



Maryland Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Network Newsletter

WITH HELP COMES HOPE

November 23 is International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day first began in the U.S. in 1999, when Senator Harry Reid, a suicide loss survivor himself, introduced a motion to the Senate to designate a National Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. The day has since been renamed International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day (or, shortened as Survivor Day) after other countries around the world began to observe the day as well. Last year, 19 countries participated in events around the world to honor and support people affected by suicide.

Survivor Day always falls on the Saturday before Thanksgiving in the U.S. Since the holiday season is usually a difficult time of year for those grieving a loss, Survivor Day is an occasion for the bereaved to connect with others who share their grief.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) hosts hundreds of [events](#) around the country (and

even a few worldwide) every year for Survivor Day. If you are unable to attend an event this year, here are some other ways you can participate in Survivor Day:

- Watch one of AFSP's [documentaries](#) from past Survivor Day events
- Use our [Postvention Resources in Maryland](#) guide, developed by the Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention, to find local resources for after a suicide
- Spread awareness of Survivor Day on social media by using #SurvivorDay
- Add a square to AFSP's [digital memory quilt](#)
- Host your own [event](#) to honor survivors of suicide loss

If you have questions about Survivor Day, contact survivorday@afsp.org.



MARYLAND
Department of Health
Maryland's Commitment to Veterans

Maryland's Commitment to Veterans (MCV) is a program devoted to total wellness for veterans and their families.

MCV provides training to the community about veteran-specific topics to improve awareness of available behavioral health resources. Regional resource coordinators provide assistance to veterans and their families to support a healthy transition to civilian life.

To connect to a regional resource coordinator, call the MCV referral line at **877-770-4801**.

211
Maryland

Get connected. Get help.
Call 211, press 1

Back to School: Suicide Prevention on College Campuses

The school year is officially in full swing, and for many students, this time of year can bring mixed emotions of excitement, joy, stress, anxiety and pressure.

Finding healthy ways to cope with stressors is particularly important for college students. College students face increasing academic pressure, as well as a challenging transition to adulthood and independence. While these factors contribute to college students' mental health, a multitude of risk factors put this population at an increased risk for suicide. In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that suicide was the second leading cause of death for college-aged young adults.

To address this growing issue, many mental health and suicide prevention organizations and

universities have developed policies and initiatives to help promote emotional wellbeing among college students.

Active Minds developed a program called [Transform Your Campus](#), which empowers college students to advocate for mental health change on their respective campuses. The program consists of a variety of ideas, including adding crisis numbers on student ID cards, improving policies on leaves of absence for mental health reasons, reducing access to lethal means, adding psychoeducation to new student orientations and applying a portion of student fees towards mental health services on campus.

Universities nationwide offer "Don't Cancel Your Class," an initiative that provides workshops on topics including stress, grief, self-esteem and substance use to students during regularly scheduled class time in lieu of their class being creating an opportunity for the

cancelled unexpectedly.

Interested students can also take our new online module, [Suicide Prevention Training: Recognize, Ask, Care, Encourage](#). The module is an introductory course on risk and protective factors, warning signs and safety planning.

For more information on preventing suicide among college students, visit the Suicide Prevention Resource Center's [website](#).



Picture courtesy of [Canva](#).

Resource Spotlight: Healing Conversations

Many suicide loss survivors feel alone and ashamed following the death of their loved one. They often wonder who they could talk to about their loss and whether that person would understand their experience.

Healing Conversations, previously called the Survivor Outreach Program, is a peer support program provided by the AFSP. The program connects suicide loss survivors in need of support to trained volunteers that have experienced a suicide loss themselves.

AFSP's [website](#) explains that "our volunteers are familiar with the isolation that so often accompanies a death of this kind, and are able to show suicide loss survivors a way forward into a world of support, by

newly bereaved to speak openly with, and ask questions of, someone who has been there, too, and truly gets it."



Picture courtesy of [Canva](#).

Volunteers are available to talk with survivors on the phone, via video chat or in person at a location convenient for the survivor.

To be connected to a volunteer, survivors can submit an [online request form](#). Survivors can choose to describe the circumstances of their loved one's suicide on the request form so that the AFSP can match them with a volunteer who has experienced a similar loss.

Survivors can sign up for Healing Conversations, or request more information about the program, by contacting their state [coordinator](#).

TRAINING SNAPSHOT

There is Life After an Attempt

On Aug. 15, Shenetta Malkia of Empowerment Essence spoke about how survivors can heal after a suicide attempt, as part of our Lunch and Learn series. Check out our other trainings [here](#).



Art-Based Techniques as a Clinical Intervention for Suicidal Clients

In January, art therapist Julie Andersen taught over 60 clinicians to incorporate art-based techniques as an alternative therapeutic approach. We are happy to have her back to present for us once again. Don't miss your opportunity to participate in one of our most popular trainings! [Register](#) now.



FAST FACTS

1 in 10

A 2016 [study](#) estimated that nearly 1 in 10 suicide loss survivors will go on to attempt suicide themselves.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Find additional information about the Commission, including scheduled meetings, [here](#).

Updates from the Commission

Since its establishment in [2009](#), the Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention has been tasked with strengthening and coordinating Maryland's suicide prevention services and developing the state's suicide prevention plan.

An updated [Executive Order](#) signed by Governor Larry Hogan in 2018 outlines a modernized strategy to suicide prevention, with the additions of new Commissioner seats among these changes. These newly appointed seats allow for more representation within the Commission of groups largely affected by suicide. The newest seats include:

- A member of police, local corrections or fire and rescue services
- A member of the LGBTQ community
- A young adult aged 18-25
- A member of the substance abuse recovery community
- A suicide attempt survivor
- A member of the American Indian community
- A member of the Asian Pacific American community
- A member of the Hispanic or Latino community
- A high school student

Also in 2018, the Commission updated Maryland's [State Plan](#), identifying four primary goals as the focus of the Commission's work over the following two years. Within these goals, workgroups were formed to address key objectives. Each workgroup was tasked to provide recommendations of actionable items that the Commission as a whole (along with community partners) will then work to implement.

The Training Workgroup was created to target two objectives in the State

Plan. Objectives 1.3 and 2.4 outline the Commission's plans to increase public awareness and knowledge about suicide through awareness campaigns and training. Recently, the Training Workgroup has worked to identify targeted gatekeeper groups and the trainings those groups are currently receiving. They have also identified two large gaps in suicide prevention training, namely that there no suicide-specific Continuing Education Unit requirements for healthcare professionals in Maryland and that Maryland's graduate degree programs have little to no coverage of suicide risk management in relevant curriculums.

The Means Safety Workgroup, focusing on Objective 2.3, to reduce access to lethal means, has made five recommendations to the Commission and is beginning to discuss implementation. Their areas of focus are promoting the [Counseling on Access to Lethal Means online training](#), encouraging providers to routinely assess for access to lethal means with at-risk patients, partnering with local firearm groups to incorporate suicide awareness in firearm safety, disseminating gun locks and promoting safe storage and raising awareness of Maryland's new [Extreme Risk Protective Order law](#).

The Data Workgroup (Objective 4.3: improve suicide data collection, analysis, and dissemination) plans to create an infographic of suicide deaths, demographics and relevant circumstances prior to the deaths using updated 2017 data from the [Maryland Violent Death Reporting System](#). The workgroup is also closely monitoring the [Environmental Public Health Tracking Portal](#) for updates to suicide-related data.

The Commission meets every other month, with Workgroups gathering more regularly in between.

Updates from the Field

Firearm Laws and Statewide Suicide Rates

A new [study](#) found a clear relationship between firearm laws and suicide rates. States with stricter laws have significantly lower suicide rates.

Mental Health Coalition Launches Assessment Platform for Employers

The Center for Workplace Mental Health, Mental Health America, and One Mind at Work developed an online assessment tool for employers to survey their organizational culture, access to supports and services, mental health awareness and training, and leadership. [Read more.](#)

Isolated and Struggling, Many Seniors are Turning to Suicide

Older adults face an increased suicide risk, in part due to loneliness, grief, chronic health issues, and loss of functioning. [Read recommendations](#) on preventing suicide among older adults.

California: Ventura County Bartenders Asked to Serve the Question, "Are You Going to Kill Yourself?"

The Ventura County Behavioral Health Department's Bartenders as Gatekeepers program trains bartenders to identify and assist customers at risk of suicide. [Read more.](#)

Revised Role Sheets for High School Teachers and Mental Health Providers

The SPRC released two revised information sheets on the roles of [high school teachers](#) and [high school mental health providers](#) in suicide prevention.

The Links between Opioid Use, Overdose, and Suicide

A new [review](#) summarized the connection between unintentional overdose and suicide, and provided recommendations for prevention.

Spread of a Peer-Led Suicide Prevention Program through School Networks

Researchers implemented the Sources of Strength peer-led suicide prevention program into schools to study students' exposure to the program. [Read more.](#)

Why Suicide is a Top Cause of Death for Police Officers and Firefighters

Chronic workplace stress may lead to increased risks of suicide and mental health problems for first responders. The Code Green Project provides behavioral health resources for first responders. [Read more.](#)

People with Mental Health Disorders Amend the Descriptions

A recent [study](#) asked focus groups of people with lived experience to review the upcoming ICD-11. Participants recommended changes to the ICD-11 to include the felt experience of having a mental health disorder.

Impact of the Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Program

Researchers found that communities exposed to Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Program initiatives saw decreases in their youth suicide mortality rates up to two years after program implementation. [Read more.](#)

Why People with Mental Illness May Face Poorer Physical Health and Early Death

People with mental illnesses are significantly more likely to die prematurely due to preventable physical health problems and are less likely to receive medical care, than the general population. [Read more.](#)

Engaging People with Lived Experience: A Toolkit for Organizations

The SPRC released an online [toolkit](#) to assist suicide prevention organizations in recruiting and engaging people with lived experience in their programs.

Impact of an Undergraduate Suicidology Course

Students who took a semester-long undergraduate course in suicidology showed increased knowledge of suicide prevention, had less negative bias towards suicide and demonstrated more willingness to advocate for suicide prevention than they did prior to taking the course. [Read more.](#)

Older Adults in Long-Term Care Need Mental Health, Suicide Prevention Care

A new [study](#) found that many adults 55 and older who died by suicide died in long-term care facilities such as nursing homes and assisted living residences. The findings highlight the need for suicide prevention activities within these facilities.

Colorado: Mental Health Training Mandatory for Colorado Coaches

High school coaches in Colorado will be required to receive training in student mental health beginning this fall in order to participate in the sports season. [Read more.](#)

Suicide: A Preventable Public Health Priority

The Region V Public Health Training Center released a free [webinar](#), discussing suicide prevention as a public health issue and prevention strategies for health care providers and systems.

U.S. Behavioral Health Barometer

SAMHSA released volume five of the national [Behavioral Health Barometer](#), which includes 2017 data on mental health and substance use in the U.S.

Events

October

October 2	Maryland's 31st Annual Suicide Prevention Conference	Register
October 3-4	Center for Child and Family Traumatic Stress at Kennedy Krieger Institute 7th Biennial Trauma Conference	Register
October 5	Havre de Grace Out of the Darkness Community Walk	Register
October 6	Baltimore Out of the Darkness Community Walk	Register
October 10	Art-Based Techniques as a Clinical Intervention	Register
October 10-11	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Suicide Prevention Training	Register
October 12	Addressing and Managing Pediatric Mental Health in Primary Care	Register
October 17	Distinguishing Suicidal Ideation from Intrusive Self-Harm OCD	Register
October 18-19	NAMI Maryland 2019 Annual Conference	Register
October 20	Burgers and Bands for Suicide Prevention: Annapolis	Register
October 23	ACHA Leadership and Innovations 2019 Summit: Inspiring Hope and Real Solutions to Address College Mental Health and Wellbeing	Register
October 24	safeTALK	Register
October 26	Frederick Out of the Darkness Community Walk	Register
October 27	Southern Maryland Out of the Darkness Community Walk	Register
October 29-30	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression	Register

November

November 7	Hope and Healing During the Holidays in Western MD	Register
November 9	Psychopharmacology Update: 2019	Register
November 14	Hope and Healing During the Holidays on the Eastern Shore	Register
November 14-15	Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)	Register
November 19-20	Prolonged Exposure for PTSD Training	Register
November 20	Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention	More information
November 21	Traumatic Brain Injury and Suicide Risk	Register
November 23	Frederick International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day Event	Register
November 23	Gaithersburg International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day Event	Register
November 23	Hagerstown International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day Event	Register
November 23	Havre de Grace International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day Event	Register

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About MD-SPIN

Maryland's Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Network (MD-SPIN) provides a continuum of suicide prevention training, resources and technical assistance to advance the development of a comprehensive suicide prevention and early intervention service system for youth and young adults. MD-SPIN will increase the number of youth, ages 10-24, identified, referred and receiving quality behavioral health services, with a focus on serving high risk youth populations (LGBTQ, transition age, veterans and military families, youth with emotional and behavioral concerns) and in target settings (schools, colleges/universities, juvenile services facilities, primary care, emergency departments).

Maryland Behavioral Health Administration Mission

The Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration will develop an integrated process for planning, policy and services to ensure a coordinated quality system of care is available to individuals with behavioral health conditions. The BHA will, through publicly-funded services and support, promote recovery, resiliency, health and wellness for individuals who have or are at risk for emotional, substance related, addictive and/or psychiatric disorders.

