

TSPN CALL TO ACTION

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AUGUST 2012

TENNESSEE SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK



“PLEDGE TO PREVENT SUICIDE” KICKS OFF SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH PROJECTS

TSPN is getting an early start on its plans for Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, starting with its “Pledge to Prevent Suicide” project.

The pledge, hosted at Change.org (www.change.org/petitions/pledge-to-prevent-suicide-in-tennessee), is an opportunity for TSPN members and others to express their commitment to suicide prevention through educating themselves and others, and to their intent to share those ideals with family, friends, legislators, and community.

The signatures will be presented at this year's Suicide Prevention Awareness Day event, scheduled for 10:30 AM on Wednesday, September 12, at Trevecca Community Church, located at 335 Murfreesboro Pike in Nashville. They may also be presented to the General Assembly as a testament to public support for suicide prevention and mental health policy.



Within the first 24 hours of the pledge's announcement on TSPN's Facebook page, 106 people signed the pledge, boding well for the ultimate project goal of 5,000 signatures. The petition had 971 signatures as of press time.

The Pledge to Prevent Suicide is a side attraction to the many events planned across the state this August and September; the following is a brief listing of events confirmed so far with contact points. If no contact point is provided, you may contact the TSPN central office for more information—(615) 297-1077 or tspn@tspn.org.

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- August 7, 9 AM: Regional conference “Saving Lives in Northeast Tennessee” at Boone’s Creek Christian Church, located at 305 Christian Church Road in Gray.
- September 6, 6 PM: Decatur County Suicide Prevention 5K Run/Walk at the Decatur County Municipal Building, located at 535 Tennessee Avenue South in Parsons.
- September 6, 9 AM: Regional conference “Saving Lives in Southeast Tennessee” at the AIM Center, located at 472 West MLK Boulevard in Chattanooga.
- September 6, 6 PM: “Light of Hope” awareness/memorial event at Dogwood Park Pavilion, located at 30 East Broad Street in Cookeville.
- September 13, 5:30 PM: Mid-Cumberland Suicide Prevention Awareness Month picnic/event at Centennial Park, located at 2500 West End in Nashville.
- September 16, 2 PM: Suicide Prevention Awareness Month picnic/walk at Warrior’s Path State Park (Shelter 5, Duck Island) in Kingsport. For more information, call (423) 361-2087.
- September 18, 6 PM: “Never Alone” memorial event at Old Lebanon High School football stadium, located at 400 Harding Drive in Lebanon. For more information, contact Brenda Harper at bharper@vbhcs.org.
- September 20, 6 PM: “Never Alone” memorial event at Mt. Juliet Church of Christ, located at 1940 North Mt. Juliet Road. For more information, contact Brenda Harper at bharper@vbhcs.org.
- September 21, 9 AM: regional conference “Saving Lives in Rural West Tennessee” at the Jackson-Madison County Regional Health Department, located at 804 North Parkway in Jackson. Details are available from Stephenie Robb of Behavioral Health Initiatives at stephenier@bhilc.org.
- September 26, 11 AM: Suicide Prevention Awareness Month conference/event at the Family Justice Center Auditorium, located at 400 Harriet Tubman Street in Knoxville (This event is being organized in partnership with the East Tennessee Council on Children and Youth.)
- September 28: Regional conference “Saving Lives in the Upper Cumberland” at Nashville State Community College’s Cookeville campus, located at 1000 Neal Street.
- September 29, 9 AM: Wellness Walk at Fort Campbell, participants meet at Sportsman’s Lodge, located at 6633 Sportsman’s Lane, Fort Campbell. More information is available from Joe Varney at (931) 431-4140 or joseph.w.varney.civ@mail.mil.

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



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SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH EVENTS (CONTINUED)

This year's Suicide Prevention Awareness Day event on September 12 will be sponsored by Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital. A special invitation has been extended to U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin, in hopes that she will attend to promote the scheduled release of the updated National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Invites have also been offered to Governor Haslam, Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey, Speaker of the House Beth Harwell, and Nashville mayor Karl Dean.

More information about all our Suicide Prevention Awareness Day events is available from the TSPN website (www.tspn.org) or our central office (tspn@tspn.org). You may also contact the central office to RSVP for the Suicide Prevention Awareness Day event.

We encourage you to sign up for the pledge and we look forward to seeing you at one of the many events planned for Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in September.

In this photo from last year's Suicide Prevention Awareness Day ceremony on September 14, 2011, Linda Phipps Harold (third from left) accepted the Madge and Ken Tullis, MD, Suicide Prevention Award. She remarked that the date of the event fell on her late son Travis Williams's birthday, referring to the award as "my birthday gift from Travis".

Also pictured, from left to right: Advisory Council Chair Madge Tullis, Advisory Council Member Emeritus Ken Tullis, TSPN Executive Director Scott Ridgway, and Tennessee Deputy Governor Claude Ramsey (photo courtesy of Jennifer Harris).



MHA APPLAUDS SUPREME COURT RULING ON AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mental Health America (MHA), the nation's largest and oldest mental health advocacy organization, released a statement approving of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on the Affordable Care Act only hours after the decision was handed down on June 28. An edited version of a statement from Dr. David Shern, MHA's president and CEO, follows:



"The decision of the Supreme Court to uphold the Affordable Care Act is a tremendous victory for the American public, including millions of individuals living with mental health and substance use conditions.

"The law represents an enormous step forward in our efforts to expand access to care for individuals with mental health or substance use conditions and in our advocacy for prevention of these conditions... Half of all people with a mental health diagnosis first experience it by age 14, but will not receive treatment until age 24. These delays have been importantly underwritten by historical discrimination in insurance coverage for mental illnesses and addictions... The law's guarantee of coverage for people with pre-existing conditions will address these barriers, lower costs, end discrimination, and dramatically improve health outcomes..."

"By including mental health and substance use services on the list of essential benefits that are to be covered in new plans offered to the uninsured beginning in 2014, the law recognizes how integral behavioral health is to overall health. And it extends the groundbreaking Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act and its prohibition of discriminatory limits on mental health and substance use services to those plans. The expansion of Medicaid also requires those who are newly eligible to receive mental health and substance use services at parity with other benefits. State participation in the Medicaid expansion is therefore critically important. Since today's ruling allows states to opt out of the expansion without penalty to their current Medicaid programs, MHA affiliates around the nation will be working with their state governments to ensure state participation."

"The law is already improving access to care and reducing costs... The parents of over 17.6 million children with pre-existing conditions no longer have to worry that their children will be denied coverage because of such a health problem. And in 2014, the law will prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage or charging more to any person based on their medical history. In addition, as a result of the law, 86 million Americans now receive coverage through their private health insurance plan for many preventive services without copays or deductibles."

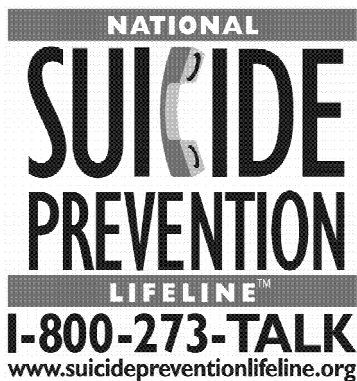
LIFELINE SEEKING SUBMISSIONS FOR YOUTUBE VIDEO GALLERY

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is currently accepting submissions for a new video gallery to be hosted on YouTube.

The My Lifeline video gallery will feature personal stories from people who have called and been helped by the Lifeline, with the object of inspiring viewers to contact the Lifeline when they are in crisis. The project will also include videos from suicide loss survivors, suicide attempt survivors, and suicide prevention advocates.

Submissions should be in .mov, .avi, .mpeg, or .wmv format. It should be between 30 seconds and 2 minutes in length and no larger than 1 GB in size. Videos may be edited for length and to meet certain other criteria. Additional details and a sample video are available for review on the Lifeline's website (<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetInvolved/MyLifelineVideoGallery.aspx>).

The My Lifeline video gallery will replace the site's Lifeline Gallery, an installation of computer-generated avatars with recorded voiceovers by submitters.



The My Lifeline project page on the Lifeline's website features a sample video featuring an actor portrayal, as an example of the type of submissions project organizers are seeking (image courtesy the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline).



HUFFINGTON POST EXPLORES SUICIDES LINKED TO STUDENT LOANS

A recent *Huffington Post* article examines the connection between suicide and student loan debt, arguing that a heavy debt load and the resulting financial burden may be a factor in suicides and suicide attempts.

The article, published on the website on July 2, was contributed by C. Cryn Johannsen, founder and executive director of All Education Matters, a student loan debt activism and education agency. The article was produced by the independent Economic Hardship Reporting Project, and it was co-edited by social critic Barbara Ehrenreich (famous for her work *Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting By in America*) and journalist Gary Rivlin.

Johannsen writes that as the nation's outstanding student loan debt hits the trillion-dollar mark and the rate of student loan defaults increases, a "severely under-reported" trend of suicides and suicide attempts has emerged. Johannsen argues that suicidal tendencies among people with high levels of student debt are widespread, based on her activism in this area. Law school graduates, who frequently have difficulty finding work that would help them pay off their loans, seem particularly affected. Further complicating the issue is a lack of empathy towards people in crisis—others may insist that it is their fault for not being able to pay off their loans, not realizing the psychological impact of debt or the circumstances that prevent them from escaping it.

"(A)s... the rate of student loan defaults increases, a 'severely under-reported' trend of suicides and suicide attempts has emerged."

While no formal studies have confirmed a link between suicidal tendencies and student loan debt load, the link between heavy financial burdens and suicide has been thoroughly vouched for by empirical research. Johannsen also references a 2011 report from the Ministerial Advisory Group within the United Kingdom's Department of Health, which accurately predicted an increase in suicides in the countries hardest hit by the European economic crisis.

"There are psychological consequences when economies fall into decay," explains Dr. Peter Kinderman of the University of Liverpool, a clinical psychologist who helped draft the Ministerial Advisory Group's report. "Feeling suicidal is understandable. It is not a disease, it's a problem."

The full article is available on the Huffington Post website: <http://huff.to/Nolo7S>.



NFL LIFE LINE OFFERS SUPPORT TO PLAYERS, STAFF IN CRISIS

The National Football League has established a crisis hotline specifically for current and former NFL players, coaches, team and league staff, and their family members who may be in crisis.

The NFL Life Line ((800) 506-0078) connects callers to trained counselors who specialize in dealing with the unique concerns of professional athletes and their families—job stress, transitioning into or out of the NFL, relocating to another city, injuries and related emotional stress, and financial or legal issues. Operators assist callers in finding solutions to problems and connecting callers to programs and resources offered by the NFL and other organizations. No confidential information about individual calls or callers is shared with the NFL, teams, or any other organization.

The hotline also maintains a website (<http://nfllifeline.org>) that features videos recorded by former and current NFL players. It also includes lists of resources for current and former players and support staff, such as information on pension plans and benefits programs, business and entrepreneurial programs, and health screenings (including a list of contact points for neurocognitive assessments). The site also offers suggestions for improving emotional and physical wellbeing, and it also provides lists of key suicide warning signs and other symptoms of a mental health crisis.

The NFL Life Line is independently operated by Link2Health Solutions, which administers the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Disaster Distress Helpline, and helps manage the Veterans Crisis Line managed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The hotline is managed by crisis center experts at Centerstone and the Mental Health Association of New York City. Other agencies collaborating with Link2Health include the Jed Foundation, the Education Development Center (which manages the Suicide Prevention Resource Center), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention.



Above: the logo of the NFL Life Line.

Below: a screenshot of Michael Irvin, one of the spokespersons for the Life Line. The former Dallas Cowboys wide receiver struggled with substance abuse issues during and after his career, but ultimately transitioned into careers in acting and broadcasting.



SPOTLIGHT: "YOU MATTER"

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) has created "You Matter", a website for people going through ongoing personal crises.

The "You Matter" website (www.youmatter.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) features a regularly updated blog on issues like self-care and life transitions. The site also includes resource lists with information on dating and relationship violence, veteran support, sex and gender issues, and other subjects that often factor into mental health crises. As a project of the Lifeline, suicide warning signs and information on the hotline are also included.

Visitors can sign up for the "You Matter" Facebook page, Tumblr account, or the Lifeline's Twitter feed and Youtube for regular supportive messages and tips for mental wellness. They can also spread their own message of hope and inspiration through these forums. The site also has a link to the Lifeline Chat program, a recently developed chatroom developed as a pilot project, available on weekday evenings.

You Matter was launched by the Lifeline with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and in partnership with Active Minds, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Reach Out, SAVE, the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, and the Jed Foundation. More information about the "You Matter" project is available from Ashley Womble, the project's Online Communications Manager, at awomble@mhaofnyc.org or (212) 614-5739.



TSPN REGIONAL CALENDAR

No December meetings are scheduled unless otherwise marked. Dates in **bold and in midnight blue** 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
August 16, October 18, and November 15

Memphis/Shelby County Region

monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 11:30 AM
The Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, 1900 Union Avenue, Memphis, 38104
August 21, September 18, October 16, and November 20

Mid-Cumberland Region

monthly, 2nd Thursday, 9:30 AM
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee, Inc., 937 Herman Street, Nashville, 37208
August 9, October 11, and November 8

Northeast Region

monthly, 4th Tuesday, 10:30 AM
Boone's Creek Christian Church, 305 Christian Church Road, Gray, 37615
August 28, October 23, and November 27

Rural West

monthly, 3rd Wednesday, 10:30 AM
Behavioral Health Initiatives, 36C Sandstone Circle, Jackson, 38305
August 15, October 17, and **November 14**

South Central

monthly, 2nd Monday, 11:00 AM
Conference Room A, South Central Regional Health Office, 1216 Trotwood Avenue, Columbia, 38401
August 13, **October 15**, **November 19**, and December 10

Southeast Region

monthly, 1st Thursday, 10:00 AM
Johnson Mental Health Center, 420 Bell Avenue, Chattanooga, 37405
August 2, October 4, November 1, and December 6

Upper Cumberland Region

monthly, 4th Thursday, 9:00 AM
Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Systems, 1200 Willow Avenue, Cookeville, 38502
August 23, **October 18**, and **November 15**

Intra-State Department Meetings

Third Floor Conference Room, Tennessee Department of Mental Health,
Cordell Hull Building, 425 Fifth Avenue North, Nashville, 37243 (3:00 PM)
August 8 and November 7

Advisory Council

September 12 (Suicide Prevention Awareness Day event at Trevecca Community Church, Nashville)

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, 37801
August 3, September 7, October 5, November 2, and December 7

Davidson County Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 4th Wednesday, 3:00 PM
Metro Public Health Department, 201 23rd Avenue North, Nashville, 37203
September 26 and November 28

Giles County Suicide Prevention Task Force

quarterly, 3rd Monday, 1:30 PM
Giles County Career Center, 125 South Cedar Lane, Pulaski, 38478
September 17 and December 17

Hickman-Perry County Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 4th Friday, 1:30 PM
Senior Care Building, Hickman Community Hospital, 135 East Swan Street, Centerville, 37033
August 24, September 28, October 26, and **November 16**

Montgomery-Houston-Humphreys-Stewart Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 1st Tuesday, 9 AM
Behavioral HealthCare Center at Clarksville, 930 Professional Park Drive, Clarksville, 37040
August 7, October 2, November 6, and December 4

Rutherford County Suicide Prevention Coalition

monthly, 1st Tuesday, 6 PM
ITNOLAP Pallet & Crating, 651 Middle Tennessee Road, Murfreesboro, 37129
August 7, September 4, October 2, November 6, and December 4

Text of the "Pledge to Prevent Suicide", as hosted on Change.org:

I believe that suicide is one of the most tragic events a family and community can experience, and that it is a major threat to the people and state of Tennessee.

I believe that awareness about suicide and mental illness is the key to preventing further suffering and loss of life, and that I have the power to bring awareness, education, and understanding to people in my community and my state.

I therefore pledge to learn about the warning signs of suicide and teach them to others. I will learn about the mental health resources available in my community and share this information as needed. I will keep the number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) on hand so I can use it to help someone else. I will review TSPN's website (www.tspn.org) to learn about suicide in Tennessee and how I can get involved in the fight against suicide. In short, I will become a source of comfort, information, and guidance so that I can help others and save lives.

In addition, I will talk about my commitment to suicide prevention and mental health with my family, friends, colleagues, and public officials, reminding them that suicide is a major public health concern worth the time and effort involved.

Finally, I will share this Pledge to Prevent Suicide with all my personal and online contacts so that they too can take a stand in preventing suicide and saving lives in Tennessee.

Again, the petition is available online at the following URL:

www.change.org/petitions/pledge-to-prevent-suicide-in-tennessee

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

Anne Young, MS, CAS
(865) 216-9884

anneyoung@cornerstoneofrecovery.com

Memphis and Shelby County

Renee Brown
(901) 523-8990, extension 5873
renee.brown3@va.gov

Mid-Cumberland region

Stephanie Barger, M.Div.
(270) 519-2352
stephanie@healthassisttn.org

Northeast region

Harold Leonard, MA, LPC-MHSP
(423) 245-5608
hleonard@centurylink.net

Rural West region

Anne Henning-Rowan, MS
(731) 421-8880
annerowan@hughes.net

South Central region

Karyl Chastain Beal, MEd, CT
(931) 388-9289
karylcb@bellsouth.net

Southeast region

Tim Tatum, MA
(423) 339-4351
tim_tatum@chs.net

Upper Cumberland region

Jodi Bartlett, Ed. S, LPC-MHSP
(931) 423-7866 or
(931) 423-4123, ext. 166
jbartlett@vbhcs.org

Advisory Council Chair

Jennifer Harris
(931) 729-1941
jennifer.harris@baptisthospital.com

Executive Director

Scott Ridgway, MS
(615) 297-1077
sridgway@tspn.org

Advisory Council Chair Emeritus

Sam Bernard, PhD, FAAETS, DABCEM
(423) 322-3297
sam@sambernard.info

