

Coming Together to Care

A Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Texas Communities

**Texas Suicide Prevention Community Network, 2004
Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Project, 2006**

**Sponsored by the
Mental Health Association in Texas**

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If You Need Help Now

If you feel suicidal or you need to help someone else who does, put down this toolkit and call for help immediately.

On the Phone

- **Call 1 (800) 273-TALK (8255)** to be connected to a suicide and crisis center in your area.

The **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** is the only national suicide prevention and intervention telephone resource funded by the Federal Government. Its mission is to provide immediate assistance to individuals in suicidal crisis by connecting them to the nearest available suicide prevention and mental health service provider through a 24-hour, toll-free telephone number-1-800-273-TALK (8255).

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

- Call the local crisis center listed in the first few pages of your local phone directory.
- Call 911 and ask for the mental health crisis team of your local law enforcement agency.
- Call or go to the nearest hospital emergency room in your area.
- Call one of the Texas crisis centers listed in the Appendices section of this toolkit.
- Call your doctor or other health care provider for a referral to someone who provides suicide prevention and intervention services.

On the Web

- <http://www.txcouncil.com/crisis.html> . The Texas Council of Community MHMR Centers has a list of Texas crisis lines supported by local mental health authorities on a county by county basis.
- <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhservices/default.shtm> The Texas Department of State Health Services, Community Mental Health Services division maintains an easy to use listing of local mental health authorities and their 24/7 crisis lines. You are able to search by county, city or zip code to find the one nearest you.
- <http://www.befrienders.org>. An international, multilingual, 24-hour confidential service operated by the Samaritans.
- <http://www.metanoia.org/suicide>. A source of potentially life-saving advice for anyone who is feeling suicidal.
- <http://suicidehotlines.com/texas.html>. A Web-based listing of Texas crisis hotlines with links to other resources.

You have made the right choice to look for help. We hope you will contact someone right away.

Introduction

This suicide prevention toolkit for Texas communities is organized in two parts. The first covers the basic knowledge that people need to have in order to act effectively on this issue, and the second covers actions they can take once they have that basic knowledge. The goal is to make this a very practical resource that community leaders can easily use in efforts to prevent suicide deaths in Texas. Updates to the toolkit will be posted periodically on the Mental Health Association in Texas Web site at <http://www.mhatexas.org/> and on the <http://www.TexasSuicidePrevention.org> website which will be online in Spring, 2007.

The development, research and training for the original toolkit were supported by a grant from the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation in 2004. The 2006 update to the toolkit, translations of initial sections into Spanish, and the development of a Texas Suicide Prevention website is supported by the Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Project funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the National Institute of Mental Health through the Texas Department of State Health Services. (A grant overview is provided in Appendix A.)

Ten Frequently Asked Questions About Suicide Prevention

Listed are a few of some of the most frequently asked questions about suicide prevention in Texas, and where you can find the answers in this toolkit:

1. **Question:** How many suicides are there in Texas and in my particular city or county? **Answer:** Go to **page 26** to find out general statistics about suicide in Texas and to **page 46** to find out how to use a web-based data search engine to generate statistics for your county.
2. **Question:** What are the risk factors for suicide? **Answer:** Suicide is considered to be multi-factoral or a combination of various biological, psychological and social risks. Go to **page 38** to find a list of individual risks factors and protective factors.
3. **Question:** I have a family member or friend who I think may be suicidal. I'm worried about him/her. What do I do? **Answer:** Follow the guidelines for QPR gatekeepers (QPRInstitute.org) and concerned family members and friends to Ask the person if they are feeling suicidal; Persuade them to get help; and Refer them to an appropriate mental health provider. Do not leave them alone if they are suicidal but ideally go with them to your nearest hospital emergency room, call 911 and ask for a mental health deputy or police officer to come to his/her location to escort them to help, or call his/her family doctor and tell them the person is suicidal and ask for a referral for help. The **1-800-273-TALK** national suicide prevention lifeline will connect you to the nearest crisis center for help or you can go to Appendix B for a list of Texas crisis centers.

4. **Question:** If you talk about suicide, aren't you just encouraging people to do it?
Answer: This is one of the main myths about suicide. Research in public health has demonstrated that you cannot address a public health issue if you do not talk about it or there is no awareness of the problem. **Go to page 36** to see a list of common myths and facts about suicide. On the other hand, media coverage about suicide should be done according to national guidelines so that suicide is not sensationalized, the specific means of death is not discussed, and pictures of the individual are not put on the front page. **See page 85** for more information on media guidelines.
5. **Question:** Are there research-based programs which can be implemented in our state to help prevent suicide? **Answer:** **Go to page 58** to find out about some of the evidenced-based prevention programs.
6. **Question:** There has been a recent suicide in our area. What do we do now?
Answer: There are some general suggestions for memorials or funerals following a suicide on **page 61** from a variety of religious traditions. In addition, it is important to follow "postvention" or after a suicide guidelines in order to prevent copycat, cluster or contagion effects. **See page 75** for postvention guidelines.
7. **Question:** How can I get involved in suicide prevention in Texas? Are there statewide and regional groups to join in this effort? **Answer:** We named this toolkit "Coming Together To Care," because Texans have a history of joining together as communities to find answers and fix problems. If you are a member of a statewide organization and your group agrees to support one or more of the goals and objectives of the Texas state plan for suicide prevention, **go to pages 11-12** to find out how to become involved in the Texas Suicide Prevention Partnership. If you want to get involved (or start) a community effort to prevent suicide, **go to pages 11-12** to find contacts for local suicide prevention coalitions around the state and contact the Texas Suicide Prevention Community Network about help in forming new coalitions.
8. **Question:** Where can I find a copy of the Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention and a 1 or 2-page fact sheet about suicide in Texas? **Answer:** The plan is in Appendix A on **page 108** and a Texas fact sheet can be found in Appendix A on **page 99**.
9. **Question:** Where can I find a list of organizations, books, and web-based resources for suicide prevention? **Answer:** Resources for suicide prevention including organizations, books and web-based resources are listed in Appendix B beginning on **page 125** and books are listed in Appendix C beginning on **page 150**.

10. **Question:** I have lost a friend or family member to suicide and would like to contribute to suicide prevention in his/her name. Where can I contribute to Suicide Prevention in Texas? **Answer:** The Texas Suicide Prevention Council serves as the administrative body for the Texas Suicide Prevention Partnership of statewide organizations addressing suicide and the Texas Suicide Prevention Community Network of local coalitions. The Mental Health Association in Texas, a statewide 501(c)(3) non-profit, serves as the fiscal agent for these groups and can accept donations in memory of a loved one for these groups.

Send Memorial Contributions to:

Texas Suicide Prevention Council
c/o Mental Health Association in Texas
1210 San Antonio Street, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78701

In addition, **Appendix B** has a list of various statewide and national groups and non-profits involved in mental health and suicide prevention, most of which accept donations/memorials to further the work of their organizations.

Dedication

In memory of the Texans who have died by suicide before and since the U.S. Surgeon General issued his Call to Action to Prevent Suicide in 1999

In honor of the families, friends and associates
they left behind as suicide survivors

In hope of bringing Texas communities together
to care about suicide prevention.

Coming Together to Care Toolkit 2006 Update

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Special Thanks

Members of the Texas Suicide Prevention Council, Partnership & Network for their ongoing work and dedication to suicide prevention in our state and to staff at the Texas Department of State Health Services and the national Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for their support of this project.

Contacts for the Texas Suicide Prevention Council, Partnership & Network follow at the end of this section as well as key contacts at the Texas Department of State Health Services and the Youth Suicide Prevention Project.

*denotes person is a survivor of the loss of a friend or family member to a death by suicide

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*denotes person is a survivor of the loss of a friend or family member to a death by suicide

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Special Thanks to:

American Association of Suicidology, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, National Suicide Prevention Resource Center, the National Suicide Prevention Resource Center and the Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network-USA for providing national contacts, research and tools for communities in Texas.

Disclaimer: Membership on these workgroups or contribution to the toolkit as a writer, editor, researcher, supporter or reviewer does not imply agreement or endorsement of the plan by the respective agencies or organizations. In addition, this toolkit is to be used as an educational tool only and not as a substitute for consultation with a health, mental health or substance abuse provider. Research in this field is developing and changes on an ongoing basis.

Contact List: Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Groups in Texas

Texas Suicide Prevention Council

Provides executive and coordinating function for the Texas Suicide Prevention Partnership & Network & is charged with the implementation of the Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention.

**denotes person is a survivor of the loss of a close friend or family member to a death by suicide.*

Co-Chairs:

Gary Kesling, representing the Texas Association of Marriage and Family Therapists & The Texas Suicide Prevention Partnership
gkesling@utmb.edu 409-747-7345

*Merily Keller, representing the Austin/Travis County Suicide Prevention Coalition & The Texas Suicide Prevention Community Network
mhkeller@onr.com or hodgekeller@yahoo.com 512-327-8689

Secretary:

*Patty Williams, representing the Southeast Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition
pattyw3166@sbcglobal.net 409-832-1146 or cell 409-790-1595.

Vice President, Annual Symposium on Suicide Prevention in Texas:

*Erin Espinosa, representing the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission
erin.espinosa@tjpc.state.tx.us 512-424-6728

Vice President, Sustainability:

*Amanda Summers-Fox, representing the Texas Department of State Health Services as the Texas Suicide Prevention Officer
amanda.summers-fox@dshs.state.tx.us 512-206-5087

Vice President, Implementation of Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention:

Jeannie Von Stultz, representing the San Antonio Suicide Prevention Coalition
jvonstultz@bexar.org 210-531-1015

Liaison, Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Grant

*Molly Wilkins, representing the Harris County Hospital District
molly_Wilkins@hchd.tmc.edu 713-873-5186, mobile 713-409-2276.

Texas Suicide Prevention Partnership

Members of statewide organizations who have signed a letter of agreement to support one or more of the goals and objectives of the Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention and who will work to implement suicide prevention within their constituent member organization.

If you are a member of a statewide organization and you would like to help support suicide prevention in Texas, please contact one of the members of the Texas Suicide Prevention Partnership below for more information.

Note: the meetings are held quarterly and convened at the offices of the Mental Health Association in Texas. **If your statewide organization is interested in joining the Partnership, contact Mary Ellen Nudd below for an agenda and to obtain a copy of the letter of agreement for partners.**

1. Advocacy, Inc:

Monica Thyssen, Advocacy, Inc., 7800 Shoal Creek Blvd., Austin, Tx 78757 #171-E, 512-454-4816 (V/TDD). mthyssen@advocacyinc.org
Web: www.advocacyinc.org/

2. Texas Department of State Health Services:

*Amanda Summers-Fox, Texas Department of State Health Services, 909 W. 45th, PO Box 12668, Austin Tx 78711 amanda.summers@dshs.state.tx.us or amanda.summers-fox@dshs.state.tx.us
Web: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mentalhealth.shtm>

3. Governor's EMS & Trauma Advisory Council:

*Molly Wilkins, Harris County Health District, 713-873-5186
molly_wilkins@hchd.tmc.edu
Representing the Governor's EMS & Trauma Advisory Council
Web: <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/ems/governor.htm>

4. Jason Foundation:

Terri McBryde, Jason Foundation, c/o The Oaks Treatment Center, 1407 W. Stassney Lane, Austin, Tx 78745. 512-565-5184 cell terri.mcbride@psysolutions.com
Web: <http://www.jasonfoundation.com/locations.html>

5. Mental Health Association in Texas:

*Mary Ellen Nudd, Mental Health Association in Texas, 1210 San Antonio, Suite 200, Austin, Tx 78701. 512-454-3706 x 206 menudd@mhatexas.org
Web: <http://mhatexas.org>

6. NAMI Texas :

Robin Peyson , NAMI Texas, Fountain Plaza III, 2800 South IH 35, Suite 140, Austin, TX 78703. 512-693-2000 rpeyson@namitexas.org
Web: <http://namitx.nami.org/>

7. National Association of Social Workers, Texas:

Meg Bloch, 10 W. 11th Street · Austin, TX 78701-2010 Phone: 512-474-1454 · Fax: 512-474-1317 mbloch@naswtx.org
Web: <http://www.naswtx.org/index.htm>

8. Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapists:

Gary Kesling, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
School of Medicine – Departments of Surgery; Preventive Medicine and Community
Health, Galveston, Texas 77555 –1173 (409)747-7345 gkelsing@utmb.edu
or

TAMFT State Office

1005 Congress, Suite 470, Austin, TX 78701

(800) 270-4320 · (512) 708-1593 · (512) 476-7297

Web: <http://www.txmft.org/index.cfm>

9. Texas Council of Community MHMR Centers:

Sanford K. "Sandy" Skelton, sskelton@txcouncil.com or

Nancy Gettelfinger, Bluebonnet Trails MHMR,

nancy.gettelfinger@bluebonnetmhm.org

Westpark Bldg 3, Suite 240 , 8140 N. Mopac Expwy.

Austin, TX 78759 Phone 512/794-9268 Fax 512/794-8280

E-MAIL office@txcouncil.com WEB: <http://www.txcouncil.com>

10. Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance-Texas:

Eileen Rosen, DBSA- Texas

3710 Cedar St. #22, Austin, TX 78705 512-407-6676 or 866- 327-2839

fax (512) 451-3110 dbsatexas@sbcglobal.net

Web: www.dbsatexas.org

11. Texas Department of Family & Protective Services:

Allen Hymans, Department of Family and Protective Services, Division of Prevention
& Early Intervention- STAR Program

P.O. Box 149030, Mail Code Y-957 Austin, TX 78714-9030

(512) 821-4746 fax (512) 821-4766 allen.hymans@dfps.state.tx.us

Web: <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Default.asp>

12. Texas Juvenile Probation Commission:

*Erin M. Espinosa, Federal Programs

Texas Juvenile Probation Commission

PO Box 13547, Austin, Texas 78711-3547

Phone: (512) 424-6728 Fax: (512) 424-6717 email: erin.espinosa@tjpc.state.tx.us

Web: <http://www.tjpc.state.tx.us>

13. Texas PTA

*Jan Wilkerson, First Vice President, Board, Texas PTA

810 South Meadows

Diboll, TX 75941 936-829-4817 janwpta@consolidated.net

Or

Texas PTA State Office, Kyle Ward, Executive Director, kward@txpta.org

512.476.6769, 408 W. 11th St., Austin, TX 78701-2113 Web: txpta@txpta.org

14. Texas Psychological Association

Bonny Gardner, 4131 Spicewood Springs, #C-3
Austin, TX 78759 512-338-0201 gardnerb@swbell.net

or

TPA State Office, 1005 Congress Ave, Suite 410, Austin, TX 78701
512-280-4099 (888) 872-3435 Web: <http://www.texaspsyc.org/>

(Merily Keller & Marcia Rachofsky serve as volunteer non-voting members of the Partnership to assist in convening and documentation.)

Texas Suicide Prevention Community Network

(note: contact name listed first under each coalition for schedules & agendas)

If you want to get involved in an existing Texas Suicide Prevention local coalition, please contact the coalition facilitators and conveners given below. If you want help to start a new coalition in Texas, please contact Troy Bush, tbush@bcm.tmc.edu or Merily Keller, mhkeller@onr.com or hodgekeller@yahoo.com, Co-chairs of the Texas Suicide Prevention Community Network. We have people and tools to help you organize your community to prevent suicide including sample local suicide prevention plans and a letter of agreement for local coalitions to sign to join the Network.

1. Austin/Travis County Suicide Prevention Coalition:

*Elizabeth Roebuck & * Merily Keller, co-facilitators
nroebuck@ix.netcom.com Phone: 512-249-2317 mhkeller@onr.com or
hodgekeller@yahoo.com Phone: 512-327-8689

2. Dallas-Area Suicide Prevention Coalition:

Margie Wright & *Dorma Tabisz, co-facilitators
MargieW@scenter.org Phone: 214-824-7020 ; dtabisz@mac.com Phone: 214-384-0584
cell- 214-384-0584

3. Fort Worth/Tarrant County Suicide Prevention Coalition:

Linda Ragsdale, Mental Health Association in Tarrant County, facilitator
lindar@mhatc.org Phone: 817-335-5405

4. Heart of Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition (Waco)

Tri-Chairs of the Coalition:

Todd Overpeck, Larry Becker & Lauren Polson
toverpeck@esc12.net Phone: 254-297-1207; Larry.Becker@hotrmhmr.org
Phone: 254-752-3451 ext. 1253; hotsprevention@yahoo.com Phone: 254-750-8200 with
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ww@hotcada.org Phone: 254-753-7332. Debbie@ciwaco.tx.us. Phone:254-750-7524.

5. Houston/Harris County Suicide Prevention Coalition:

Troy Bush, Sharon Derrick & *Molly Wilkins, facilitators
tbush@bcm.tmc.edu Phone: 832-824-2246;
sharon.derrick@meo.hctx.net Phone: 713-796-6858
Molly_Wilkins@hchd.tmc.edu Phone: 713-873-5186

6. Highland Lake Suicide Prevention Coalition(Marble Falls/Burnet County):

Cari Foote, Doris Greater & Sandra Galyon, facilitators
cfoote@pgrb.com Phone: 830-693-0530. doris48@verizon.net Phone: 512/756-2607.

7. Hill Country Suicide Prevention Coalition (Fredericksburg/Kerrville)

Mark Rogers, facilitator
Mark.Rogers@DSHS.state.tx.us Phone: 830-896-2211 ext 6323

8. San Antonio Suicide Prevention Coalition:

Jeannie Von Stultz & Susan Mercado
jvonstultz@bexar.org Phone: 210-531-1015; smercado@nixhealth.com
Phone: 210-842-3313

9. Southeast Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition (Beaumont):

Patty Williams & Jayne Bordelon, co-facilitators
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mhajc@eonet.net 409-833-9657

In addition, community volunteers and leaders in **Amarillo, Lubbock, Montgomery County, and San Marcos** have also expressed interest in developing a community coalition to prevent suicide in their areas. The Texas Suicide Prevention Community Network has volunteers to help these communities and other areas who want to start their own coalition.

Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Officer for the State:

*Amanda Summers Fox

Department of State Health Services, Policy Specialist & Suicide Prevention Officer

Phone: (512) 206-5087 Fax: (512) 206-4784 amanda.summers@dshs.state.tx.us or

amanda.summers-fox@dshs.state.tx.us

**Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Grant,
Department of State Health Services Contacts:**

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Youth Suicide Prevention Grant DSHS Project Director

Department of State Health Services, Substance Abuse Unit, Austin, Texas 78751

Phone: 512-206-5866 Fax: 512-206-4784 dan.rawlins@dshs.state.tx.us

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For Pilot Project at Ben Taub and Texas Children's Hospital:**

*Molly Wilkins, Harris County Hospital District

Project Director – HCHD-InSight

Houston, Texas

Phone: 713-873-5186, Mobile: 713-409-2276, Fax: 713-440-5517

Molly_Wilkins@hchd.tmc.edu

Troy Bush, TCH Project Coordinator

Texas Children's Hospital, Houston, TX

Phone: 832-824-2246, Fax: 832-825-5424 tbush@bcm.tmc.edu

Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Grant, Public Awareness Project Contact:

*Mary Ellen Nudd, Project Director

Vice President, Mental Health Association in Texas

Austin, Texas Phone: 512-474-3706 ext. 206, FAX: 512- 454-3725

menudd@mhatexas.org

Note: For Question, Persuade & Refer (QPR) Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training

We have instructors who are certified to give workshops in your area or statewide through the Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Grant, contact:

*Merily H. Keller, QPR Instructor/Mentor, mhkeller@onr.com or

hodgekeller@yahoo.com 512-327-8689 Note: In Spring 2007, QPR Instructors &

Calendar of Workshops will be posted on the Texas Suicide Prevention website at TexasSuicidePrevention.org.