

# TSPN CALL TO ACTION

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JULY 2011

## TENNESSEE SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK



### ADVISORY COUNCIL RETREAT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PRESENTATIONS, STATEWIDE PLANNING

The Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network's annual retreat on June 8-9 featured several presentations on training programs currently in use by TSPN and TLC, as well as the review of three brochures currently in development.

Jerry Swanner of LivingWorks presented to approximately 40 members of the Advisory Council and Intra-State Departmental Groups, as well as guests, during the second day of the retreat at Montgomery Bell State Park Inn. LivingWorks provides community-based training in suicide prevention through a network of trainers spanning six countries. Over one million community participants have been trained in suicide intervention skills through LivingWorks since its establishment in 1983. The Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) protocol used by TSPN and TLC was developed by LivingWorks.



During his presentation, Swanner provided information about the company and the programs it offers, especially the ASIST protocol. He also discussed three other programs LivingWorks offers: safeTALK, a program that prepares participants to identify potentially suicidal persons and connect them with mental health resources; suicideTALK, a community awareness program, and suicideCare, which is oriented towards people in the helping professions who may interact with suicidal persons.

Also during the retreat, members participated in a presentation by TLC Project Coordinator Jason Padgett and Lead Evaluator Jennifer Lockman of Centerstone Research Institute, detailing TLC's ongoing development of a suicide prevention curriculum for juvenile justice system staff. Lygia Williams, of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health, who serves as TLC Primary Investigator, provided information on TLC's grant, scheduled to end later this year, in which TLC staff provided suicide prevention training to juvenile justice staff and other gatekeepers alongside a peer awareness program for youth at risk of juvenile justice placement.

In other news, Advisory Council members participated in a planning session for the next fiscal year, discussing ideas, programs, and materials they would like to have available for fiscal 2012. They also offered feedback on local implementation of the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention in advance of an upcoming meeting of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, attended by TSPN Executive Director Scott Ridgway and TLC Project Coordinator Jason Padgett. Ridgway is a member of the Action Alliance's Strategy Committee, which is reviewing the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention for possible refinement and revision.

Members reviewed new brochures in development by the central office: one on suicide within the GLBT community, one on suicide among African-Americans, and one that provides general information about the Network. The general information brochure is expected to go to the printer by the end of this month and will be available for distribution sometime this fall; the other two will need further revision.

Ken Tullis, a co-founder of TSPN, was elected to the Network's Emeritus Alumni Association by unanimous vote. The Emeritus group consists of former members of the Advisory Council who made unique contributions to the Council and intend to continue their involvement with TSPN after rotating off the group.

Finally, the Suicide Prevention Awareness Day event was set for 10:30 AM on Wednesday, September 14, at Trevecca Community Church, located at 335 Murfreesboro Pike in Nashville. More information about this event available in the Suicide Prevention Awareness Month round-up on page 3 of this publication.

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295 PLUS PARK BOULEVARD,  
SUITE 201  
NASHVILLE, TN 37217  
PHONE: (615) 297-1077  
FAX: (615) 269-5413  
E-MAIL: TSPN@TSPN.ORG  
WWW.TSPN.ORG

NATIONAL  
**SUICIDE**  
PREVENTION  
**LIFELINE**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

## FIFTH NATIONAL SUICIDE AND THE BLACK CHURCH CONFERENCE

Over 200 people attended the Fifth National Suicide and the Black Church Conference, held June 22-23 at the University of Memphis's Student Alumni Center.

The theme for this year's event was "The Sun Will Shine Again!" It was dedicated to the memory of Dr. James (Jim) Clemons, a well-known suicide prevention researcher and advocate who co-founded the conference in 2003 and who died earlier this year. He was remembered in a presentation by Elsie and Jerry Weyrauch, founders of the Suicide Prevention Action Network (now part of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention), and a musical tribute by singer Ernestine Dillard. Dillard also headlined the event's "A Night of Inspiration" concert on the evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

TSPN Executive Director Scott Ridgway was one of several speakers during the opening address, alongside Memphis Mayor A.C. Wharton, Shelby County Mayor Mark H. Luttrell, Jr., and State Representative Karen Camper. Additionally, TLC Principal Investigator Lygia Williams led a youth session during the event.

A total of 29 breakout sessions were available for participants, not including plenary sessions. The luncheon segment featured remarks by Anne Matthews-Younes, Ph.D, Director of the Division of Prevention of Traumatic Stress & Special Programs within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); John Draper, Ph.D., Director of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; Bishop William M. Young, M.Div., LPC, LMFT, CPT, Executive Director of the Healing Word Counseling Center and Senior Pastor, the Healing Center; and Rev. Gerald Durley, M.Div., Ph.D., Senior Pastor at Providence Baptist Church in Atlanta. Dillard performed two songs during the luncheon segment.

At the close of the conference Bishop Young and his wife, Pastor Dianne Young, received a certificate from TSPN acknowledging their contributions to the National Suicide and the Black Church Conference and to the African-American suicide prevention movement at large.

Readers are reminded of the Suicide and the African-American Faith Communities conference scheduled for October 17 at St. James Missionary Baptist Church, located at 600 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue North in Nashville. More information about this event is available on the TSPN website ([tspn.org/stse2011](http://tspn.org/stse2011)).



Rev. Dr. Durley (left) provided the luncheon address at this year's conference. Dr. Williams (center) was the event's primary plenary speaker. Dillard performed during the "Night of Inspiration" concert on the evening of June 22 (photos of Durley and Williams courtesy of the Memphis Healing Center; photo of Dillard courtesy of [earnestinedillard.com](http://earnestinedillard.com)).

## TSPN ANNOUNCES NEW SUBSTANCE ABUSE OUTREACH COORDINATOR

TSPN is pleased to announce the selection of Granger Brown, MSW, LMSW, as the Network's new Substance Abuse Outreach Coordinator.



Photo of Granger Brown courtesy of Jason Padgett.

The Substance Abuse Outreach Coordinator will oversee suicide prevention training of substance use professionals and program administrators as part of a program funded by the Division of Alcohol and Drug Services within the Tennessee Department of Mental Health. This training program will be a version of the "Question, Persuade, and Refer" (QPR) suicide prevention training protocol commonly used by the Network. Additionally, the Coordinator will provide instruction and elaboration upon the Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 50, *Addressing Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Substance Abuse Treatment*, published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Brown has a long and dedicated history of mental health crisis and suicide prevention work in several states. Brown is currently a Project Trainer for the Tennessee Lives Count (TLC) Project. Before that, he was the clinical supervisor of the Crisis Center in Nashville, where he also facilitated a Survivor of Suicide support group. He has also 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. Finally, Brown also owned and operated a highly successful social work consulting business in Oregon for ten years.

Brown will formally start work with TSPN on July 18 and immediately begin rollout of the project, engaging substance use centers across Tennessee in the program and providing general information and education about suicide prevention to substance abuse treatment professionals and consumers. He will also present program objectives and findings at professional conferences on the local and national levels.

TSPN thanks its members for spreading the word about this new program and the Substance Abuse Outreach Coordinator position. The Network received upwards of 60 applications for the job and extends its thanks everyone who applied.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS DAY EVENT SET FOR SEPTEMBER 14; OTHER EVENTS PLANNED STATEWIDE

Trevecca Community Church, which hosted TSPN's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium in April, has been selected as the venue for this year's Suicide Prevention Awareness Day event on September 14.

The theme of this year's event is "Where We Were, Where We Are, and Where We Hope to Be". It will include a panel discussion featuring members of Tennessee's survivor support and attempt survivor support groups. The event itself will run from 10:30-11:45 AM with a catered luncheon provided by New Life Café and sponsored by Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital. A meeting of the Advisory Council will convene at 1 PM on the church grounds.

The event is the highlight of this year's "30 Days of Suicide Prevention" campaign, which offers members a daily suggestion for raising suicide prevention during this year's Suicide Prevention Awareness Month observance. More information about this project will be available in the August newsletter.

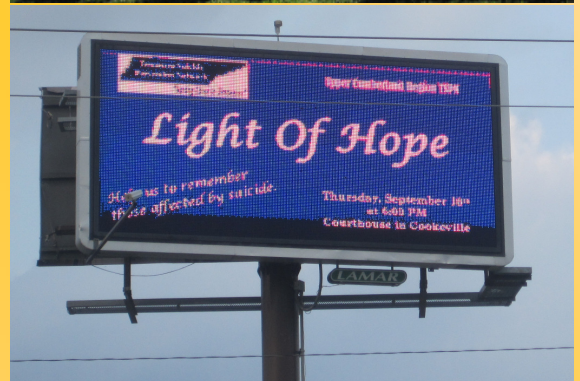
Additionally, the Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamation is available for free download on the TSPN homepage ([www.tspn.org](http://www.tspn.org)). Last year the Network received signed documents from mayors and county executives in roughly 70 Tennessee counties, a record for the project. This year the Network aims to have all 95 Tennessee counties represented in the effort. As of press time proclamations have already been secured from the mayors of Clarksville, Memphis, and Shelby County. We recommend contacting your regional chair to see what counties remain in your area to make arrangements for getting an endorsement from your local officials.

Among the events already planned for September:

- TSPN's South Central Region, the Hickman-Perry County Suicide Prevention Task Force, and the Left Behind By Suicide support group are partnering with Cowboy Up to stage an awareness event at Central High School in Centerville on September 13. More information is available from Regina Peery at [peeryr@k12tn.net](mailto:peeryr@k12tn.net).
- The annual "Light of Hope" event, confirmed for 6 PM on September 15 at the Putnam County Courthouse in Cookeville. For more information, contact TSPN Upper Cumberland Regional Chair Jodi Bartlett, Ed.S., LPC-MHSP, at (931) 432-4123, extension 166, or [jbartlett@vbhcs.org](mailto:jbartlett@vbhcs.org).
- The Sixth Annual Memorial Walk, planned for Warrior's Path State Park in Kingsport on September 18. This year's observance will include a cookout prior to the walk itself. For details, contact Linda Phipps at (423) 361-2087.
- "Saving Lives in Rural West Tennessee", to be held from 9 AM-3 PM on September 29 at the Jackson-Madison County Regional Health Department, located at 804 North Parkway in Jackson. The event will include a survivors' panel and breakout sessions on suicide prevention for high-risk population groups like veterans, older adults, and people with substance abuse concerns. For additional information, call (731) 668-6886.

Additionally, something new TSPN is introducing this year is "30 Days of Saving Lives in Tennessee", a daily calendar for the month of September with ideas for what you can do to promote suicide prevention in your community. We encourage you to pass this calendar along to friends and family and so they can join you in the activities listed. The calendar, like the proclamation, is available for free download on the TSPN website.

More information about Suicide Prevention Awareness Month events will be provided in the August and September newsletters. To have your event listed in the TSPN newsletter and our website, contact the TSPN central office at (615) 297-1077 or [tspn@tspn.org](mailto:tspn@tspn.org).



Above: the balloon release from last year's Memorial Walk in Kingsport (photo courtesy of Harold Leonard). Below: Lamar Advertising donated the use of this digital billboard to promote last year's "Light of Hope" event in Cookeville (photo courtesy of Scott Ridgway).

## ARMY RESERVE SUICIDE PREVENTION BILL INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS

New legislation aimed at reducing suicides within the U.S. armed forces has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives, based on a highly successful program in New Jersey.

The Holt-Runyan Amendment to this year's Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense funding bill will require that every Army Reserve and National Guard member who has served in Afghanistan or Iraq receive a call from a trained counselor to see if they need counseling or mental health services. Members of the Reserve and National Guard will receive calls every 90 days so long as they remain on the force. The legislation will also mandate the collection of suicide data for the Individual Ready Reserve, presumably for use in suicide prevention outreach projects.

The legislation, introduced by Rep. Rush Holt (D-New Jersey), is based on one developed and operated by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, which also provides counseling and clinical services to local veterans.



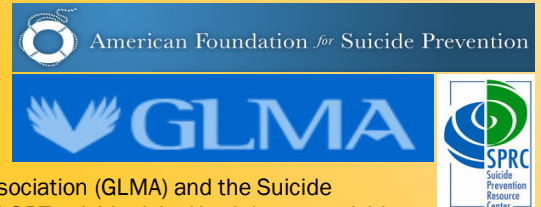
At left: Sgt. Coleman S. Bean, USA Reserves (photo courtesy of nj.com). At right: Rep. Rush Holt (photo courtesy of the United States Congress).

According to a March 16 *Huffington Post* report, Holt has introduced this bill twice before, proposing it for inclusion in the National Defense Authorization Acts for both 2010 and 2011. Both times it cleared the U.S. House but was taken out of the Senate version of the bill.

A U.S. Army report released January 19 counted 301 confirmed or suspected suicides among Army personnel in 2010, including reservists or National Guard troops on an inactive status. This is up from 242 in 2009 and represents yet another all-time high. 101 of the deaths occurred among inactive National Guard personnel, up from 48 in 2009. Holt's bill is named after Sgt. Coleman S. Bean, a Reserve member who died in 2008 following his second tour of duty in Iraq, on which he was deployed despite a diagnosis of PTSD. Linda Bean, Sgt. Bean's mother, accompanied Holt to the House chamber for the introduction of the bill.

## MAJOR REPORT ON LGBT SUICIDE RISK RELEASED

A panel of leading researchers, clinicians, educators and policy experts has published a comprehensive report on the incidence and risk factors related to suicidal behavior in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth and adults. The study confirms previous assumptions about the effects of stigma and discrimination on suicidality within this population group and offers recommendations for prevention.



The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) joined forces to review over 40 years of research on LGBT suicide risk. Hard data on suicide and suicide attempts is scarce since most countries do not list sexual orientation on death certificates, but research does confirm significantly higher rates of suicide attempts among sexual minorities across the lifespan compared to heterosexuals.

Many studies document higher incidences of anxiety, depression, and substance abuse among LGBT persons, but the research team found that even LGBT subjects without these diagnoses were at increased risk for suicide attempts. According to the report abstract, "the consensus report identified stigma and discrimination as playing a key role, especially acts such as rejection or abuse by family members or peers, bullying and harassment, denunciation from religious communities and individual discrimination". The report also offered evidence that discriminatory laws and public policies negatively effect the mental health of gay adults.

Study authors offered several suggestions for reducing LGBT suicide risk, including the promotion of mental health and substance abuse screening within LGBT organizations. At the clinical level, the researchers called for more culturally appropriate suicide prevention protocols and mental health treatment regimens. They also recommended the revision of criteria for gender identity disorder and similar diagnoses in the upcoming fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-V). Finally, the researches suggested including gender identity and sexual orientation in national and local health surveys to provide more information on the links between sexual orientation and suicide risk.

The citation for this study is as follows: Haas, A.P., et al. (2011). Suicide and suicide risk in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations: review and recommendations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 58(1): 10-51. A copy of this study is also available online ([www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00918369.2011.534038](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00918369.2011.534038)).

# TSPN REGIONAL CALENDAR

No December meetings are scheduled unless otherwise marked. Dates in **bold and in cardinal** 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  
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  
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  
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  
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  
July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, and November 16

## South Central

monthly, 2nd Monday, 10:00 AM  
Conference Room A, South Central Regional Health Office, 1216 Trotwood Avenue, Columbia 38401  
July 11, August 8, September 12, October 10, November 14, and December 14

## Southeast Region

monthly, 1st Thursday, 10:00 AM  
Downtown Chattanooga YMCA, 301 West Sixth Street, Chattanooga, 37402  
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  
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 (3:00 PM)  
August 17 and November 16

## Advisory Council

September 7 (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  
July 1, August 5, September 2, October 7, November 4, and December 2

## Davidson County Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 4th Wednesday, 3:00 PM  
July 27, August 24, September 28, October 26, and **November 16**

## Giles County Suicide Prevention Task Force

quarterly, 3rd Monday, 1:30 PM  
Giles County Career Center, 125 South Cedar Lane, Pulaski, 38478  
September 19 and **December 12**

## 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  
July 22, August 26, September 23, October 28, and **November 18**

