

Office of Suicide & Violence Prevention

Nova Southeastern University

December 2014

SVP Spotlights

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This academic year, SVP has participated in a number campus and community events.

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Florida State University Campus Shooting

Lessons Learned: Suicide and Homicide Prevention and Postvention Practices

The recent school shooting that occurred on FSU's campus within the last several weeks has left many confused and wondering why this senseless act had to occur. Another question that continues to linger, is could we have done more to prevent this horrible tragedy? The perpetrator, Myron May (31), wounded three students studying in the library preparing for finals. Ultimately, the perpetrator was shot and killed by the police. As a society, where did we fail? How did we miss this and what could we have done to prevent this horrible tragedy from occurring? The shooter appeared to be an intelligent lawyer, who was interpersonally and professionally successful prior to this event. Many ask, what happened?

From what the media has reported, he was considering filing for bankruptcy, he quit his job suddenly, he became increasingly paranoid that the government was out to get him, and he began to hear voices. Some friends reported he appeared depressed. Apparently he was recently hospitalized for his emotional and psychological state and was taking prescription medication.

It is important to remember that as friends and family members we can provide a significant role in preventing violence against the self and others. The warning signs of May's psychological crises are clear and evident. While he was taking medication, it does not appear to have stabilized his paranoid delusions, hallucinations, or low mood. It is important for individuals to obtain the psychiatric help necessary to stabilize these symptoms to prevent escalation. For maintenance of care, continuous check-ups with the psychiatrist are critical to ensure the medication dosage and type of medicine is efficacious. Continued psychotherapy is also recommended by the professionals to ensure comprehensive managed care for effective coping. Here at NSU, we have extensive mental health resources for crisis situations (see page 6).



Out of the Darkness Walk

On November 16, 2014, SVP participated in the annual Out of the Darkness Walk at Nova Southeastern University. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) brings the event to our community each year. By participating in the walk, we helped raise money and awareness to support AFSP's research and education programs. AFSP works to prevent suicide and save lives, increase national awareness about depression, and assist survivors of suicide loss.

SVP Spotlights

Dr. Douglas Flemons and Dr. Scott Poland are leading contributors to the area of suicide and violence and prevention. Here are some recent updates of their recent and upcoming work.

- Dr. Poland will present on Self-injurious behavior for all the Palm Beach County counselors on December 11, 2014.
- In October, Dr. Flemons and Dr. Cantrell met with staff at Chrysalis, a local mental health agency, and talked about the challenges of staying engaged and conducting assessments with suicidal clients.
- Dr. Poland has three recent chapter publications:
Poland, S., Samuel-Barrett, C. & Waguespack, A. (2014). Best practices in responding to deaths at school. In A. Thomas & P. Harris (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology VI* (pp. 303-320). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists
Lieberman, R., Poland, S., & Kornfeld, C. (2014) Suicide intervention in the schools. In A. Thomas & P. Harrison (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology VI* (pp. 273-288). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
Poland, S., & Kornfeld, C. (2014). Suicide prevention and intervention. In R. Witte & G. Mosley-Howard (Eds.), *Mental health practice in schools* (pp.265-287). New York, NY: Springer.
- Dr. Flemons has just signed a contract with the publisher Routledge to complete a book on academic writing. Called *Composing Social Science Page-Turners*, it will help aspiring writers to craft manuscripts that both inform and captivate their readers.



- Dr. Poland and Dr. Flemons presented to the NSU Ambassador Club on November 13th about suicide prevention and resources at the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office.
- Dr. Flemons provided a keynote address on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention to the Korean Association of Family Therapy in Seoul, South Korea, in November 2014. He also conducted a day-long workshop for the group on suicide assessment. On subsequent days, he spoke to undergraduates at two South Korean universities on how they can develop and then bring expertise on suicide prevention into their careers upon graduation.
- Dr. Poland has been providing extensive consultation and training for the Fairfax County Virginia schools this fall as they have experienced a suicide cluster. In addition he has done two nationally promoted webinars on school safety with Michele Gay a Sandy Hook parent who founded Safe and Sound Schools after the murder of her daughter, Josephine. Dr. Poland Mrs. Gay will next provide a webinar on school safety on January 14, 2015, please visit www.psi-solutions.org, <http://www.psi-solutions.org> or www.safeandsoundschools.org, <http://www.safeandsoundschools.org> to register for this free webinar.



Pictured above: The Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention. Douglas Flemons, Ph.D., Stephanie Guedj, M.S., Courtney Cantrell, Psy.D., and Scott Poland, Ed.D.

Pictured left: Dr. Flemons presenting “Relational Suicide Assessment” at the Korean Association of Family Therapy in Seoul, South Korea.

Addressing Current Legislation and Policies Regarding Anti-Bullying and Harassment Efforts in Public Schools

If school buildings and their surrounding grounds provide the physical context where most bullying incidents occur, then there seems to be an obvious need to alter that environment and implement policies that reduce the occurrence of bullying. Studies show that between 15% to 25% of U.S. students are being bullied with some frequency (Nansel et al., 2001). According to Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, (2010) bullying poses threats to mental health concerns including increased anxiety, depression, alienation, and in severe cases self-harm and suicidality. With the growing use of internet and cellphones in younger generations, it is important that schools implement bullying policies that reach and address the concern of cyberbullying. Wang Nansel, & Iannotti (2010) reported that victims of cyberbullying experienced higher levels of depression than victims of face-to-face bullying.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2012) evaluated the diversity of state statutes concerning bullying and found that while most states require some form of anti-bullying law, the statutes range from simple statements prohibiting bullying to explicatory lists of what must be included in school anti-bullying policies.

Currently, there is no federal anti-bullying law that exists, however, 49 states do have anti-bullying legislation. The state of Florida seems to be a shining example of detailed legislation and accountability of schools to enforce bullying policies. Florida legislation mandates that all school districts have a valid and working bullying and harassment reporting and investigation procedure and further necessitates that the distribution of safe school funds to school districts be contingent upon approval of the bullying and harassment policy.

Florida defines bullying and cyberbullying as systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve: teasing, social exclusion, threat, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, theft, sexual, religious, or racial harassment, public or private humiliation, and/or destruction of property. Additionally, according to the "Jeffrey Johnson Stand Up for All Students Act," all school districts must identify their reporting procedure and require prompt investigation of allegations.

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Postvention Resources for Schools

Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) developed a postvention guide to help direct and advise K-12 schools on what to do within the school and community after a student dies by suicide.

Click the link, [After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools](#)

A Higher Education Mental Health Alliance (HEMHA) project was recently published to help facilitate and direct college campus administrators and staff how to effectively establish and implement a postvention plan after a campus crisis or death.

Click the link, [Postvention: A Guide for Response to Suicide on College Campuses](#)



Per Florida law, policies should clearly outline the disciplinary action that will be taken by the school regardless of where the bullying occurs (on or off school grounds) and extends to students' personal computers, cell phones and other devices. Additionally, whereas most states do not hold laws articulating the data reporting procedures that school districts must make for reports of bullying, Florida law requires school districts to report to the Department of Education individual incident reports as well as their consequences. Where Florida legislation falls short is recognizing the need to incorporate suicide prevention into school policies. Klomek, Sourander & Gould (2010) reported an association between bullying behaviors (whether victim or bully) and suicidality among children of all ages. In Texas, the anti-bullying legislation, House Bill 1386, requires all public schools to incorporate suicide prevention into campus policy and to designate a suicide prevention liaison at every school. As researchers accept that bullying is a risk factor for suicide, it is important that advocates communicate and relate clinical and research knowledge to legislators.

Whether the state mandates "appropriate" anti-bullying legislation, there remains the opportunity and continued need for teachers to address bullying as a prevention measure within the classroom. This starts with increasing awareness among students about bullying and its serious and threatening effects. We should not wait to start talking to children about bullying. In fact, bullying education should start with younger children as they tend to have a higher rate of reporting bullying behaviors (Rigby and Slee, 1991). Additionally, creating a supportive classroom environment can be established by reinforcing the "prevention principles" of the acronym SCRAPES (Fried and Fried, 1997). SCRAPES stands for S- Social skills and self-esteem (i.e., learning to share, initiate friendships, accept responsibility for mistakes, cooperate, and wait your turn); C- Conflict resolution and character education; R- Respect for differences (i.e., fostering and modeling positive multicultural respect); A- Assertiveness and anger management training; P- Power and problem solving skills; E- Empathy training; and S-Sexual awareness training. Teachers should be educated about the warning signs for bullying and emphasize to students the importance of reporting bullying and that it will not be tolerated. Especially important is the need for students to feel that reporting bullying to their teachers and school administrators will lead to intervention. Among a sample of middle and high school students, "66 % of victims of bullying believed school professionals responded poorly to the bullying problems that they observed" (Hoover, Oliver, & Hazler, 1992).

Prevention is crucial to ending the bullying and harassment that takes place both in and outside of schools. As advocates, we have the opportunity to not only communicate to legislators the importance of specific anti-bullying policies, but we can also raise awareness of the mental health effects that bullying has. Promoting high social support, social connectedness at school, and mental health services can all serve to prevent and reduce

"The state of Florida seems to be a shining example of detailed legislation and accountability of schools to enforce bullying policies."

- Jenna Lyons

bullying. As it is recognized that bullying has so many detrimental effects, it is vital that we step up and advocate together to prevent and put an end to bullying and cyberbullying.

Arseneault, L., Bowes, L., & Shakoor, S. (2010). Bullying victimization in youths and mental health problems: 'Much ado about nothing'? *Psychological medicine*, 40(05), 717-729.

Fried, S. (1997). Bullies & victims: Children abusing children. *American Journal of Dance Therapy*, 19(2), 127-133.

Hoover, J. H., Oliver, R., & Hazler, R. J. (1992). Bullying: Perceptions of adolescent victims in the Midwestern USA. *School Psychology International*, 13, 516.

Klomek, A., Sourander, A., & Gould, M. (2010). The association of suicide and bullying in childhood to young adulthood: A review of cross-sectional and longitudinal research findings. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55 (5), 282-288.

Nansel, T. Overpeck, M., Pilla, R.S., Ruan, W.J., Simmons-Morton, B. Schmidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 285, 2094-2100.

Rigby, K., & Slee, P. T. (1991). Bullying among Australian school children: Reported behavior and attitudes toward victims. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 131(5), 615-627.

Wang, J., Nansel, T., & Iannotti, R. (2010). Cyber and traditional bullying: Differential association with depression. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 48(4), 415-417.



Request an SVP Presentation

The Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention has provided over 300 presentations to various departments at Nova Southeastern University. SVP has presented to over **6,100** faculty, staff and students of Nova. 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_request.html

SVP Newsletter Contributors

Interested in becoming a contributor to the SVP newsletter? Graduate students looking to write articles on the topics of suicide and violence prevention can email Stephanie Guedj at sg1181@nova.edu for further information.

SVP Campus and Community Involvement

SVP has had a very busy start to the new academic year. Community involvement and campus outreach has been at an all time high. Below are a few of the engagements SVP has participated in! Be on the look out for upcoming SVP outreach and events scheduled on campus.

Live, Love, Hope and Out Of Darkness Community Walk

The sorority, Lambda Theta Alpha, hosted the annual Live, Laugh, Love and Out of Darkness Walk at Nova this year. The Live, Love, Hope event took place on 11.12.14 from 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm. The sorority provided an opportunity for attendees to share their personal experiences with suicide. Courtney Cantrell and Stephanie Guedj attended on behalf of SVP and were asked to provide both information about suicidality and strategies for prevention. Group participation was high and great questions were asked such as, "What do I do when I know my friend is depressed, may be suicidal, and they want to be just left alone?" Withdrawal and isolation are symptoms of Depression and potentially suicidal ideation, as such it is important to obtain help for your friend as isolating tends to exacerbate the negative symptoms. Upon completion of the event there was a candle light vigil and a moment of silence to all those who have experienced the loss of a loved one to suicide.

The Out of Darkness walk took place on 11.16.14 from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm at NSU. The event is affiliated with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The proceeds go to research and education on suicide prevention. In attendance on behalf of SVP were Scott Poland, Courtney Cantrell, and Stephanie Guedj. This event raised over 33,000.00 dollars and there were over 713 participants! CPS's student organization NSPIRE raised over 2,000.00 dollars! In attendance were men and women of all ages as well as their four legged friends. The sorority hosting the walk had several events planned to culminate the 5 mile walk. There was music, singing, dancing, remembrance of loved ones who died by suicide, and a beautiful Native American proverb read with butterflies taking flight. It was SVP's pleasure to be a part of and to support such a wonderful event. We hope to see everyone there next year!

Ambassadors Board

Douglas Flemons, Scott Poland, and Stephanie Guedj discussed the importance of suicide and violence prevention to NSU's Ambassadors Board, a select group of business, professional, and dedicated leaders charged with a passion to support NSU's mission. The Board members were open to learning all they could, and they followed up the talk with excellent questions.

Health Fair

Courtney Cantrell and Stephanie Guedj participated in the annual Nova Health Fair for faculty and staff. The office of SVP was a very popular stop along the path, as information about our office was shared and conveyed with many! Community outreach was discussed with encouraging interest in opportunities to lecture on suicide prevention and assessment, stress management, and test anxiety! The "SVP wheel" game was employed to engage staff about suicide signs, symptoms, and action! Community and campus resources were shared.

Community Presentations

Chrysalis Health requested a lecture on "Coping with the Loss of a Suicidal Patient". Based upon the attendees' request, he instead lectured on suicide assessment and crisis management of suicidal patients. He provided examples of the dyadic interaction and implemented strategic techniques in order to emphasize patient strengths to potentially develop positive therapeutic change. Douglas Flemons provided invaluable information to Chrysalis' mental health practitioners working in the field.

Nova Southeastern University's Counselor in Residence, Leonnette Lee

This year, Nova Southeastern University has a new Counselor in Residence, Leonnette Lee! Leonnette provides on call coverage to respond to emergency situations involving mental health issues, crisis situations, and emotional concerns of the residential population.

Residential students can schedule an appointment with Leonnette by phone, (954) 262-8911 or email, counselorinresidence@nova.edu.

Leonnette also holds weekly office hours at Goodwin Residence Hall, Room 209B.

Meet...
LEONNETTE LEE

Supporter
Motivator
Mentor
Resource

NSU Counselor in Residence

Goodwin Residence Hall,
Room 209B

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

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

NSU NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
Office of Student Life and Wellness

Suicide Prevention Resources

1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-273-TALK

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



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 - 8:00pm
Wednesday..... 9:00 am - 8:00 pm
Thursday9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Friday9:00 am - 5:00 pm