



PREVENT SUICIDE PA

OUR MISSION:

To support those who are affected by suicide, provide education, awareness and understanding by collaborating with the community to prevent suicide and reduce the stigma associated with suicide.

September 2019 Newsletter

Prevent Suicide PA News



Welcome to the first *Prevent Suicide PA* Newsletter. If you are receiving this then you are involved in suicide prevention efforts across Pennsylvania. First, let us thank YOU for what you are doing to save lives and make a difference in wherever you are in our Commonwealth. Our purpose with this newsletter is to give you up to date information on what is going on with awareness and prevention activities across our state and to also inform you of information that can be helpful in your efforts to help others.

It is an exciting time for Suicide Prevention efforts in Pennsylvania with the announcement of the Governor's Statewide Task Force. The Wolf Administration intends to develop PA's statewide suicide prevention plan, a four-year strategy to reduce suicide in Pennsylvania and fight the stigma associated with suicide, suicide attempts, and mental health issues so that Pennsylvanians in crisis know their lives are valuable and help is available for those who are affected. See page 5 in our Newsletter for Listening Sessions that the Statewide Task Force will be offering. *Prevent Suicide PA* is proud to play a major part in this new initiative. For more information on the Statewide Suicide Task Force, please go [here](#).

Prevent Suicide PA is connected throughout the state by our social media pages on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram pages](#), Drive Out Suicide campaign, our trainings (QPR, ASIST, Mental Health First Aid for both adults and youth), our Annual Conference, local awareness events in your areas, articles on the latest in research on suicide prevention, and much more. What we really want to know is, 'How Can We Help YOU?' Everyone (Loss and Attempt Survivors, suicide advocates, mental health professionals, task forces, educators, all individuals in PA) can play a role in suicide prevention and our job is to help facilitate that task. Please write to us at info@preventsuicidepa.org with any questions that you have and how we can help you. Let's make a difference together in stopping suicide in PA. We hope you will join us, so that together, ALL OF US can make a difference to Prevent Suicide in PA.

Letter from the Executive Director

Suicide Prevention Month...this is such an important month in the field of suicide prevention; however, to most of us, every day of every month is dedicated to preventing suicide. In my life, I have lost my brother, friends, and co-workers to suicide, but I also hear the many stories of those who I know and don't know who are affected by suicide daily. I meet them while representing *Prevent Suicide PA* across the Commonwealth as they share their stories of attempts and loss, and the devastation that suicide can cause. Each of those stories are tragic and heartbreaking, and unfortunately, there are many more people who think about and die by suicide each and every day who I will never have the opportunity to meet. Each of those stories empowers me to get up every single day to make a difference in those lives. What I do know is that *One suicide is too many!*



Govan A. Martin, III
Chair/Executive Director
Prevent Suicide PA

I am extremely honored to be the Executive Director and Chair of *Prevent Suicide PA (PSPA)*. I am also working with a wonderful and dedicated group of people who make up our Board of Directors. Each of us bring our passion, desire, and unique capabilities in leading *PSPA* to saving lives from suicide in Pennsylvania. Our goals at *PSPA* are to ensure that: *Those who need help and are thinking about suicide - Resources will be there to access help; Those who need support after losing a loved one or friend - that they will have someone to lean on; Those who don't feel included and not equal - Show them that their life has meaning and value; and that Those who are afraid to reach out because of how others may feel about them - That we can lessen the stigma associated with mental health and suicide.*

The Doctor is:



IN

Finding appropriate and effective care when you or someone you care about is struggling with thoughts of suicide can be difficult and frustrating. No one with these thoughts wants to feel this way, but often shame and a desire for self-agency (“I can take care of this on my own”) interfere with seeking external supports quickly. When someone works desperately hard to feel better but cannot find ways to experience the relief they desire, this can lead to a sense of hopelessness even before reaching out for additional help. To make matters worse, far too many of us in the behavioral health field have received insufficient training specifically focused on working with individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts. At times, it can feel as though the helpers are struggling to tolerate the emotional pain of their patients or clients. When faced with this situation, hopelessness can build and individuals may start feeling like they will never get better.

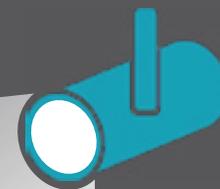
All of this said, there are some very important things to remember:



Matthew Wintersteen, PhD
Vice Chair/Board of Directors
Prevent Suicide PA

1. Seeking help is always better than not seeking help. As much as it seems things will not improve, or even when faced with less-than-desirable past treatment, someone can help. We are social beings and designed to live and work in community with one another. Harboring thoughts of suicide alone can lead to isolation, loneliness, and further promote helplessness. It may take shopping around to find the right person, but this provides a much greater chance of improvement than doing nothing.
2. There are treatments available to improve the lives of those living with suicidal thoughts and those who have engaged in suicidal behavior. Not every treatment works for everyone, so it is also important to recognize the different treatments that have evidenced-based outcome research. For example, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Suicide Prevention (CBT-SP), and Attachment-Based Family Therapy (ABFT), have all demonstrated effectiveness in multiple research studies. So where can you find these treatments? The great news is that many of these interventions were originally developed in Pennsylvania. CBT-SP is derived from some of the earlier work of Dr. Aaron Beck and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania in cognitive therapy. To find a certified cognitive therapist in your area, visit: <https://www.academyofct.org/> and follow the link to find a therapist. ABFT was developed by Dr. Guy Diamond. To access the list of ABFT trained providers, visit: <https://drexel.edu/familyintervention/abft-training-program/therapists/>. Finally, DBT was developed by Dr. Marsha Linehan in Seattle, but there have been numerous Pennsylvania-based providers who have completed the formal training. To access this list, visit: <https://behavioraltech.org/resources/find-a-therapist/> and then click the link (in red in the text) to access the DBT-LBC Directory.
3. Finally, remember that the way in which treatment is offered is changing rapidly. It is no longer necessary to “see” a behavioral health provider in person (although it may be more desirable). The emergence of telehealth services, particularly within larger health care networks, makes receiving treatment from almost anywhere possible. The one caveat is that insurances may not fully cover these services, so the cost of convenience and accessibility may be higher.

Getting better takes work. If three therapists have not been very helpful in the past, it is certainly possible that the fourth therapist will also be less optimal. But what if they are not? The combination of the right provider with the right treatment options are essential in making a difference. Do not be afraid to do your homework and ask questions. Active patients or clients may challenge their therapist from time to time, but they are also more likely to get what they actually need out of treatment.



Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Task Force

Each Newsletter, *IN THE SPOTLIGHT* will be highlighting a County Suicide Task Force, Loss and Attempt Survivors, suicide advocates, mental health professionals, educators, that are making a difference in Suicide Prevention in Pennsylvania.

Suicide affects us all. Our Montgomery County community is not exempt from loss and heart ache. We lose approximately 100 lives a year to suicide in our county. Each life gone, each family impacted, is a renewed call to enact meaningful change and save lives.

Montgomery County is home to a dynamic Suicide Prevention Task Force whose mission is to reduce suicides in our community to zero. In partnership with the County's Department of Health and Human Services, this diverse group of advocates is made up of survivors, family members, mental health and medical professionals, law enforcement, advocates, and educators. We receive support from the Coroner's Office with real time data, which is used to inform efforts and interventions, and enjoys extensive collaboration with state and regional partners, as well as our neighboring Task Forces.

We focus our efforts in three ways: Awareness building through outreach events, Community gatekeeper trainings, and Collaborative work with helping systems (i.e., mental health, physical health, education, criminal justice). In 2018, we hosted 94 trainings, reaching 2861 trainees. We participated in 30 outreach events, including hosting 18 specifically for the Peyton Heart Project. So far in 2019, we have made over 2500 direct connections. Trainings and outreach events offer folks the opportunity to both learn and to practice suicide prevention techniques that can teach attendees to save lives. We teach people how to replace the fear and avoidance that so often surround suicide with empathy and connection, the keystones of suicide prevention work.

Spotlight on partnership and collaboration. Our Task Force has been able to develop new partnerships, and add fresh energy to existing initiatives, in the past year with many of the fifty local police departments serving Montgomery County. Several of our local departments partner around suicide prevention month activities, sponsor internal and community trainings, and participate in collaborative meetings with mental health system partners.

At the local correctional facility, an original proposal to offer suicide prevention training focused on inmates has been embraced by jail leadership to include training on self-care for corrections officers, a profession at high risk for suicide. The training has been incorporated into the regular curriculum for all new CO's and a version for supervisory staff is in the works.

In 2019, local schools have partnered with us and mobile crisis provider (Access Services) to increase training opportunities for staff and students. So far in 2019 we've trained at 10 local schools. In September, Spring-Ford

School District is hosting its 2nd Annual 9th grade training event, utilizing Task Force sponsored trainers to educate 1300 freshman on suicide awareness and resources, and their very real ability to save a life. A special teen version of the training was developed by crisis staff and the Task Force, incorporating feedback and content suggestions from Montgomery County students and teachers.

Municipalities are engaging in important collaborative work with the Task Force. Residents are organizing suicide prevention panels, mayors are hosting film screenings, town councils are engaging in social media campaigns to de-stigmatize suicide and prioritize the importance of many of the social determinants of health. The Montgomery County Office of Public Health has continued to incorporate suicide prevention into its yearly trail challenge, placing prevention and awareness materials along local trails and nature walks, in an innovative blend of physical and mental wellness.

Upcoming Events for World Suicide Prevention Month in September include: 2nd Annual Poster Contest, Lighting of the Court House purple, Participation in Regional Rail awareness campaign, presentation to County Commissioners, 3 Community Trainings, Prevention and Awareness Panel, Loss Survivors Event, Alternatives to Suicide Groups.

How did we get here? Our Task Force has seen several iterations over the past decades. Each version has had its own unique focus and direction, but at the heart has always been a firm belief in the importance of open and honest conversation in public spaces and at the core there has always been hope. Hope that a group of committed advocates can impact real change. Hope held by families who are dedicated to ensuring that no one else has to know the pain of losing a loved one and by attempt survivors who offer up their own stories as a healing balm when others are hurting. In 2018, we saw a 15 percent drop in suicide deaths, even as our county population continues to grow. The work continues in memory of those we have lost, and in honor of those who are still here.

If you're interested in learning more about the work happening in Montgomery County, contact: Erin Hewitt at ehewitt@montcopa.org or visit www.montcopa.org/suicideprevention.

Article written by Anna Trout, Crisis and Diversion Director, Montgomery County.



Prevent Suicide PA Events



Sept 6th

6 pm - 9:30 pm

Prevent Suicide PA Fundraiser

Location: Davio's, King of Prussia, 200 Main Street, King of Prussia, PA 19406

Please join Prevent Suicide PA at Davio's King of Prussia for a night of great food and drink for a great cause. Learn about Prevent Suicide PA's efforts to combat suicide in the Commonwealth and what you can do to support this great cause. In addition, bring your wallets and join in on a fantastic basket raffle with amazing prizes from local businesses and sports teams. Ticket purchase includes a buffet style meal including salads and hors d'oeuvres, penne with San Marzano tomato and basil, Davio's famous meatballs, and a variety of desserts.

To purchase tickets, please go [here](#).

Starting Sept 6th
and throughout
the month



Out of the Dark Art Exhibit at the Penny Gallery at the Pond

Location: The Penny Gallery, 10 N Hanover St., Carlisle, PA 17013

An exhibit of artwork opening the paths to healing for suicide loss survivors, and opening doors to hope in the struggle for suicide prevention, in recognition of Suicide Prevention Month in September. The exhibit will run from September 6-28th with a Welcome Ceremony on both Friday and Saturday, September 6-7th from 11am to 3pm. Part of the Proceeds go to Prevent Suicide PA.

For more information please go [here](#).

Sept 24th

9 am - 3 pm



Prevent Suicide PA Stakeholder Meeting

Location: PaTTAN Learning Center, 6430 Flank Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17112

Purpose: Engage (or re-engage) individuals and groups with an interest in supporting the Mission of Prevent Suicide PA; Supporting those who are Affected by Suicide, Providing Education, Awareness, and understanding, by Collaborating with the Community to Prevent Suicide and Reduce the Stigma associated with Suicide. Our plan is to discuss projects and activities that could have an impact on reducing the incidence of suicide attempts/deaths, as well as negative outcomes following suicide attempts/deaths that occur for those who attempt, Loss Survivors, and the community.

For more information, please go [here](#).

Sept 25th

1 pm - 2:30 pm



PA Suicide Prevention/Awareness Day at the Capitol

Location: PA State Capitol Building, 501 N 3rd Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120

Prevent Suicide PA will host Suicide Prevention Day at the Pennsylvania State Capitol on September 25, 2019 from 1:00-2:30 pm. Join suicide prevention advocates, suicide attempt and loss survivors, legislators, and mental health professionals for an important day at the Capitol. We will be raising awareness for suicide prevention and offering hope in the East Wing of the Capitol. Display tables will provide free information such as brochures, resources, wristbands, gun locks, etc.

For more information, please go [here](#).

For more information about these events go to www.preventsuicidepa.org/events.



Statewide Task Force Listening Sessions

Many Pennsylvanians expressed interest to share their personal stories — whether they are family or friend loss survivors, attempt survivors, health providers, or community members — to raise awareness and help suicide prevention efforts in any way possible. The public's voice will help the Statewide Task Force members shape a statewide suicide prevention plan, which will include recommendations, not only for state government, but for stakeholders and communities, to carry forward and implement.

- 1) Thursday, Sept. 12, 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM
Reed Union Building, Penn State Behrend, 4701 College Drive, Erie, PA 16563
- 2) Thursday, Sept. 26, 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM
Temple University, Fox-Gittis Community Room, 1776 North Broad St, Philadelphia, PA 19122 – Partner with Rep. Kenyatta
- 3) Thursday, Oct. 10, 5:30 to 7:30 PM
Jewish Community Center, 2000 Hollywood Drive, York, PA 17403
- 4) Thursday, Oct. 24, 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM
Specific Location TBD – Luzerne or Lackawanna County
- 5) Friday, Oct. 25, 10:00 AM to Noon
Specific Location TBD – Allentown – Partner with Rep. Schlossberg
- 6) Thursday, Nov. 7, 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM
Jewish Healthcare Foundation, 650 Smithfield St, 26th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15222
- 7) Friday, Nov. 8, 10:00 AM to Noon
Slippery Rock University, 102 Robert M. Smith Student Center, 1 Morrow Way, Slippery Rock, PA 16057
- 8) Friday, Nov. 15, 10:00 AM to Noon
Specific Location TBD – Bucks or Montgomery County – Partner with Senator Collett, Rep. Thomas, & Rep. O'Mara

Contact Us

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17104, United States of America.

T: 717-885-9161

E: info@preventsuicidepa.org

Prevent Suicide PA invites you to join our efforts to prevent suicide by becoming a contributing volunteer of our organization. If you want to help with our efforts with creating awareness concerning suicide prevention, please write to us at info@preventsuicidepa.org.

Your donations to Prevent Suicide PA will have an important impact on our programming goals. We have a number of initiatives that we currently address, such as suicide prevention training to the public and clinicians, up-to-date suicide prevention materials and resources, support development of county based task forces, supporting Attempt and Loss Survivors, annual PSA contests for Youth Suicide in high schools across PA, and many other things.

To learn more about our efforts and how you can support Prevent Suicide PA, please visit us [here](#).

If you, or someone you know, is in Emotional Distress, in a Crisis, or thinking about Suicide, please call the *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* number at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK), or the *Crisis Text Line* and text 741741, or call 911.