

# OFFICE OF SUICIDE AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

## Greetings from the Directors



*Dr. Scott Poland*  
Associate Professor, CPS



*Dr. Douglas Flemons*  
Professor, SHSS

It has been our pleasure and a great professional opportunity for us to work together, serving as the Co-Directors of the SVP Office. The NSU administration was very forward thinking in the creation of this office, acknowledging how many lives are touched by suicide and recognizing the national concern about campus violence. In particular, we have worked closely and received invaluable assistance and support from Dr. Bob Oller, the CEO of Clinical Operations at the university.

We met during Scott's first week on campus in the fall of 2005, when we were both asked to respond to the tragic death of a student who was murdered off campus by her former boyfriend. This experience forged a close personal and professional bond between us, opening the way for us to share with each other how violence and suicide have touched our lives.

Douglas lost four friends to suicide when he was growing up in Canada, two of whom were college age when they died. Part of Douglas's commitment to suicide prevention on our campus is informed and inspired by these losses. When Scott was 25, he lost his father to suicide, and he realized later that he missed obvious warning signs and thus an opportunity to help. This recognition galvanized his commitment to suicide prevention through education and helping people become more comfortable with the topic.

We have both faced, as well, difficult professional situations with suicide and violence. Scott was previously the Director of Psychological Services for the third largest school system in Texas, and, during his first year on the job, several students died by suicide. When the superintendent asked what he was going to do about the deaths, he really did not know. He devoted himself to figuring out effective strategies, which he included in the pioneering book *Suicide Intervention in the Schools*.

One of Douglas's first clients when he was in graduate school was suicidal, and he realized that he had no idea how to properly assess how at risk she was. Today, after many years of seeing clients and directing psychotherapy clinics, Douglas is finishing off a book on suicide assessment with a psychiatrist colleague.

Scott has been a responder to many tragic school shootings, including Columbine. He knows that schools, including colleges, are among the safest places in the nation, and he wants to keep it that way. Any act of violence on school grounds is unacceptable. The SVP Office has worked collaboratively with Nova Alert and many departments on campus to increase safety for all staff and students.

Training has been a high priority for our office. SVP has conducted nearly two hundred trainings to date on the main campus and at Student Educational Centers. We have also worked collaboratively on several projects with the Florida Office of Suicide Prevention and numerous local agencies and foundations, including the Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention (FISP) Tri-County Suicide Prevention Conference, which NSU will host again this year on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

We have both provided presentations at the Florida State Conference on Prevention and at the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) annual conference. Scott currently serves as the Prevention Division Director for AAS.

We are very pleased to also announce that in addition to offering suicide and violence prevention training, our office provides workshops on topics such as stress management and text anxiety. The SVP Office wants to serve NSU in all areas of prevention, and we are particularly interested in providing more education and skills directly to students. Please don't hesitate to contact the office at [svp@nova.edu](mailto:svp@nova.edu) to let us know how we can be of assistance to you or your department or organization. We need everyone's help to strengthen and extend the safety net at NSU!

Sincerely,  
Scott and Douglas

## ISSUE 1, APRIL 2011

### Look Inside:



**SVP Mission & Goals:** Get to know who we are and what we hope to bring to NSU and the surrounding community.

2



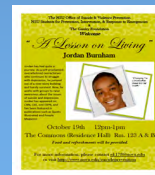
**Dr. Procacci:** Get to know the Coordinator of the EPIC Project and learn about NSU's SAMHSA-funded Grant.

2



**IS PATH WARM:** Learn this great mnemonic for suicide prevention.

3



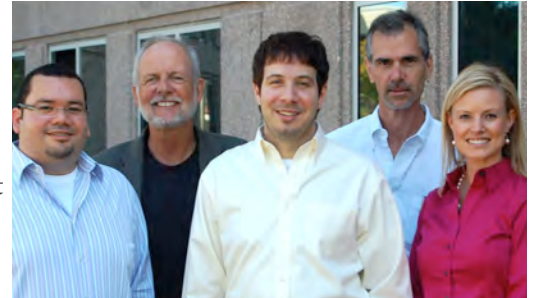
**A Lesson on Living:** Jordan Burnham speaks about his struggle with depression and suicide.

4

**"It Takes a University to Create a Living Safety Net"**

## SVP Mission & Goals

At the direction of Chancellor Ray Ferrero, Jr., a Crisis Prevention Committee was formed in 2004 to develop strategies for preventing suicide and violence among the NSU community. In 2007, the NSU Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention was developed to support crisis prevention efforts, with a focus on suicide prevention. The team is comprised of Douglas Flemons, Ph.D., SHSS faculty member and Co-Director of SAMHSA Campus Suicide Prevention Grant, Scott Poland, Ed.D., CPS faculty member and Co-Director of SAMHSA Campus Suicide Prevention Grant, Erin Procacci, Ph.D., Coordinator of SAMHSA Campus Suicide Prevention Grant and CPS adjunct faculty, Jose Miranda, Psy.D., Post-Doctoral Psychology Resident in Crisis Prevention, and Michael Pusateri, M.A., CPS doctoral student.



*“The only real risk is in doing nothing”*

Working in conjunction with NSU Student Counseling, the team has developed presentations for students, faculty, and staff to provide education on suicide and violence prevention. The presentations provide the NSU community with information regarding the risk factors, protective factors, and warning signs of suicide and violence. Information regarding how to respond to a troubled individual and the resources that are available at NSU and in the community are also presented. Our goal is to reach all NSU students, faculty, and staff. We now present at the Office of Human Resources New Employee Orientations are currently working on the SAMHSA Grant-funded EPIC project to extend prevention efforts to the NSU Student Educational Centers and the NSU on-line community.

Request the training via our website:

[http://www.nova.edu/suicideprevention/presentation\\_requests.html](http://www.nova.edu/suicideprevention/presentation_requests.html).

## Expansion of Prevention Initiatives Off-Campus (EPIC) Project



*Dr. Erin N. Procacci,  
Coordinator & Co-Investigator,  
SAMHSA Campus Suicide  
Prevention Grant*

Dr. Procacci is a Licensed Psychologist and Adjunct Faculty member at Nova Southeastern University's (NSU) Center for Psychological Studies. She also works full-time on the EPIC Project, which is funded by the NSU Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMSHA) Campus Suicide Prevention Grant. The 3-year grant has an annual award of \$100,000 from SAMHSA, which is matched by the University each year.

Currently, we are developing compelling and culturally relevant web-based suicide prevention trainings to better reach faculty, staff, and students at the distance sites and online programs. The trainings include a combination of written text and music, interlaced with video vignettes and narration. They will be accessible via the WebCT/Blackboard platform. The ultimate goal is to create a “university-wide safety net” which means reaching not only the 10,000 on-campus students at NSU, but also the 8,000 students who attend one of the six Florida Student Educational Centers (SECs) and the 10,000 who study online. Please visit our website for updates and resources for our distance students, faculty, and staff.

How do you Remember the Warning Signs of Suicide?

Here's an Easy-to-Remember Mnemonic:

## ***IS PATH WARM?***

I	Ideation
S	Substance Abuse
P	Purposelessness
A	Anxiety
T	Trapped
H	Hopelessness
W	Withdrawal
A	Anger
R	Recklessness
M	Mood Change

# Suicide Prevention: Know the Warning Signs and Risk Factors

Suicide is a tremendous public health issue. In the United States, a person dies by suicide every 15 minutes. Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for college students and the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death for high school students. Unfortunately, only about 1/3 of individuals who struggle with depression and/or thoughts of suicide receive help. Consequently, it is extremely important to become educated about the warning signs, risk factors, resources available, and the importance of taking action.

### **Risk Factors**

- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- Substance abuse problems
- Previous/ongoing sexual, mental, or physical abuse
- School/family/relationship difficulties
- A recent loss
- Untreated mental health issues

### **Warning Signs**

- Fascinated with death, dying, and suicide
- Preoccupied with (cyber/real) violence and weapons
- Talking, writing, or hinting about suicide/homicide
- Giving away possessions
- Withdrawn, apathetic, depressed, sad, angry, or aggressive
- Angry/aggressive about perceived injustice
- Exhibiting changes in behavior, such as
  - school performance
  - eating
  - appearance
  - sleeping patterns
- Perfectionistic/harshly self-critical



# Office of Suicide & Violence Prevention

## Events

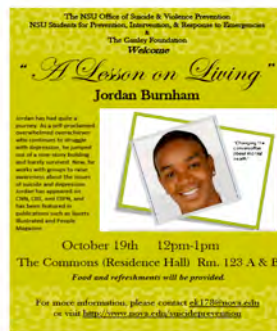
### LIVE, LOVE, HOPE

In collaboration with Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, NSU Students for Prevention, Intervention, and Response to Emergencies (NSPIRE), and Psi Chi Psychology Club, the event provided education on the warning signs and risk factors associated with suicide, as well as spotlighted the resources available at NSU. Additionally, it served as a kick-off event for the Out of Darkness Community Walk at NSU on November 21, 2010. Dr. Jose Miranda and Michael Pusateri were guest speakers along with Debra Goldman, LCSW, Henderson Student Counseling Director, and Dr. Denise Vazquez, a psychologist at Henderson Student Counseling.



### “A Lesson on Living”

More than 100 people attended, “A Lesson on Living,” an event to increase suicide awareness and prevention. It was hosted by NSU’s Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention and sponsored by The Ganley Foundation and NSPIRE. Jordan Burnham, a suicide attempt survivor and speaker from Active Minds, was the featured presenter.



## LATEST SUICIDE PREVENTION NEWS & RESEARCH



An estimated 5,000 veterans die by suicide annually, with Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans 35 percent more likely to die by suicide than the general population. VA statistics show that between 2002 and 2006, more than 250 veterans who left the military after Sept. 11, 2001, died by suicide. In an effort to decrease this number the VA implemented a program. The VA initiative is part of a collaborative effort with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a nationwide network of 133 crisis centers. Received calls are automatically routed to the nearest center based on the caller’s area code. Nearly 100,000 veterans, family members or friends of veterans have reached out for help by calling the Department of Veterans Affairs suicide prevention hotline at 1-800-273-TALK. The hotline was launched July 2007. **\*\*US Department of Defense\*\***

### Violence Prevention

#### Did You Know?

People living in a household where a firearm is kept are almost 5 times more likely to die by suicide.

People with a gun in their home are almost 2 times more likely to die in a gun-related homicide.

#### Statistics Show That:

93% of the crimes committed against college students occur off campus.

With 4,200 universities and colleges in the U.S., each can expect to experience a murder on campus *once* every 265 years.

It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance! My name is Michael and I am the graduate assistant for the Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention (SVP). I would like to take this opportunity to share some important information about SVP.

NSU is aware of the risk of suicide occurring among the student population and is committed to implementing prevention efforts throughout the university. Our team provides live presentations for students, faculty, and staff in order to educate the university on suicide prevention, as well as to strengthen the university-wide safety net.

Though we have been successful in reaching many NSU students, faculty, and staff, we have yet to reach everyone. Therefore, we are committed to increasing our relationship with student organizations, residential life, and other student-focused departments. In order to achieve that end, SVP's principal goal is to conduct more live presentations for students.

Each of you plays a key role within NSU and the student community. For this reason, it is essential for us to develop a strong working relationship. Together, we can increase overall suicide prevention efforts. As our motto states, "It takes a university."

On behalf of SVP, I welcome the opportunity to discuss further the services we offer. Please feel free to contact me directly at [mp1268@nova.edu](mailto:mp1268@nova.edu). I look forward to talking with you!



*Michael J. Pusateri, M.A.  
Graduate Assistant  
Office of Suicide & Violence Prevention*

### Suicide Prevention Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifelines  
1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

The Ganley Foundation  
<http://ganleyfoundation.org/>

The Trevor Project  
<http://www.thetrevorproject.org>

American Association of Suicidology  
[www.suicidology.org/](http://www.suicidology.org/)

American Association for Suicide Prevention  
[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

Suicide Prevention Resource Center  
[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

Florida Office of Suicide Prevention  
[www.helppromotehope.com](http://www.helppromotehope.com)

Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention  
[www.fisponline.com](http://www.fisponline.com)

Mobile Crisis Response Teams  
**Broward - Henderson:**  
954-463-0911

**Palm Beach:**  
North: 561-383-5777  
South: 561-637-2102

**Miami-Dade - Miami Behavioral:**  
305-774-3627

### Henderson Student Counseling

Student counseling provides the opportunity for students to benefit from working on personal issues with experienced professionals.

The counseling relationship is objective, non-judgmental, and understanding. Most importantly, the counseling relationship is strictly confidential. Nova Southeastern University students are afforded the opportunity to express their emotions in an uninhibited environment.

The counseling center is staffed by licensed mental health professionals, a licensed psychologist and a psychiatrist

3538 S. University Drive Davie, FL 33328  
Located at the University Park Plaza  
(Just east of the NSU Bookstore)

Phone (954) 424-6911 Fax: (954) 424-6915

#### Hours of Operation

Monday..... 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Tuesday..... 9:00 am - 8:00 pm  
Wednesday..... 9:00 am - 8:00 pm  
Thursday .....9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Friday .....9:00 am - 5:00 pm