

Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention

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*Pictured Above: Dr. Douglas Flemons, Dr. Scott Poland,
Dr. Shannon Worton, and Stephanie Guedj*

Bullycide and the School Counselor: Keys for Prevention

Bullycide is an emerging phenomenon that describes a direct link between an act of suicide and bullying. School counselors are in a key position to implement school-wide programs to prevent both suicide and bullying. A big part of prevention programs is education; therefore, it's important for school counselors to be well-educated on bullying and suicide and how they can be related.

National figures indicate that 25% of students are bullied but thankfully few students who are the victims of bullying die by suicide. Although bullying is associated with suicide and increases other suicide risk factors such as depression and isolation, it may be oversimplifying to say bullying caused a suicide.

However, a link between bullying and suicide cannot be ignored. In 2008, researchers at Yale reviewed 37 research studies that examined bullying and suicide. Overall, these studies found evidence of connections between being bullied and suicidal thoughts among children. Five of the studies found that bullying victims were found to be two to nine times more likely to report suicidal thoughts.

Additionally, legal cases have arisen where parents have sued school districts believing that bullying at school was a casual factor of their child's death or physical harm to their child. The basis of these lawsuits is typically that the school did not protect the child from bullying incidents on campus and that this lack of protection resulted in the harm to the child, and in some cases, the child's suicide.

It is important that school counselors take proactive steps to increase their knowledge and to ensure that their schools implement solid bullying and suicide prevention programs. The following are recommendations that schools can implement to improve their prevention efforts.

“Unless and until our society recognizes cyber bullying for what it is, the suffering of thousands of silent victims will continue.”

- Anna Maria Chavez

Bullying Prevention

- Implement a school-wide program where all staff cooperates.
- Survey students to determine the extent and nature of the problem and to solicit student recommendations to reduce bullying.
- Recognize that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth are often the target of bullying and increase support for those students.
- Implement programs designed to reach bystanders and to gain a commitment from them to take action to stop the bullying.
- Hold parent meetings and provide training, especially on reducing cyber bullying.
- Teach staff to recognize bullying and to take immediate action to stop bullying when it occurs. Train staff that the bully and victim should be separated and the bully given consequences and the victim given support.
- Staff needs to let the bully know that they and other staff will be watching and consequences will increase in severity if the bullying continues.
- The victim needs to know the importance of letting staff know if bullying continues.
- Increase staff supervision in areas where bullying occurs the most.
- For more in-depth instructions, review evidenced-based bullying prevention programs listed on the U.S. Department of Education website at www.stopbullying.gov.

Suicide Prevention

- Provide annual training for all school staff on the warning signs of suicide and how to get help and increase support for suicidal students.
- Ensure that your school has a comprehensive suicide prevention policy that specifies annual training for all staff on the warning signs of suicide and the importance of working as a team and not keeping a secret about suicidal behavior.
- Key school support personnel including school counselors, social workers and school psychologists should receive training on suicide assessment.
- Policies should be developed to ensure that suicidal students are properly supervised and that parents are notified that their child is suicidal.
- Schools need to be familiar with community resources and any specific interventions available in their state.
- Provide mental health presentations for parents that include suicide prevention information.
- Create a prevention task force that involves both school staff and community resources and agencies.
- Implement depression screening programs and follow program recommendations and school policies for securing supervision and support for students who are identified as depressed and/or suicidal.
- Designate a suicide prevention expert at your school and get them credentialed in school suicide prevention from the American Association of Suicidology www.suicidology.org.

Bullying and suicide prevention plans both need to be implemented school-wide. The implementation needs to involve all stakeholders, including administration, faculty, students, parents, community resources, and other school professionals. The group of students in schools that are most in need of staff support and programs to stop bullying are the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender students as they are most often the targets of the bullying. It is crucial for school counselors to advocate for students and ensure that the school has solid prevention programs in place.

*Carolyn Berger, Assistant Professor at Nova Southeastern University
Scott Poland, Professor and Co-Director of the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office at Nova Southeastern University*

SVP SPOTLIGHTS

SVP in The Huffington Post

SVP is proud to announce that Stephanie Guedj, graduate assistant to the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office, was recently published, along the side of Dr. Poland, in the Huffington Post. Ms. Guedj and Dr. Poland's article, "Bullying Prevention Neglects the Full Needs of Victims," highlighted that an astonishing one quarter to one third of all students in either middle or high school are reported to have been bullied. Consistent with the mission of the NSU's Suicide and Violence Prevention Office, Ms. Guedj and Dr. Poland skillfully wove in the topic of suicide prevention as they explored its relevance to bullying. Interestingly enough, the article, which was featured during Octobers' National Bullying Prevention Month, focused on helping not just the victims of bullying, but the "bullies" as well; both of who are at greater risk for suicide. As pointed out in the article, though bullying has not necessarily been identified as a direct cause of suicide, "feelings of isolation, rejection, exclusion, and despair" (as outlined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), all of which can be triggered by bullying, are considered risk factors for suicide. Ms. Guedj and Dr. Poland pointed out the importance of implementing suicide prevention programs across all schools in the country to not only establish awareness, but to identify prevention strategies.

Click here to read the article:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/scott-poland/bullying-prevention-neglect_b_4124588.html

Dr. Poland's Presentations

Dr. Poland recently provided the following presentations:

A keynote address entitled "Legal and Ethical Issues in School Crisis" at the annual California Association of School Psychologists Conference in Newport Beach, CA.

A keynote address on bullying prevention and mental health at the Regional Bullying Prevention Conference, sponsored by the School Safety Advocacy Council, in Morgantown, WVA.

A keynote address entitled "Psychology Making the Difference to Save the Lives of Children" at the NSU Psi Chi Induction Ceremony.

Dr. Flemons's Talks & Pubs

Dr. Flemons recently provided the following presentations:

A five-hour pre-conference institute entitled "Relational Suicide Assessment" at the national meeting of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy in Portland, OR.

A four-hour workshop entitled "Relational Suicide Assessment" for the Brief Therapy Institute Workshop Series at NSU.

Dr. Flemons recently published a book chapter on hypnosis and relaxation in the third edition of *Psychologist's Desk Reference* (Oxford University Press) and an article, "Talking on the Edge: Assessing the Risk of Suicide" in the *Psychotherapy Networker*.

LIVE. LOVE. HOPE.

Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, NSU Students and Response to Emergencies (NSPIRE), and Psi Chi Psychology Club collaborated on LIVE. LOVE. HOPE., an event that 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 the Darkness Community Walk on November 23, 2013. NSU's Counselor in Residence, Michael Pusateri, was the guest speaker at the event.

The Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention



Losing a loved one to suicide is unimaginable to many. As such, it is difficult for those who have not experienced this kind of loss to fully understand the needs of a survivor of suicide. Mrs. Rosen (Co-Founder of FISP) is open and expressive regarding both her personal and professional involvement with survivors of suicide, and was able to shed light on some of the helpful, and perhaps not-so-helpful ways of responding to a survivor of suicide.

The grief associated with a suicide is great. Because many people, included survivors of suicide, believe in some sort of after-life (e.g., heaven), there is a tendency to make statements reflecting that someone who died by suicide is “in a better place.” While it may be true that the individual’s suffering has ceased, many, if not most, survivors would rather their loved one still be here, on Earth, with them. However good-intentioned the statement may be, when going through the stages of grief, it is more helpful to focus on empathy and understanding. So what is helpful to say to someone who recently lost a loved one to suicide? Mrs. Rosen suggests statement such as, “I’m here for you. I will be at your house tomorrow.” While it can be helpful to offer sentiments such as, “I’m here for you. Let me know if you need anything,” going the extra step of letting the person know that you plan on being there for them, and taking steps to do so, can be comforting. It is also important to follow through with intentions to provide your support/comfort. And finally, connect. Show the individual that you are there for them and can empathize with their feelings.

The message behind Mrs. Rosen’s words can be likened to the initiative of the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office: building a living safety net. Mrs. Rosen shared that “Suicide is everybody’s business.” Whether you are a survivor of someone who died by suicide, or are close to someone who has recently experienced such loss, the emotional journey tied to this experience can be challenging and overwhelming. With that, it is important to remember self-care; to practice the self-care strategies and coping mechanisms that we encourage others to engage in.

About FISP

The Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention (FISP) is a non-profit organization committed to suicide prevention efforts, including research, education, and support groups for survivors of suicide. Mr. and Mrs. Harry and Jackie Rosen founded FISP in 1992 following the loss of their son, Mitchell Rosen, who died by suicide in 1986 at the age of 24. In his memory, Mr. and Mrs. Rosen have reached out to their community in an extraordinary way, developing community-based programs to prevent the loss of others to suicide. In addition, FISP has held and assisted with a number of fundraising events in support of suicide awareness and suicide prevention programs. Money raised through such fundraising efforts is used to sponsor suicide prevention research and student scholarships. FISP’s ultimate mission is to prevent suicide by lessening societal risk factors that contribute to feelings of alienation, desperation, helplessness, and hopelessness.

Continued on next page.



Pictured above are the performance artists and producers of "Expressions of Hope."

FISP Art of Community "Expressions of Hope"

One of FISP's many community outreach endeavors is their "Expressions of Hope Project," a multi-media theatrical performance intended to draw awareness to the risk of suicide within the LGBTQA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Questioning, and Ally) community. They successfully held their first performance series October 10 through October 15, 2013 at the Pride Center in Wilton Manors, Florida. The show entailed a series of vignettes that demonstrated the impact of societal rejection, especially as it relates to members of the LGBTQA community. One vignette was the true story of a young woman who was rejected by her family and church after identifying herself as a lesbian, and subsequently died by suicide. Another vignette depicted a story of a young woman who turned to self-injury to cope with feelings of depression that were triggered by being scorned by her peers. The "Expressions of Hope Project" intends to continue creating performances such as these in effort to generate community awareness regarding the issue of suicide among the LGBTQA community and is made possible by the donations of community members. To keep this project going, donations may be made at <http://fisponline.org/get-involved/donations/>.

FISP Sponsored Programs

With suicide prevention being the focus of FISP's mission, there are many programs housed under the FISP umbrella that relate to this goal. The Solutions Unlimited Now (SUN) Program, which targets all ages (but has specific focuses on adolescents and the geriatric population), emphasizes building problem-solving abilities, social skills, and support. FISP partners with community agencies, as well as the Juvenile Justice System in Broward County, to facilitate a series of ten group sessions for each group at no cost to the partners or participants (the program is funded through grants and donations). Survivors Support, another program through FISP, facilitates a series of support groups for survivors of suicide. Finally, the Helping Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) Club is a school-based club for students interested in exploring topics including problem-solving, bullying, and substance abuse prevention.

As this is not an inclusive presentation of all FISP events and programs, please visit their website (<http://fisponline.org>) for additional information.



For more information about how to get involved with FISP, visit their website at <http://fisponline.org/>

Upcoming Events



FISP is hosting their annual 5K Run/Walk on May 17, 2013. Registration will start at 8:00am. Get involved by running, walking, or volunteering your services! Visit <http://fisponline.org/> for more information.

NSPIRE

Get involved with

NSU Students for Prevention,
Intervention, and Response to
Emergencies

Open to all NSU students!

Contact Laura Lundell, NSPIRE's
President for more information.
ll858@nova.edu

REQUEST AN SVP PRESENTATION

To date SVP has provided **278** presentations to various departments of NSU. SVP has presented to over **6,100** faculty, staff and students of NSU. Presentation topics include suicide and violence training, stress management, and test taking anxiety. Use the link below to request a presentation!

http://nova.edu/suicideprevention/presentation_requests.html

Come join as FISP **"Goes back to the 80's!"** FISP is holding their annual dinner, dance and silent auction with the Blues Brothers Band on February 8, 2014, 7:00pm-11:00pm.



Suicide Prevention App

The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) sponsored the Suicide Prevention: Continuity of Care and Follow-up App Challenge at the Behavioral Health Technologies Innovations Conference at the White House. The winner of this challenge, and a \$50,000 prize, was a group led by Dr. Nadine Kaslow at Emory University School of Medicine. Dr. Kaslow and her team developed an app called the ReliefLink, which is designed to provide continuity of care and follow-up resources for individuals at risk for suicide. The app allows users to monitor and track their mood and behavior, engage in safety planning, create medication and appointment reminders, locate help centers, engage in built-in coping tools (e.g., relaxation exercises), and create an emergency button that can be linked to emergency contacts, including 911. According to Lu Dong, a member of Dr. Kaslow's team, "[The] suicide prevention app is an innovative effort that tries to marry the art and science of mental health care with cutting-edge mobile technology."

For more information, visit http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/09/kaslow_reliefink_app/campus.html



N.O.L.A. Dancers Perform at Broward County Schools for Anti-Bullying Week

Dance students at Nest of the Living Arts (N.O.L.A.) performed “Through the Red Door” at schools across Broward County for anti-bullying week. “Through the Red Door” is a poignant showcase of the harmful and tragic consequences of bullying among adolescents, including self-harm and suicide. Through monologues, dancing, and singing, the series depicts the real-life stories of the dancers’ experiences with bullying. Nolwen Lalanne, founder and artistic director of N.O.L.A., conceived the idea for this performance several years ago when she discovered that twenty of her dance students, including her daughter, were being bullied at school nearly every day. Since 2010, Ms. Lalanne’s students have performed “Through the Red Door” annually at 27 public schools from Broward County to West Palm Beach, as well as at the Miramar Cultural Center. Ms. Lalanne encourages her students to be strong in the face of adversity, to support one another, and to embrace each other’s differences. Ms. Lalanne and her students hope that their performance draws students’ awareness to the issue of bullying and its harmful effects, and ultimately, decreases the prevalence of bullying in schools.

Pictured above are N.O.L.A. dancers after their performance at Silver Trail Middle School in Pembroke Pines, FL.

Pictured to the right are the dancers as they walk through the halls at Silver Trail Middle School.



Poland and Flemons: Suicide Prevention Starts with Knowledge

Every 13.7 minutes in America someone dies not from a car accident or from disease or even natural causes, but by his own hand. In our country, suicide claims the lives of more than 38,000 of our neighbors, friends and family members each year.

Recent statistics show that suicide is the fourth-leading cause of death in the U.S. among adults 18-65, and the second-leading cause of death among teens and young adults. Even more troubling, approximately 16 percent of high-school students have “seriously considered” suicide in the last year.

Most tragic is that the vast majority of these individuals never seek professional care. For some, the reason they don’t get help could be the stigma that some place on the issue of mental health and depression. For others, it may simply be that they do not know help is available or don’t know where to look.

That’s why in 2004, Nova Southeastern University established a Crisis Prevention Committee to help develop strategies for preventing suicide and violence within the NSU community. That grew and, in 2007, the NSU Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention was formed to help crisis prevention efforts, with a main focus on suicide.

Our team has created presentations geared toward students, faculty and staff. The goal is to provide information regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide and violence. So many times those closest to the victim can identify some of the warning signs, albeit it is in hindsight; that’s why it’s vital that people have this knowledge so they can be proactive and help a friend or family member.

Part of NSU’s Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention efforts include a free suicide prevention webinar. This webinar, tailored for school administrators, teachers, guidance counselors — anyone who works with young people — was provided on December 2, 2013. The goal was to shine a light on what can be done to help prevent suicide, to successfully intervene with suicidal youngsters and to effectively respond in the aftermath of such a tragic event.

This is a public health issue that, quite frankly, we aren’t doing enough to address. This is something that has taken, and continues to take, an enormous toll on our society. That’s why it’s vital that everyone — not just those who work with young people — understands and recognizes the warning signs and helps those in need get assistance and support.

To view the webinar and access more information on suicide prevention, visit the NSU Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention Website (www.nova.edu/suicideprevention). If you or someone you love needs help, please call 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433).

*Scott Poland, Professor and Co-Director of the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office at Nova Southeastern University
Douglas Flemons, Professor and Co-Director of the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office at Nova Southeastern University*

SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES

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/

American Association for Suicide Prevention
www.afsp.org

Suicide Prevention Resource Center
www.sprc.org

Florida Office of Suicide Prevention
www.helppromotehope.com

Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention
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 Services

What should every student know?

Students can participate in up to 10 sessions per year
FOR FREE!

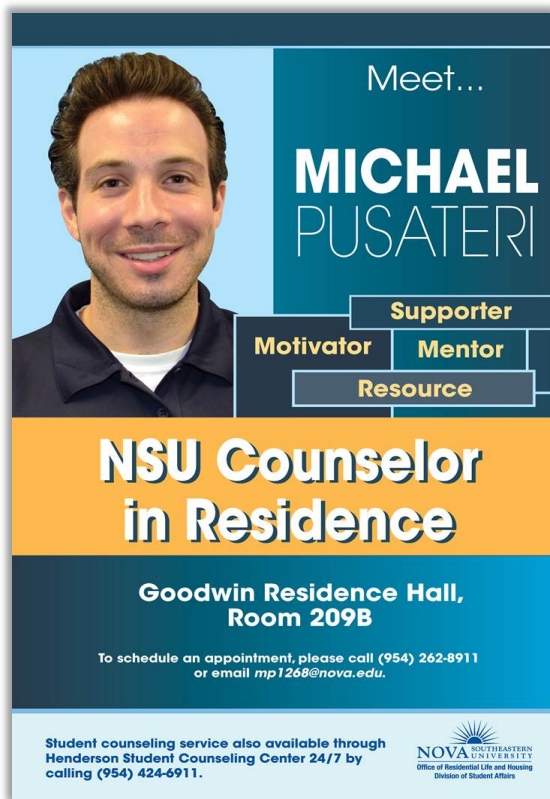
The counseling relationship is strictly confidential!
An on-call counselor is available after hours in times
of crisis.

Just call **(954) 424-6911** to make an appointment!

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

Nova's Counselor in Residence



Meet...
MICHAEL PUSATERI

Supporter
Motivator **Mentor**
Resource

**NSU Counselor
in Residence**

**Goodwin Residence Hall,
Room 209B**

To schedule an appointment, please call (954) 262-8911
or email mp1268@nova.edu.

Student counseling service also available through
Henderson Student Counseling Center 24/7 by
calling (954) 424-6911.

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY
Office of Residential Life and Housing
Division of Student Affairs