

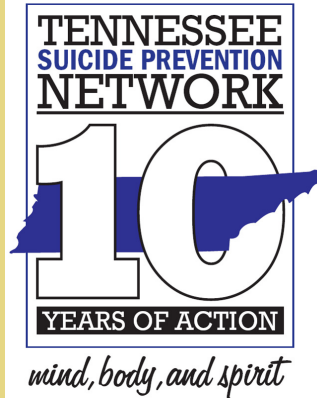
TSPN CALL TO ACTION

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2
FEBRUARY 2011

TENNESSEE SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK



GOVERNOR, STATE OFFICIALS INVITED TO 10TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM



TSPN continues planning for its 10th Anniversary Symposium on April 29, to be held at 335 Murfreesboro Road in Nashville.

This event recognizes the anniversary of the agency's first meeting and the development of plans for a statewide public-private partnership for suicide prevention.

The theme for our symposium is "Suicide Prevention: Mind, Body, and Spirit"; as such this event will include panels and breakout sessions emphasizing whole-body health and its relation to suicide prevention. Presenters will include survivors of suicide and suicide attempts, authors, counselors, and public officials from across the state.

Governor Bill Haslam has been invited to provide remarks on the importance of suicide prevention, while Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey and Speaker of the House Beth Harwell have been invited to present a joint resolution from the Tennessee General Assembly. Additionally, commissioners from four different state departments have been asked to participate in a panel discussion on the future of mental health and suicide prevention in Tennessee.

TSPN continues to seek sponsors for this event. All sponsors will be recognized on the event Program; other benefits are outlined on the symposium sponsorship form available on the TSPN homepage (www.tspn.org).

Any questions about the symposium may be addressed to Executive Director Scott Ridgway, MS, at tspn@tspn.org or (615) 297-1077.

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TSPN would like to thank all the groups and agencies who have committed to sponsoring our symposium thus far.

MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY REACTS TO TUCSON MASS SHOOTING



Giffords had previously co-chaired an event for NAMI in Arizona and is a longtime supporter of the group, according to a NAMI statement on released after the attack (image is courtesy of the United States Congress).

Mental health agencies across the country have been providing resources and commentary on the January 8 mass shooting in Tucson that left six dead and several critically injured, including U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

Mental Health America released a statement on January 10 expressing its condolences, but pointing out that most people with mental illness are not likely to commit acts of mass violence, and that such incidents can be prevented if mentally ill persons receive treatment. "Although rare, when a person becomes so ill that he/she is a danger to themselves or others, state laws provide a way to get them help even if they don't believe that they need it. The best strategy, however, is to have an accessible system of care that is easy to use."

"Nationwide, the mental health care system is broken," observes Michael J. Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), in a statement on the tragedy. "Arizona, like other states, has deeply cut mental health services. Arizona has a broad civil commitment law to require treatment if it is needed; however, the law cannot work if an evaluation is never conducted or mental health services are not available." Fitzpatrick noted that Giffords had previously co-chaired a NAMI event in southeastern Arizona and is a longtime supporter of that group.

MHA is offering a collection of links and resources relevant to the tragedy in its online pressroom (www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/about-us/pressroom/press-kits/tragedy-in-arizona). These include recommendations for coping with sudden trauma and related anxiety, suggestions for people with mental illness, as well as facts about the alleged connection between mental illness and violent behavior.

Additionally, the NAMI Blog (<http://blog.nami.org>) offers a summary of a segment from NPR's "Diane Rehm Show". The segment, which is linked in the blog entry, focuses on the problems parents encounter in connecting their adult children with mental health care, as well as the need for families and communities to work together in connecting people with mental illness to potentially life-saving resources. Guests include several mental health experts along with Pete Earley, author of *Crazy: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness*.

TSPN ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SET FOR FEBRUARY 9

The next meeting of the Advisory Council will convene at 12 PM on February 9 at the Metro Nashville Police Department's Hermitage Precinct, located at 3701 James Kay Lane in the Hermitage.

Committee meetings will convene at 10:30 AM, followed by a catered luncheon at 11:45 AM and the business meeting immediately following. The primary matter of business will involve continued planning for the 10th Anniversary Symposium in April.

Several new members of the Council have been appointed since the last meeting in September. They include:

- Dr. Nancy L. Badger, Director of the Counseling Center at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, appointed to the Southeast Region
- Kathy Benedetto, LPC, SPE, LMFT, Director of Tennessee Child and Youth Outpatient Services for Frontier Health, representing TSPN's Northeast Region
- Minnie L. Bommer, BPS, MRD, operator of Bommer and Associates Consultation Services in Covington, representing the Rural West Region
- Renee Brown, Suicide Prevention Coordinator at the Memphis VA Medical Center, representing the Memphis/Shelby County Region
- Carole A. Dickens, RN, MS, CHES, President of Wellthy Journey, the new alternate for the Memphis/Shelby County Region
- Brenda Harper of Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Services, alternate for the Upper Cumberland Region
- Rita McNabb, Coordinated School Health Director for Cocke County Schools, the new East Tennessee Region alternate
- Monica Middlebrooks, CIT Coordinator within the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, the new alternate for the Southeast Region
- and Shelia R. Ward of the Madison County Health Department, serving our Rural West Region



At the last Advisory Council meeting on September 15, outgoing Advisory Council Chair Harold Leonard received a plaque recognizing his prior service. At right is Madge Tullis, the current chair of the Council (photo courtesy of Tim Tatum).

A full report on proceedings from this meeting will be available in the March edition of this newsletter.

GOVERNOR HASLAM APPOINTS NEW TDMH COMMISSIONER

The following is from a press release sent out by Governor Haslam's Transition Team on January 10. We wish Mr. Varney all the best in his new position, and wish outgoing Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts, MSN, JD, RN, FAAN, all the best in her future endeavors.

NASHVILLE – Tennessee Governor-elect Bill Haslam during a stop in Kingsport today announced mental health non-profit executive Doug Varney as Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health.

Varney has spent his professional career with Gray, Tennessee-based Frontier Health, a community mental health center serving families and individuals affected by behavioral health, substance abuse and intellectual deficit issues. He worked his way up from psychological examiner, counselor and therapist to President and CEO.

The department's mission is to plan for and promote the availability of a comprehensive array of quality prevention, early intervention, treatment, habilitation, and rehabilitation services and supports based on the needs and choices of individuals and families served.

"Doug Varney has spent his life dedicated to helping those affected by these issues, and I'm pleased he will be part of our team," Haslam said. "He has spent his career at the community level and having that perspective makes him uniquely qualified to this position."

Varney is active in the Northeast Tennessee region. He was a board member and past president of the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations. He is a member of the faculty at the Healthy Appalachia Institute; adjunct faculty member at East Tennessee State University; past chairman and board member of CareSpark, a regional health information exchange; and a member of the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. He has a master's degree in Psychology from East Tennessee State and was formerly licensed as a psychological examiner, marriage and family counselor and professional counselor.

"I'm a mission-oriented person, and I'm excited to use my experience and years spent in this field to help all Tennesseans facing these challenges," Varney said. "I'm honored to be selected by Gov.-elect Haslam, and I'm looking forward to working with the great staff at the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities department."

Varney, 60, is married to Teresa, and they have three grown daughters and a granddaughter.

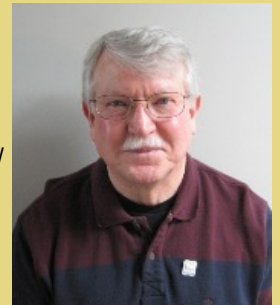
GRANGER BROWN CHOSEN AS NEW TLC PROJECT TRAINER

The Tennessee Lives Count (TLC) Project proudly announces the selection of Granger Brown, MSW, LMSW, as its new Project Trainer.

Granger Brown has a long and dedicated history of mental health crisis and suicide prevention work in Missouri, Oregon and Tennessee. Most recently, Brown was the clinical supervisor of the Crisis Center here in Nashville, where he also facilitated a Survivor of Suicide support group. He has previously worked in a variety of staff and contract roles to include settings such as an alcohol and drug rehabilitation facility, two community mental health programs, a state hospital, a medical hospital, a state prison and a county jail. He owned and operated a highly successful social work consulting business in Oregon for ten years.

Brown is a "clinical survivor" of suicide, meaning he has experienced the impact of the suicide death of a clinical client, and has a strong passion for suicide prevention. He has focused on providing training to law enforcement, corrections, and mental health workers, as well as college students.

Brown can be reached at gbrown@tspn.org or (615) 312-3116. Information on other TLC staff is available via the TLC section of the TSPN website (www.tspn.org/tlc-staff).



Granger Brown started with TLC on January 28 (photo courtesy of Nicole Drummond).

MC: CLARKSVILLE AND MURFREESBORO SUPPORT GROUPS

New support groups for survivors of suicide are available to residents of Clarksville and Murfreesboro.

The Survivor of Suicide Bereavement Support Group will hold its first meeting on February 21 at First Baptist Church Clarksville, located at 435 Madison Street, and will meet on the third Monday of the month at 7 PM thereafter. Additional information about the group is available from facilitator Cindy Johnson at (931) 538-6420 or cjohnson@thmgt.com.

Johnson, who lost her son to suicide, serves as Community Education Director with Behavioral HealthCare Center at Clarksville, which is co-sponsoring the group along with First Baptist Clarksville. Johnson recently promoted the new support group in an interview with the 5 Star Radio Group, which produces PSAs and promotions for five Clarksville radio stations.

Additionally, Central Christian Church in Murfreesboro is hosting a Survivors of Suicide group in Murfreesboro. The group will meet on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 7 PM. More information is available from group facilitators Brittany Dyer (brittany.dyer@hotmail.com) or (615) 904-8623, ext. 53) or Karen Potratz (kpotratz@fbcmboro.org) or (615) 962-8016).

TSPN sponsors several survivor support groups across the state of Tennessee. Group meetings are open to anyone who has lost a loved one through suicide or who is helping someone who has lost a loved one through suicide. They provide safe spaces for survivors to explore their feelings of grief and anger, to raise questions and doubts, and to work through the grieving process with the help of other people making the same journey.

A list of suicide survivor support groups supported and promoted by TSPN is available on the Network's website (tspn.org/for-survivors-of-suicide) along with information on support groups for survivors of suicide attempts (tspn.org/for-survivors-of-suicide-attempts).



First Baptist Church Clarksville (above) and Central Christian Church in Murfreesboro are hosting and co-sponsoring new survivor support groups in the Mid-Cumberland Region (photos courtesy of the church websites at www.fbct.org and www.borodisciples.org).

ONLINE CAPTAIN AMERICA COMIC PROMOTES LIFELINE



Cover image courtesy of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Marvel Comics has released a free digital comic book promoting suicide prevention and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK).

Captain America: A Little Help was written by psychologist Tim Ursiny, founder of Advantage Coaching & Training Inc., a corporate and life coaching service based out of Chicago. Ursiny has contributed interviews and material to the *Chicago Tribune*, *People*, *Readers Digest*, CNN Radio News, and VH-1 News. The comic's illustrator, Nick Dragotta, has worked on Marvel series such as *The Age of the Sentry*, *X-Men: First Class*, and *X-Statix Presents: Dead Girl*.

The 11-page comic involves a suicidal young man whose jump off a building is interrupted when he spots the titular superhero battling a large force of villains on a nearby rooftop. After helping Captain America win the fight, he goes back to his apartment and calls the Lifeline, which is prominently featured in the comic.

The comic is available in the fifth and last issue of the "I Am an Avenger" limited series released January 12. It is available on the Marvel Comics website (http://marvel.com/comic_books/issue/38864/captain_america_a_little_help_2011_1) and through the Marvel Comics App for iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch.

TSPN REGIONAL CALENDAR

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

East Tennessee Region

monthly, 3rd Thursday, 12:00 PM

Mental Health Association of East Tennessee, Inc., 9050 Executive Park Drive, Suite 104-A, Knoxville, 37923

February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, and November 17

Memphis/Shelby County Region

monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 11:00 AM

The Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, 1900 Union Avenue, Memphis, 38104

February 15, March 15, April 19, May 17, June 21, July 19, August 16, September 20, October 18 and November 15

Mid-Cumberland Region

monthly, 2nd Thursday, 9:30 AM

Non-Profit Conference Center, 293 Plus Park Boulevard, Suite 201, Nashville, 37217

February 10, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9, July 14, August 11, September 8, October 13, November 10, and December 8

Northeast Region

monthly, 4th Tuesday, 10:30 AM

Boone's Creek Christian Church, 305 Boone's Creek Road, Gray, 37615

February 22, March 22, April 26, May 24, June 28, July 26, August 23, September 27, October 25, and November 22

Rural West

monthly, 3rd Wednesday, 10:30 AM

Behavioral Health Initiatives, 36C Sandstone Circle, Jackson, 38305

February 16, March 16, April 20, May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, and November 16

South Central

monthly, 1st Tuesday, 10:00 AM

Mental Health Cooperative, 100 Berrywood Drive, Columbia, 38401

February 1

monthly, 2nd Monday, 10:00 AM

Conference Room A, South Central Regional Health Office, 1216 Trotwood Avenue, Columbia 38401

March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 1, and December 6

Southeast Region

monthly, 1st Thursday, 10:00 AM

Downtown Chattanooga YMCA, 301 West Sixth Street, Chattanooga, 37402

February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, **June 9**, 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 Care Systems, 1200 Willow Avenue, Cookeville, 38502

February 24, March 24, April 28, May 26, June 23, July 28, August 25, September 22, October 27, and **November 17**

Intra-State Department Meetings

Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, Third Floor Conference Room, Cordell Hull Building, 425 Fifth Avenue North, Nashville, 37243 (2:30 PM)

April 27, July 27, and October 26

Advisory Council

February 9 (Metro Nashville Police Department Hermitage Precinct , 3701 James Kay Lane, Hermitage, 37076)

June 1-2 (location to be announced)

September 14 (location to be announced)

Blount County Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention Alliance

monthly, 1st Friday, 12:00 PM

Blount County Health Department Conference Room, 302 McGhee Street, Maryville, TN 37801

February 4, March 4, April 1, May 6, June 3, July 1, August 5, September 2, October 7, November 4, and December 2

Davidson County Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 4th Thursday, 3:00 PM

March 24, May 26, June 23, July 28, August 25, September 22, October 27, and **November 17**

Giles County Suicide Prevention Task Force

quarterly, 2nd Monday, 1:30 PM

Giles County Career Center, 125 South Cedar Lane, Pulaski, 38478

April 11, July 11, and October 10

Hickman-Perry County Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 4th Friday, 1:30 PM

Hickman Community Hospital, Senior Care Building, 135 East Swan Street, Centerville, 37033

February 25, March 25, April 22, May 27, June 24, July 22, August 26, September 23, October 28, and **November 18**

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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Memphis and Shelby County

Madge Tullis
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Mid-Cumberland region

Stephanie Barger, M.Div.
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Northeast region

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Rural West region

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