

Coming Together to Care

A Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Texas Communities

**Texas Suicide Prevention Council
Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Project
Website: TexasSuicidePrevention.org**

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Spanish translations of selected sections of this toolkit are available online at
www.TexasSuicidePrevention.org.

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. The Lifeline provides 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). Veterans' hotline: 1-800-273-8255.

<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://txcouncil.com/crisis_numbers.aspx 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 and FAQs

This suicide prevention toolkit for Texas communities is organized in two parts. The first section 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 are posted periodically on the Texas Suicide Prevention Council website, <http://www.TexasSuicidePrevention.org>.

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 and 2008 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 Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 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: The State of Texas lost 11,256 residents to suicide in the five year period from 2000-2004. This is a loss of close to 2,300 Texans per year and slightly more than 6 Texans who die by suicide each day. (Note: county by county statistics and instructions on how to use a web-based search engine to generate specific statistics for your area can be found in this toolkit in Part I, Chapter 1, “An Overview of Suicide in Texas.”)
- 2. Question: What are the risk factors for suicide?**
Answer: Suicide is considered to be multi-factorial or a combination of various biological, psychological and social risks. (Note: Individual risks factors and protective factors are outlined in Part I, Chapter 2, “Understanding Suicide, The Basics.”)
- 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: 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, are you 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 do you do not talk about it, or there is no awareness of the problem. 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. (Note: Media guidelines are provided at the end of Section I, Chapter
- 5. Question: Are there research-based programs which can be implemented in our local areas to help prevent suicide?**
Answer: Yes, there are a number of best-practice programs for suicide prevention for your consideration. You can go to SPRC.org to get more information about these programs and to find out what programs states are implementing under their Youth Suicide Prevention SAMSHA grants. (Note: Section II, Chapters 5 and 6 give information on some of the best practice programs.)
- 6. Question: There has been a recent suicide in our area. What do we do now?**
Answer: It is important to get advice from mental health and public health officials, not to have permanent

memorials in schools and to identify and provide counseling to those at risk. In addition, follow “postvention” (after suicide) guidelines in order to prevent copycat, cluster or contagion effects and try to follow media guidelines. (Note: There are some general suggestions for memorials or funerals following a suicide in Section II, Chapter 5 from a variety of religious traditions as well as some brief postvention guidelines. A complete postvention toolkit will be posted on TexasSuicidePrevention.org in the future.)

7. Question: How can I get involved in suicide prevention in Texas? Are there statewide and regional groups to join in this effort?

Answer: This toolkit was named “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/agency and your group agrees to support one or more of the goals and objectives of the Texas state plan for suicide prevention, your agency can become a member of the Texas Suicide Prevention Council. Go to the end of this introduction to find a list of other groups in Texas who have joined the Texas Suicide Prevention Council and to Appendix A to obtain a copy of the statewide organization letter of agreement. If you want to get involved (or start) a community effort to prevent suicide, your community can also be a member of the Council. You can also find a list of community coalition contacts at the end of this introduction and a copy of the community coalition letter of agreement in Appendix A. For more information about joining the Council, contact suicideprevention@mhatexas.org.

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 and several state fact sheets are in Appendix A.

9. Question: Where can I find a list of organizations, books, and web-based resources for suicide prevention?

Answer: Extensive resources for suicide prevention including organizations, books and web-based resources are listed in Appendix B, and books are listed in Appendix C.

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 statewide organizations addressing suicide and local suicide prevention coalitions. It is charged with implementing the Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention. Mental Health America of Texas, a statewide 501c (3) non-profit, serves as the fiscal agent for this organization and can accept donations in memory of a loved one or general donations to support the cause.

Send Memorial Contributions to:

Texas Suicide Prevention Council
c/o Mental Health America of 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.

Toolkit Workgroups

Coming Together to Care Toolkit 2008 Update

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Special Thanks

Members of the Texas Suicide Prevention Council 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 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.

2006 Toolkit Update

*Mary Ellen Nudd, *Merily Keller, Traci Patterson, Jasmin Paikattu, Sharon Derrick, Lynn Lasky Clark

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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.

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

*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

Charged with the implementation of the Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention.

Executive Committee

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

Co-Chairs:

Gary Kesling, Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapists and the Governor's EMS & Trauma Advisory Council, gkesling@utmb.edu 409-747-7345

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

Immediate Past Chair

*Merily Keller, Austin/Travis County Suicide Prevention Coalition and founding board member, Texas Suicide Prevention Council, mhkeller@onr.com or hodgekeller@yahoo.com 512-327-8689

Secretary/Treasurer

* Margie Wright, Dallas Suicide Prevention Coalition, MargieW@sccenter.org 214-824-7020

Vice Chairs, Local Coalitions

* Merily Keller, Austin/Travis County Suicide Prevention Coalition, mhkeller@onr.com or hodgekeller@yahoo.com 512-327-8689

Troy Bush, Houston Suicide Prevention Coalition, troydidinato@yahoo.com or houstonareasuicideprevention@gmail.com 832-355-4939

Vice Chairs, Statewide Partner Organizations

Gary Kesling, Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapists and the Governor's EMS & Trauma Advisory Council,

*Amanda Summers-Fox, Texas Department of State Health Services, Suicide Prevention Officer, amanda.summers-fox@dshs.state.tx.us 512-419-2231

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*Erin Espinosa, representing the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, erin.espinosa@tjpc.state.tx.us 512-424-6728
Jeannie Von Stultz, representing the San Antonio Suicide

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Vice Chair, Nominations

*Elizabeth Roebuck, representing Austin Suicide Prevention Coalition nroebuck@ixnetcom.com 512-249-2317

Liaisons, Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Project

Joshua Martin, Texas Department of State Health Services, project director for the Youth Suicide Prevention Grant Joshua.Martin@dshs.state.tx.us 512-419-2255

*Mary Ellen Nudd, Youth Suicide Prevention Project partner, Mental Health America of Texas menudd@mhatexas.org, 512-454-3706 x 206

Isaac Martinez, Youth Suicide Prevention Project partner, Center for Health Care Services, IMartinez@chcsbc.org 210-299-8139 x 353

Texas Suicide Prevention Council Members from Statewide Organizations

Members of statewide organizations 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 work to implement suicide prevention within their constituent member organization.

Statewide Organization Members

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 Council below for more information.

The meetings are convened at the offices of the Mental Health America of Texas and via conference call two to four times annually. **If your statewide organization, local community group or college campus is interested in joining the Council, contact Mary Ellen Nudd at menudd@mhatexas.org to obtain a copy of the letter of agreement. A sample letters of agreement is also included in the appendix.**

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/

American Association of University Women-Texas

Ann Berasley, President, berasley@swbell.net

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance-Texas

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

Governor's EMS & Trauma Advisory Council

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 gkesling@utmb.edu. Web: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/governor.shtm>

Texas Department of State Health Services, Office of EMS/Trauma Systems Coordination

PO Box 149347, Austin, TX 78714-9347. (512) 834-6700. Web: www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/about.shtm

Halliburton Foundation

Vanita Halliburton vanita@halliburtondallas.com. Halliburton Communications, (214) 676-4072 Cell and Voice Mail

Jason Foundation

Terri McBryde, Jason Foundation, c/o The Oaks Treatment Center, 1407 W. Stassney Lane, Austin, Tx 78745. 877-778-2275. 512-565-5184 cell terri.mcbryde@psysolutions.com. Michele Beaupre, 5120669-1187 cell. Web: <http://www.jasonfoundation.com/locations.html>

Mental Health America of Texas

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

Montrose Counseling Center

(Representing gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth statewide) Ann Robison, PhD, 401 Branard, 2nd Floor, Houston, TX 77006. 713-529-0037. mcc@montrosecounselingcenter.org. Deb Murphy, HATCH - GLBT teen support program. 713-529-3590. Web: <http://www.montrosecounselingcenter.org>.

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/>

National Association of Social Workers, Texas

Vicki Hansen, 810 W. 11th Street · Austin, TX 78701-2010 Phone: 512-474-1454, Fax: 512-474-1317. vhansen@naswtx.org. Web: <http://www.naswtx.org>

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 gkesling@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>.

Texas Council of Community MHMR Centers

Joe Lovelace, TCCMHMR Centers, jlovelace@txcouncil.com. 8140 N. Mopac Expy, Westpark Bldg 3, Suite 240, Austin, TX 78759. Phone 512/794-9268 Fax 512/794-8280. Email: office@txcouncil.com; Web: <http://www.txcouncil.com>

Texas Department of Family & Protective Services

Carrie Harris, Volunteer Coordinator, Youth & Runaway Hotline, TDFPS P.O. Box 149030, Austin, TX 78714-9030, (512) 821-4746 fax (512) 821-4766. carrie.harris@dfps.state.tx.us 512-929-6877

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-fox@dshs.state.tx.us. Web: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mentalhealth.shtm> and John Hellsten, John.Hellsten@dshs.state.tx.us, Epidemiologist, Environmental & Injury Epi (T713). Texas Dept of State Health Services, 1100 W. 49th Street, Austin, TX 78756. 512.458.7269 12.458.7222 fax

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Sherri Hammack, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, 4900 N. Lamar, Austin, TX 78751, 512 424-6964. sherri.hammack@hhsc.state.tx.us. Web: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>

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>

Texas Mental Health Consumers

* Mike Halligan, Executive Director, 1545 Mockingbird Lane, Suite 3005, Dallas, Texas 75235. 214-819-9911. 2104-819-9944 fax. 800-860-6057. mike_halligan@tmhc.org. Web: <http://www.tmhc.org/>

Texas PTA

*Jan Wilkerson, President, Board, Texas PTA, 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

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. 12-280-4099 (888) 872-3435 Web: <http://www.texaspsyc.org/>

Local Suicide Prevention Coalition Members

(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 listed below. If you want help to start a new coalition in Texas, please contact Merily Keller, mhkeller@onr.com or hodgekeller@yahoo.com, or Troy Bush, troydidonato@yahoo.com, Co-chairs of the Local Coalitions. The Texas Suicide Prevention Council has 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 and college campuses to sign to join the Council.

1. Austin/Travis County Suicide Prevention Coalition

*Elizabeth Roebuck nroebuck@ix.netcom.com, 512-249-2317; or *Merily Keller mhkeller@onr.com or hodgekeller@yahoo.com, 512-327-8689

2. Dallas-Area Suicide Prevention Coalition

Margie Wright, MargieW@scenter.org, 214-824-7020; or Jennifer Mootz, jenniferm@scenter.org

3. Fort Worth/Tarrant County Suicide Prevention Coalition

Tammy Heinz, tammy@mhatc.org, 817-335-5405

4. Heart of Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition (Waco)

Larry Becker, larry.becker@hotmhmr.org

5. Houston/Harris County Suicide Prevention Coalition

Troy Bush, troydidinato@yahoo.com or houstonarea-suicideprevention@gmail.com 832-355-4939. Jennifer Battle, 713-970-8240, Jennifer.battle@mhmraharris.org

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

Cari Foote, cfoote@pgrb.com, 830-693-0530 or Sandra Galyon, Sgalyon@Seton.org, 512-715-3078, 512-715-3078. Fax: 512-756-9438. Pager: 512-604-0945

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

Contact Merily Keller for more information, mhkeller@onr.com or hodgekeller@yahoo.com, 512- 327-8689

8. San Antonio Suicide Prevention Coalition

Jeannie Von Stultz, jvonstultz@bexar.org, 210-531-1015 or Susan Mercado, smercado@nixhealth.com, 210-842-3313

9. Southeast Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition (Beaumont)

*Patty Williams, pattyw3166@sbcglobal.net, 409-832-1146, cell 409-790-1595 or Jayne Bordelon, mhajc@eonet.net, 409-833-9657

10. Bastrop Suicide Prevention Coalition

*Debra Boyd, debra.boyd@dshs.state.tx.us; Laura Menn, laura.menn@bluebonnetmhmr.org or *Sarah Maness, rebel_mimi@yahoo.com

11. San Marcos Suicide Prevention Coalition

Donna Murphree, dmhrphree@ahss.org or Polly Robertson, 512-392-7151, probertson@hillcountry.org

In addition, community volunteers and leaders in **Amarillo, Lubbock, and Montgomery County** have also expressed interest in developing a community coalition to prevent suicide in their areas. The Texas Suicide Prevention Council has volunteers to help these communities and other areas or college campuses that want to start their own coalition.

Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Officer for the State:

*Amanda Summers-Fox, Suicide Prevention Officer, Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Division, Texas Dept. of State Health Services, 909 West 45th Street, Austin, TX 78751. Phone 512-419-2231; Fax 512-419-2675. Amanda.Summers-Fox@dshs.state.tx.us

Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Project,

Department of State Health Services Contact:

Joshua Martin, DSHS Project Director, Youth Suicide Prevention Grant, Department of State Health Services, Substance Abuse Unit, Austin, Texas 78751. Joshua.Martin@dshs.state.tx.us

Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Project, Partner in San Antonio

Isaac Martinez, Center for Healthcare Services, 711 E. Josephine, San Antonio, Texas 78208. IMartinez@chcsn.org
210-299-8139 x 353

Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Project, Public Awareness Partner

*Mary Ellen Nudd, Project Director & Vice President, Mental Health America of Texas
1210 San Antonio, Suite 200. Austin, Texas 78701. Phone: 512-474-3706 ext. 206, FAX: 512- 454-3725.
menudd@mhatexas.org

*Merily Keller, Project Trainer & Suicide Prevention Consultant, Mental Health America of Texas, Austin, Texas
Phone: 512-327-8689 FAX: 512-327-1752

mhkeller@onr.com or
hodgekeller@yahoo.com

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

The Texas Suicide Prevention Council has 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