Action Alliance
NATIONAL
FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Using the New Action Alliance
Framework for Successful Messaging
to Create More Effective Communications

2014 Campus Grantee Meeting

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@LindaLangford @Action_Alliance @SPRCtweets #SPSM

What's Important About Suicide Prevention Messaging?

Can
- Increase risk
- Undermine prevention

OR

Can
- Promote positive behaviors
- Support prevention goals

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Messaging Challenges & Successes

- Turn to the person next to you and each share:
  - One challenge you've faced in developing suicide prevention communications?
  - One success you've had related to your communications efforts?

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National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention: One Initial Priority (of Four)

Change the public conversation
around suicide & suicide prevention:

"…change the national narratives….to ones that promote hope, connectedness, social support, resilience, treatment and recovery."

Media/Entertainment Outreach
(Journalists, Writers)

Public Messaging
(Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Professionals & Other Messengers)

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What's Public Messaging?

Defined Broadly

- Any public-facing information

- Campaigns & also social media, newsletters, websites, event publicity, fundraising, public talks, etc.

- Does **not** include
  - Private conversations
  - 1-on-1 with individuals in crisis
  - Doctor-patient interactions
  - Sharing in support groups

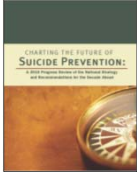What are all of the ways you're communicating to the public?

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NEED FOR A CHANGE IN SUICIDE PREVENTION MESSAGING

Data Sources

- Research literature
- *Charting the Future* progress review of 2001 NSSP
- Public opinion surveys
- Expert Panel, January, 2013

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In the U.S.
4 people die by suicide every hour.

Emphasis on problem severity

CUT HERE

Violates safety guidelines

BULLYCIDE

University president calls student suicide an epidemic

BY URSULA REUTIN

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What's the collective message? Do these make suicide seem preventable?

Depression and Suicide

Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
LANDMARK MENTAL HEALTH REPORT DOCUMENTS DEVASTATING EFFECTS, SIGNIFICANT STIGMA AGAINST SUFFERERS

Full-Day Event
Suicide Prevention: Why Can't We Find Answers?

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Show of Hands:
Where Are We on "Awareness?"

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"KADNAB"™

Changing behavior is more complicated than this:

"This problem is so big!"

I know just what to do!

What makes messages more likely to lead to action?

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{SUICIDE} IS 100% PREVENTABLE

SPEAK UP
REACH OUT

Undefined audiences & goals

Calls to action absent or vague
-*Charting the Future*

Quote from Expert Panel: "It's time to shift from communicating for awareness to communicating for action."

Prevent suicide.
Treat depression.
See your doctor.

Often not integrated with programmatic efforts, e.g. clinical training

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Content undermines the prevention message

SUICIDE AWARENESS FOR MEN

Depression isn't a normal part of getting older...

There is hope & help.

FAST FACTS

- Over **38,000** people in the United States die by suicide every year.
- There are **4** male suicides for every female suicide.
- Over **60** percent of all people who die by suicide suffer from major depression.
- An estimated **1 in 10** U.S. adults report depression.
- The average age of depression onset is **32**.

A vast majority of men have visited a physician a short time before their suicide

★ *Note: not an actual brochure.*

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Recap So Far

- Based on this review, what makes for more successful messages?

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National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention
Framework For Successful Messaging

Four considerations when developing messages:

- **Strategy**
- **Safety**
- **Positive narrative**
- **Guidelines**

Formal launch upcoming! (Please don't publicize until then.)
www.SuicidePreventionMessaging.org

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Strategy

- Should we use communications?
Think it through, to ensure benefits > costs

We need posters!

= **Decide "why" before "how"**

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Careful Planning is Key

1.	Set the CONTEXT
2.	WHY message?
3.	WHO to influence?
4.	To DO what?
5.	WHAT to say?
6.	HOW to reach them?
7.	SO WHAT?

"How" decision is here

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Safety

Messaging can be harmful by:

- increasing suicide risk among vulnerable individuals
- undermining prevention

⚠️ **Safety**

"Don'ts" for Public Messaging

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⚠️ **Safety**

- **DON'T….**
- ✖ …show/describe **methods or locations**
- ✖ …focus on **personal details**
- ✖ …**glorify or romanticize** suicide
- ✖ …**"normalize"** by portraying suicide as common, acceptable
- ✖ …use data/language implying suicide is **inevitable, unsolvable**
- ✖ … **oversimplify** causes
- ✖ … reinforce **stereotypes, myths or stigma**
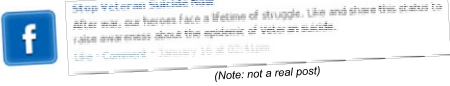
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Positive Narrative

Positive Narrative

Counter the "negative narrative":

- Emphasis on problem severity, not <u>prevention</u>
- It's hopeless; no solutions exist
- Negative "social script" for some groups

Stop Veteran Suicide Now

After war, our heroes face a lifetime of struggle. Like and share this status to raise awareness about the epidemic of Veteran suicide.

Like · Comment · January 16 at 07:41pm

(Note: not a real post)

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In Every Message:
Help the Public to *Envision* Prevention

Many possible options:

Positive Narrative

- ✓ Concrete actions the audience can take
- ✓ Stories of coping, resilience, recovery
- ✓ Program successes
- ✓ Available resources
- ✓ What we know about successful prevention

Etc.

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Avoid a Simplistic Approach:
"Being Positive" is Not a Strategy!

Positive Narrative

Go deeper than this!

- Use research to plan focused messages with specific objectives, audiences & calls to action;
- Then: incorporate some version of the "positive narrative" about suicide prevention *that fits with that message.*

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Positive Narrative

NH #Suicide Prevention Project Focuses on Gun Shops abcn.ws /12SCQgN Remember help is available, just a phone call away 800-273-8255

PRA Parent Helps Their Child Thanks to Information Learned at Work

Pinterest

A loved one has attempted suicide. Now what? Attempt survivors explain what family approaches put them more at ease. ow.ly /jpBMJ

$11 ANSWERS ONE CALL FOR HELP
CLICK HERE TO DONATE
Eleven dollars answers one call for help on our 24-hour crisis hotline (954-761-1133)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline '1-800-273-TALK (8255)' shared a link.
March 30
Are you living with depression? A new study shows how strong social connections can help. http://ht.ly/uWsn2

Coping Skills

Hear real stories from Veterans like you at: www.MakeTheConnection.net

MAKE THE CONNECTION
Shared experiences and support for Veterans

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You're On It!

Positive Narrative

Project Lifeline

HOPE (Hold Onto Positive Emotions)

Promise for Tomorrow

The Hope Initiative

SAIC Cares

USM Cares

Reach Out. UWF Cares

Buffalo State Cares

UFlourish

Promoting a Caring Community (PACC)

U Matter @ Uiowa

Life Happens, UWM CARES

Project STEPS

Na Ki'a O Ke Ola (Guardians of Life)

Lifesaver program

R U a Lifesaver?

Crisis Prevention Resource Project

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Guidelines

Safety

Strategy

Positive Narrative

Guidelines

- Many best practices exist.
- Use them! (when appropriate to your message)

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Examples
(Some not specific to suicide)

Guidelines

Messeng*ers*

Best Practices for Survivor/Attempt Stories

Goals

Stigma Reduction

Channels

AAS Video Guidelines ***Working with the Media***

Creating Your Organization's Social Media Strategy Map

Populations

Talking About Suicide & LGBT Populations

And more!

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**For More Successful Messages:
Use all Four "Lenses"**

- **Strategy:** Define goals, audiences & actions, integrate with other efforts, etc.

- **Safety:** Avoid "don'ts"

- **Positive narrative:** e.g. stories of coping & resiliency; programmatic successes; actions audience can take; available resources & services, etc.

- **Guidelines:** Use message-specific best practices

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Home page

Global nav →

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Four Framework Elements

Strategy sub-menu

Overview: Strategy ←

Principles of Effective Communications

Key Planning Steps

Tips for Messaging Strategically ←

How Strategy Fits Into the Framework ←

Resources: Strategy ←

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Start with Strategy

(At the *FW's* center = shapes all other decisions)

Key Planning Steps

1.	Set the CONTEXT
2.	WHY message?
3.	WHO to influence?
4.	To DO what?
5.	WHAT to say?
6.	HOW to reach them?
7.	SO WHAT?

Overview: Strategy

Principles of Effective Communications

Key Planning Steps

Tips for Messaging Strategically

How Strategy Fits Into the Framework

Resources: Strategy

"How" decision is here

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Research-Based Principles of Effective Communications

Strategy

- Systematically **planned**
  - Research inputs at each phase
- Tied to **overall program for change**
- Informed by **audience research** & **pre-testing**
- Specific **objectives**, **audience** and **action**
  - Clear, focused message; specific call to action
- Content & framing uses audience research to **build motivation**
- **Appropriate channels** and sufficient **exposure**
- **Evaluated**

-- Making Health Communication Campaigns Work;
Abroms & Maibach; Noar; Goodman; Chambers et al. 30

Tied to overall program for change

- Communications integrated into overall strategic plan

- Defined communications objective
  - Advances a programmatic goal
  - Realistic about what messaging can & can't do
  - Consider messaging + other programmatic components

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Informed by audience research & pre-testing

- Types
  - Published literature
  - Local quantitative & qualitative
  - Guidelines, if any
- Purpose
  - Avoid assumptions
  - Picture the issues *from the audience's perspective*
  - Detailed understanding allows you to get specific

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Specific objectives

Strategy

Suicide Prevention Goals
- Increase help-seeking
- Increase access to effective treatments and services
- Increase life skills
- Increase social connectedness
- Restrict access to lethal means

Etc.

Organizational Goals
- Fundraise
- Increase name recognition and reputation
- Recruit volunteers
- Increase participation in an event

Etc.

Specific communications objective
- Advances existing goal
- Hint: use "increase/decrease" to indicate change
- "Raise awareness" is not specific enough

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Objective can be very focused

Gretel LabraDoodle
@Gretel_Labradoo

Carruth Center Therapy Dog - Majoring in Psychology, Specializing in Stress and Anxiety - Will you come visit me? helpWELL is great!

Morgantown, WV

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Specific audience
(Hint: not "everybody")

Strategy

Direct appeal vs. reaching population of interest through another audience

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Specific "call to action"

- Call 1-800-273-TALK
- Sign up for a gatekeeper training
- Read real stories of coping at…
- Join our efforts by (specific action)….
- Post your reasons for living on…
- Help us publicize our project successes by…
- Call your legislator & ask them to vote…

And many many more!

Come talk to us.

Michigan State University Counseling Center

Strategy

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WHAT to Say?
Use audience research to build motivation

Examples of issues to explore:

- How do they view the issue & action?
- Top barriers to action?
- What would help them to act?
- If unwilling to take that action, what *are* they willing to do?
- Where do they get info?

- Listen for
  - Beliefs & attitudes (impede/facilitate acting)
    - Misperceived norms
    - Inaccurate info
  - Positive values, protective factors, actions they already take
  - Language they use

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Language & framing:
match to goals & audience

Strategic decision: whether or not to use suicide/mental health terms vs. lay language.

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Throughout Content Development Process:
Apply Other *Framework* Concepts

Keeping Strategy in mind…

- **Ensure approach & content follows Safety guidelines**

- **Include some version of the Positive Narrative**

- **Check for applicable Guidelines**

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Only Then: Which "Channels"?

Don't assume   *Many other options*

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Pretest messages and materials

- Ask target audience for reaction
  - Understandability, clarity, language
  - Do they get it?

  Types of questions (e.g.s)
  - Who do you think this is for?
  - What do you think is the purpose?
  - Tell me about the people/setting.
  - Is it personally relevant to you? How?
  - Does it help you to [insert message objectives]?
  - Anything that strikes you negatively?

2/3 of MSU students would tell a friend to go to the MSU Counseling Center if they thought the friend needed help.

Michigan State University Counseling Center

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Evaluated

- Know what you're trying to change
  - Realistic objectives
  - Logic model

- Build in monitoring of process and outcomes

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Sharing Examples & Discussion

Strategy

- **Strategy** is systematically **planned**. At each phase:
  - Use **research & theory**
  - Follow applicable **Guidelines**

- Tied to **overall program for change**

- Informed by **audience research** & **pre-testing**

- Specific **objectives**, **audience** and **action**
  - Clear, focused message; specific & realistic call to action

- **Content & framing** uses audience research to **build motivation**, is **Safe**, builds in the **Positive Narrative**

- **Appropriate channels** and sufficient **exposure**

- **Evaluated**

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Action Alliance Framework for Successful Messaging

YOUR Message Matters!

Sign on today! We're asking individuals and groups to join this important initiative that will help to change the way suicide and suicide prevention is viewed.

Make a Commitment

- Sign on to the *Framework* initiative to indicate your commitment to developing messages that are strategic, safe, convey a positive message, and follow available guidelines. Individuals and organizations are welcome.

Support Your Commitment with Action. Examples:

- Use the *Framework* and the resources on this site as a guide when developing all of your public messaging.

- At every opportunity, use your voice to contribute to a Positive Narrative about suicide, one that emphasizes solutions and action as opposed to describing the problem in unsolvable terms.

- Create a set of standards or policies to guide messaging across all of your efforts. For example, decide that as a matter of policy, you will not forward or repost news articles that include potentially unsafe content.

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Team Planning

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