Welcome!

We will begin at 3:30pm ET. While you’re waiting, please share in the Q & A box below:

- One **success** you’ve had related to your communications efforts.

  OR

- One **challenge** you’ve faced in developing suicide prevention communications.

For example:

Success: We have an active teen advisory group who helps us develop and test messages for other teens.
The Action Alliance Framework for Successful Messaging: A primer for state suicide prevention coordinators

Virtual Event
September 22, 2014

Co-sponsored by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center and The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention

@Action_Alliance  @SPRCtweets  #SPSM  @LindaLangford
If you are having any technical problems joining the webinar please call 617-618-2984 or Adobe Connect 1-800-422-3623.

Type any questions or comments at any time into the Q&A box at the bottom of your screen and we will try to assist you.

You can also make the presentation screen larger at any time by clicking on the “Full Screen” button in the upper right hand side of the slide presentation. If you click on again, it will return to normal view.
Who you’ll hear from today

Linda Langford  
Evaluation and Communications Scientist  
Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Jane Ann Miller  
Public Health Program Consultant  
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Kerri Smith  
Senior Prevention Specialist  
Suicide Prevention Resource Center
Objectives

- Understand how messaging can fit into an overall suicide prevention strategy.

- Learn about the four components of the Action Alliance *Framework for Successful Messaging*.

- Learn how other states, such as North Carolina, have applied concepts from the *Framework* in creating their strategic communications materials.
What’s Important About Suicide Prevention Messaging?

Can
- Increase risk
- Undermine prevention

OR

Can
- Promote positive behaviors
- Support prevention goals
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)  NSSP Goal 4

Public Messaging (Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Professionals & Other Messengers) NSSP Goal 2
What’s Public Messaging?

Defined Broadly

- Any public-facing information
- Campaigns AND social media, newsletters, event publicity, websites, fundraising, materials, etc.

Does not include

- Private conversations
- 1-on-1 with individuals in crisis
- Doctor-patient interactions
- Sharing in support groups

Type into the Q&A box: What are all of the ways you’re communicating to the public?
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
- Dialogues with diverse stakeholders
“Don’ts” for media also apply to public messaging

Principles of effective health communications

Various guidelines exist (e.g., channels, populations, goals, etc.)
In the U.S.
4 people die by suicide every hour.

Emphasis on problem severity

University president calls student suicide an epidemic

BY URSULA REUTIN on May 30, 2012 @ 5:37 am (Updated: 9:09 am - 5/30/12)

Violates safety guidelines
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?
Polls: Where Are We on “Awareness?”
Changing behavior is more complicated than this:

“This problem is so big!”

What makes messages more likely to lead to action?
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.

Calls to action absent or vague

- Charting the Future
Based on this review, what makes for more successful messages?
Four considerations when developing messages:

- Strategy
- Safety
- Positive narrative
- Guidelines

www.SuicidePreventionMessaging.org
Should we use communications?

**Think it through, to ensure benefits > costs**

We need posters!

**Decide “why” before “how”**

= **Planning** + **Principles**
Systematic **Planning** Process

Key Planning Steps: *Framework*

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?

Great planning resource! [Cancer.gov/PinkBook](http://Cancer.gov/PinkBook)
Research-Based Principles of Effective Communications

- 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**

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

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Messaging can be harmful by:

- increasing suicide risk among vulnerable individuals
- undermining prevention

“Don’ts” for Public Messaging
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
• Counter the “negative narrative”

• In every message: help the public to envision prevention.

• Many possible options!
Options for Conveying a Positive Narrative

Ask: what fits with my strategy?

- Concrete actions your audience can take
- Stories of coping, resilience, & recovery
- Program successes
- Available resources
- What we know about successful prevention
- Etc.
Use Applicable **Guidelines**

Examples

**Messengers**

*Best Practices for Survivor/Attempt Stories*

**Channels**

- AAS Video Guidelines
- Working with the Media
- Social Media Guidelines for MH & Suicide Prevention

**Goals**

- Stigma Reduction

**Populations**

- Talking About Suicide & LGBT Populations

And more!
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
Overview of Principles w/ All Framework Components

- **Strategy** is systematically **planned**
- Tied to an **overall program for change**
- Informed by **audience research & pre-testing**
- Specific **objectives, audience and action**
  - Specific & focused aims and audience
  - Specific, realistic & **Positive** call to action
- **Content & framing...**
  - Uses audience research to **build motivation** to act
  - Is **Safe**
  - Conveys a **Positive Narrative** (action, resources, recovery, etc.)
- **Appropriate channels and sufficient exposure**
- **Evaluated**

At every step:
- Use **research & theory**
- Follow applicable **Guidelines**
Pause for questions.
Framework Concepts in Practice: North Carolina

Jane Ann Miller
Public Health Program Consultant
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Format for rest of webinar
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
North Carolina’s Garrett Lee Smith Grants

2008-2011

- **First:** Creation of suicide prevention program trainer cadre
- **Second:** Gatekeeper training (CFST and school health centers, community colleges and universities)
- **Third:** Communications Campaign

2011-2014

- Gatekeeper training (Military, Juvenile Justice, LGBTQ)
- Communications Campaign
Counties reached by gatekeeper trainings by May 2011: prior to the It’s OK 2 Ask website going “live”
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
Concept

Grant goal of the communications campaign
- Reduce stigma of mental illness
- Increase help seeking behavior in youth

Obtain input and feedback from target audience: middle & high school students
- To elicit information about communication methods
- Identify preferences of teens
- Discover their beliefs about mental illness/suicidal behavior
- Identify where or to whom they would go for help
Focus Groups

How many?
65 youth within eight focus groups across the state

Who were they?
Urban, rural, racially/ethnically diverse

How were the groups conducted?
Experienced facilitator partnered with an ASIST trainer

Preferred sources of information or communication?
Texts, cell phones, websites, social media
Color Institute

Font styles used on youth websites
How does formative research inform decision-making?

Set communications objectives
- Advances existing goal
- Use “increase/decrease”
- Specific! “Raise awareness” is too general

Specify the audience
- Hint: not “everybody”
- Direct appeal vs. reaching population through another audience

Articulate a “call to action”
- What should people do?
- Match to objectives & audience

Shape message content
- What will help them to act?
- Highlight benefits & lower barriers that matter to your audience

Only then: which delivery channels
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?
Focus Groups

What were preferred sources of information or communication?
Texts, cell phones, websites, social media

What features did they want on websites

• Links built into websites directing to information
• Pop ups leading to other information
• Videos (real people with real stories – no actors)
• Links to local resources (counselors, churches, community groups)
• Statistics & facts
• Contests and prizes
Other ways to convey a positive narrative

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

Coping Skills
Coping skills help us get through difficult times - they can give us an important break from mental and emotional distress, and sometimes they are literally life-saving.

Keep this list of coping skills handy for when you need it... folded up in your wallet or bag or post it up on the wall somewhere handy at home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distraction</th>
<th>Conversation, listen to talk</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Make this list work for you
Use a highlighter pen to mark the skills that work best for you & add your own ideas over the page.

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

NH Suicide Prevention Project Focuses on Gun Shops abcnews

PRA Parent Helps Their Child Thanks to Information Learned at Work

Posted on October 23, 2017 by Anonymous

$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)
Pause for questions.
CHALLENGES
Challenge #1

WORKING WITH PARTNERS ON SAFETY
Challenge #2

WORKING WITHIN STATE GOVERNMENT (or any other bureaucracy)
ENSURING SUFFICIENT EXPOSURE TO MESSAGES
Website Promotion: Summer 2011-present

Media

Traditional Methods

- Suicide Awareness Walks
- Conferences
- Direct Mailing to School Superintendents

Promotional items at community events
Video Contest

- Marketed to schools who had received gatekeeper training
- Reporting guidelines and technical specs
- Needed a staff member to oversee project
- Submitted concepts were reviewed by state team prior to students filming
PLANNING IS ITERATIVE
Filming in 3...2...1

2012-2013 Youth Advisory Council

it's OK2Ask about suicide
Four accepted to the American Association of Suicidology Youth Advisory Board

Application to State of North Carolina Student Council

Advocating for a high school based program

Youth Legislative Assembly Weekend

2013-2014 Youth Advisory Council
Please type questions into the Q & A box.

Meanwhile, quick site tour....
Home page

Global nav

Note short URL:
SuicidePreventionMessaging.org

What is the Framework?
The Framework for Successful Messaging is a research-based resource that outlines four critical issues to consider when messaging about suicide.

Strategy

Safety

Positive narrative

Guidelines

What it’s About
The Framework for Successful Messaging is a resource to help people messaging about suicide to develop messages that are strategic, safe, positive, and make use of relevant guidelines and best practices.

Why it’s important
Because messaging matters! Certain types of public messaging about suicide can increase risk among vulnerable individuals.

HOW it’s Unique
It’s for suicide prevention messengers, rather than the media.

It addresses “public messaging,” any communications released into the public domain. From posters, PSAs, and social media to websites, newsletters, fundraising appeals, event publicity, press releases, social media, and advocacy efforts, each contributes to the public’s perceptions about suicide and suicide prevention.

Get Started

Learn about the Framework elements:
- Strategy
- Safety
- Positive narrative
- Guidelines

Visit the Examples Gallery.
Sign on and take action.
Read why and how the framework was developed.

Not looking for guidance on public messaging?
See resources for other types of suicide prevention communications.

YOUR Message Matters!
It’s not just a framework, it’s a movement!

Sign on and take action.

We’ve Signed On
Suicide Prevention Resource Center
Jack Benson
Reingold
Action Alliance Framework for Successful Messaging

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

2 strategy-specific sections

Principles

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?
Examples Gallery

These examples are designed to bring the Framework for Successful Messaging to life and inspire you to think about the four elements of Strategy, Safety, Positive Narrative, and Guidelines when developing or choosing your own messages and materials.

Please note:

- The examples are thinking through how to always start with:
- While the Framework research tells us:

- Not “right messaging” (context matters)
- Without evaluation data, can’t say if they’re “effective”
- Purpose: illustrate the Framework components

WeRNNative website for Native teens and young adults takes a positive messaging approach to addressing comprehensive health and wellness needs.

What it is:
This website is part of a multimedia health resource with content for Native youth, by Native youth. Geared to teens and young adults, the site provides content and stories about the topics that matter most to this audience. Issues addressed range from physical and sexual health to mental health and life skills. The project is managed by the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board.

Tags: American Indian/Alaskan Native, youth, website, social media, increase life skills, increase resiliency and coping, promote connectedness, increase help-seeking, provide crisis supports

Read more
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.
Q & A
Thank You!

- **Framework:** SuicidePreventionMessaging.org

- **Action Alliance:** ActionAllianceforSuicidePrevention.org

- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center:** sprc.org

- **Contact us**
  - LLangford@edc.org
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  - KSmith@edc.org