allsaintspres.com

Mid-Cumberland region

Eileen Wallach
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eileen@yourheartonart.org

Northeast region

Jack Stewart, MA
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Rural West region

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Southeast region

Eve Nite

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Advisory Council Chair

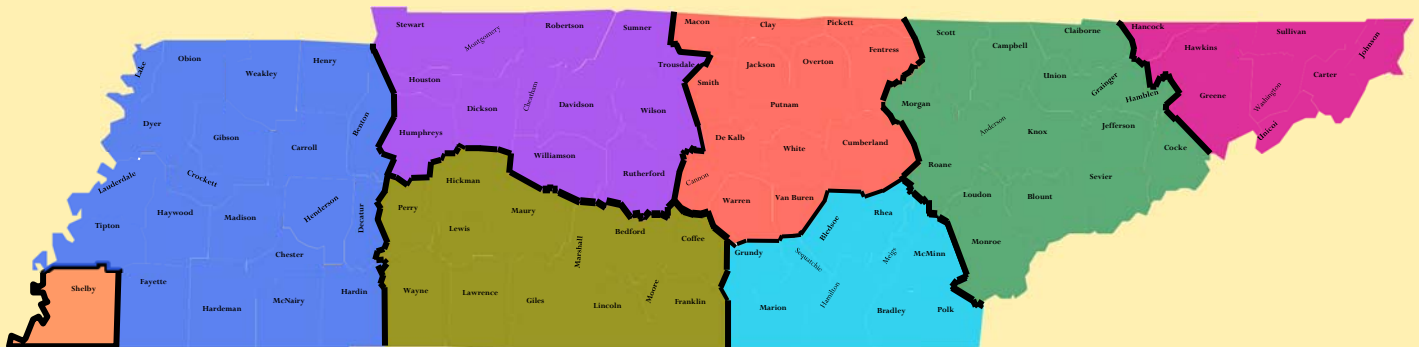
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