

Read the latest news from Texas Suicide Prevention.

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March/April 2016



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Certification Training

Resources for Suicide Prevention in Texas

Mental Health America of Texas launched an online certification training for ASK About Suicide to Save a Life. This best practice based training, which had only been available in person, is now also online. With the online training, individuals who need suicide prevention training certification can easily complete the training anywhere. Go to Texassuicideprevention.org/training to access the training. Watch for the updated videos and new statistics to be added by the end of the summer.

Texas offers a number of our videos, online and in-person training options related to suicide prevention, including "ASK" training program, Kognito's "At Risk" training, "Mental Health First Aide," "Counseling on Access to Lethal Means," and others. In addition, there are a number of Best Practice designated training options nationally. Texas also has Videos of Help & Hope With Youth and Military/Veterans telling their stories of getting help for themselves or others in short "Ted Talk" style videos with a small group discussion guide. Find the training solution that is right for your organization at TexasSuicidePrevention.org.

Texas' Zero Suicide Initiative To Be Highlighted

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will showcase Texas suicide prevention in the Healthy People 2020 Who's Leading the Leading Health Indicators Series in April. This will be a feature around the Texas Zero Suicide initiative and collaborative efforts with the Texas Department of State Health Services, Mental Health America of Texas, the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health at the University of Texas at Austin and Denton County MHMR. They note that the Texas Suicide Prevention Council, which includes over 50 statewide and community level groups, allows for coordinated suicide prevention activities to be implemented across the state.



Lauren Lacefield Lewis



Sonja Gaines

Texas DSHS & HHSC Leadership Endorse Zero Suicides in Texas Initiative

As identified by the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, one of the key core dimensions of a zero suicide approach is to create “a leadership-drive, safety-oriented culture that commits to dramatically reducing suicide among people under care.” Lauren Lacefield Lewis, Assistant Commissioner, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Texas Department of State Health Services and Sonja Gaines, Associate Commissioner for Mental Health, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, recently issued a statement endorsing the Zero Suicide in Texas (ZEST) initiative to stress that they and their agencies are committed to dramatically reducing suicide in Texas. They said that “(it) ... is a commitment among Texas’ primary public health agencies to thoughtfully and systematically change the way we think about suicide prevention....No longer will we think of prevention as fewer deaths, but rather no deaths.” Go to links below to see the complete statement and zero suicide resources for Texas.

Zero Suicides Goal in Texas

[Read the Statement](#) from the Texas Department of State Health Services

Texas Zero Suicide Toolkit - <http://sites.utexas.edu/zest/toolkit/>

Texas Zero Suicide Website - <http://sites.utexas.edu/zest/>



Left to right: Jennifer Battle (@battle4justice), Merily Keller (@hodgekeller), and MHMR Tarrant County's Kyra Meyers and Mark Ware (@MHMRTarrant).

Texas Experts Well Represented at American Association of Suicidology Conference

Texas was well represented at the American Association of Suicidology Conference in Chicago recently. Jennifer Battle, Crisis Center Director for Harris County MHMR opened the AAS conference, Thursday, March 31 by accepting the AAS Crisis Center Excellence Award for the Harris Center, Crisis Call Diversion Program. She is shown in the picture above at the 7 am gathering of Texas suicide prevention early risers flashing the #ZeroSuicide sign! Also participating in the Texas morning gathering were Carl Dunn (@CarlDunnJr) Texas suicide prevention advocate and Lisa Sullivan (manages @StopTXSuicides) who left a bit early to start live tweeting from #AAS16!

Below is a list of attendees and their presentations:

- **Jennifer Battle**, Crisis Center Director, Harris County MHMR, presented on a panel on "Crisis Center Collaboration with Crisis and Emergency Services,"
- **Merily Keller**, Suicide Prevention Project Coordinator, Mental Health America of Texas, presented on a panel with Means Matters and representatives from Utah, New Hampshire, and Texas on "Progress and Promise in Reducing a Suicidal Person's Access to Lethal Means" as well as a panel with Jennifer Spiegler from Kognito on "Suicide Safer Schools in Texas,"
- University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work, PhD student, **Hannah Szlyk** presented on a panel on "Understanding Youth Suicidality Through Qualitative Methods,"
- Texas lawyer, **Skip Simpson** from the DFW area, presented on "Suicide in the Courtroom: Lessons Learned in Malpractice Litigation," and
- **Tammy Weppleman**, Director of Crisis Services, Denton MHMR presented on a panel on "Zero Suicide in Health and Behavioral Health Care: Results of State-Based Initiatives."

Go to [Suicidology.org](https://suicidology.org) or search #AAS16 for more information about the conference, speakers, topics and research presented. You can also view key points made by speakers in collections of live tweets. The @StopTxSuicides collection from Day 1 can be found on Storify at <https://storify.com/StopTXSuicides/the-411-from-aas16>, and Dunn highlights Researcher Marsha Linehan's presentation at #SPSM sfy.co/f1LNB and features pictures and tweets from April 2 at #SPSM sfy.co/y5gN.

Registration Open for National LOSS Team Conference

The 6th Annual National LOSS Team Conference will be held September 28-29 in Fort Worth, Texas. The LOSS Conference provides best practices and training on suicide postvention in the community and will include panels discussing how postvention is done nationally and feature Survivors of Suicide and medical professionals discussing postvention.



To register, copy and paste the link below into your browser. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/6th-annual-national-loss-team-conference-tickets-22465618269?aff=ebrowse>

Contact Amy Honeycutt for more information at Amy.Honeycutt@mhmtc.org or 817-569-5782

Texas Launches Student Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) formally launched the Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals to help expand the state's mental health workforce and improve access to mental health services in Texas. The Higher Education Coordinating Board is now accepting [online applications](#) for the Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals.

Alamo Area Teen Suicide Prevention Coalition Adds Youth Voices to Their Area Outreach

More than 50 attendees heard updates on the Alamo Area Teen Suicide Prevention Coalition's website and accomplishments with presentations on the Coalition's new website and teen outreach, Teen Suicide Risk Factors, Postvention & Best Practices for Suicide Safe Messaging and Reporting on Suicide, Bullying Prevention, School Based Suicide Prevention and others.

Go to their new website, stopteensuicide.info, to learn more about the coalition and to view the video of their teen suicide advisory board, which can be found on the Teen Advisory Board tab. For upcoming meetings and information about youth participation, contact: Terri Mabrito, Coalition Interim Coordinator and Teen Advisory Board facilitator at tmabrito@voicessa.org or email aatspc@gmail.com.



Photo: Jeannie Von Stultz, Alamo Area Teen Suicide Prevention Coalition chair, and Deputy Chief, Mental Health Services, Bexar County Probation Department, with Geoff Gentry, Senior Vice President of Clinical Services, Clarity Child Guidance Center at an Alamo Area Teen Suicide Prevention Coalition meeting April 4 at ESC 20.

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Through screening we can gather the insights into areas to target and form partnerships for
#suicideprevention #AAS16 #workplace

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Stay Up-to-Date on Mental Health News & Research

Clinical research trials are at the heart of all medical advances. The mission of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure. You can find current information about mental health disorders, science news in mental health, and clinical trials at nimh.nih.gov.

Learn more:

Subscribe to get updates every two weeks [here](#).

Clinical Trials:

Get a listing of clinical trials at ClinicalTrials.gov, a service of the U.S. National Institutes of Health. [Find trials by state or by topic](#).

Mental Health America of Texas is one of 55 partners of the NIMH [Outreach Partnership Program](#).

Texas Suicide Prevention Council

The Texas Suicide Prevention Council is made up of more than 50 local coalitions and statewide organization members who agree to support one or more of the goals and objectives of the Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention. <http://www.texassuicideprevention.org/policy-info-updates/>

The Council offers a wide range of suicide-related information, fact sheets, apps, statistics and training for suicide prevention in Texas. Find out more at: <http://www.texassuicideprevention.org/>

Executive Committee for 2015-16

Board Co-Chair Representing Local Coalitions/Military/Organizations

Troy Bush, Houston Suicide Prevention Coalition

Board Co-Chair Representing Statewide Organizations

Terri McBryde, Universal Health Systems

Immediate Past Co-Chair

Beverly Bernzen, Mental Health Task Force of Brazoria County

Nominating Committee

Sandra Galyon, Highland Lakes Suicide Prevention Coalition and Tracy Reyes Franklin, Texas Lawyers

Assistance Program

Vice Chairs Statewide

Bonnie Gardner, Texas Psychological Association and
Will Francis, NASW Texas

Vice Chairs Local Coalitions

Merily Keller, Austin-Central Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition & Monica Kintigh, Fort Worth/Tarrant
County Suicide Awareness Coalition

Vice Chairs Communications and Symposium

Margie Wright, Dallas Suicide Prevention Coalition & Angela Nguyen, Austin-Central Texas Coalition

Non-voting Liaisons:

Epidemiology

Jennifer Haussler Garing and Adrian Conder, DSHS

DSHS Crisis Services

Liza Carol Chigos, Disaster Behavioral Health

Military

Murphy Roland, Army One Source, San Antonio

Texas Department of State Health Services

Suicide Prevention Officer

Jenna Heise, Austin Texas

Suicide Prevention Council Fiscal Agent

Mental Health America of Texas

Youth Suicide Prevention Project

Jenna Heise, DSHS, Project Director for the Youth Suicide Prevention Project, Austin
Molly Lopez, PhD, Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health, UT-Austin School of Social Work
Merily Keller, Youth Suicide Prevention Project Coordinator, Mental Health America of Texas
Lisa Sullivan, Suicide Prevention Communication and Education Coordinator, Mental Health America of
Texas

Universities

Marianne Trattner, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, University of Texas at Austin

Veterans Affairs

Stephanie Clafferty, Central Texas, VAMC

For more information, contact:

TxSuicidePrevention@mhatexas.org, Merily Keller, hodgekeller@yahoo.com or Lisa Sullivan,
lisa@infuse.com.



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