

## Executive Summary

# Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Communication Plan

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### Introduction

The purpose of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide is to reduce youth suicides in the state by supporting implementation of a five-year Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Plan. An element of the YSIPP is to develop a statewide approach for communicating and sharing information about suicide prevention, intervention and postvention.

The Alliance's Communication Plan is organized around a national framework and specific goals in the YSIPP. Embedded throughout is a belief that it is crucial to support Oregon's youth and families by:

- Promoting a sense of **hope** and highlighting resilience.
- Normalizing **help**-seeking behaviors, and supporting individuals and systems to provide help
- Engaging individuals and communities in the **healing** process after an attempt or suicide

### Background

The Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide formed a Communications Workgroup to execute Strategic Direction 1, Goals 2 and 3 of YSIPP. Strategic Direction 1- Healthy and Empowered Individuals, Families and Communities - and Goals 2 and 3 promote general health and resilience to reduce the risk of suicidal behaviors. This approach is the basis for the Communication Plan.

The Communications Workgroup, with input from the field, established goals and action steps to increase continuity of messaging to promote resilience, hope and healing and to unify the youth suicide prevention and intervention field across Oregon. The call to action is centered on a coordinated and systematic communication strategy that connects youth suicide prevention and intervention efforts across the state.

The communication plan is informed by the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's *Framework for Successful Messaging*. It is a resource to help people messaging about suicide to develop content that is strategic, safe, positive, and makes use of relevant guidelines and best practices.

### Planning Process

In addition to the Communication Workgroup, planning included discussions with U of O Suicide Prevention Lab; conferring with Alliance members; consultation with experts from the field; interviews with key contacts within public and private agencies; and, guidance from OHA Health Systems and Public Health divisions. Participants represented stakeholders from state agencies, county governments, private organizations, rural and urban communities, and non-profit organizations serving at-risk youth.

The participatory process identified four priority areas for action based on an analysis of challenges, needs, opportunities, and strengths. The four priority areas are:

- 1) Broader awareness of youth suicide prevention and intervention efforts being implemented in local communities across the state; and, a systematic communication process for sharing lessons learned, practice and communication resources, and subject matter expertise.



- 2) Increase dialogue across geographic areas and use suicide-related messaging to unify the field. Readily available communication materials such as talking points, fact sheets, one-page notes from the field (highlighting stories of hope, help and healing), promising practices and policy directions, and a resource list of subject matter experts all designed with Oregon communities in mind.
- 3) Design communication materials to support development of allies and champions at community, county and state levels. Materials should inform and engage decision and policy makers to promote public policy that aligns with best practice and potentially secures future funding.
- 4) Work with Oregon media to increase their understanding of and commitment to safe messaging. Develop relationships with media to support non-crisis driven coverage that promotes protective factors, destigmatizes help-seeking and highlights the preventable nature of suicide. Support development of innovative social media tools and work with youth to identify ways to meaningfully and appropriately engage and respond to struggling youth.

## Goals

Four strategic communication goals, plus one goal to measure the impact of the action steps, were developed to address the priority action areas. The goals and highlights of the action steps are:

**Goal A. Develop a communication strategy that fosters a more well-connected and effective youth suicide prevention and intervention field in Oregon.**

Action Steps include scan of regional/local youth suicide prevention and intervention coalitions to develop communication hubs across the state; collaborate with state agencies on communication processes.

**Goal B. Develop an online presence for the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide.**

Action Steps include: create a website to promote Alliance activities, facilitate communication among members and partners, and disseminate communication materials; collaborate with Public Health, Lines for Life and U of O to align efforts related to online dissemination of suicide prevention and intervention information; develop communication materials and messaging relevant to YSIPP priorities.

**Goal C. Establish an approach to participate in national initiatives such as Suicide Prevention Month and to respond to emergent situations and crises.**

Action Steps include: align communication materials with and support national and regional campaigns such as Suicide Prevention Walks and Mental Health Awareness month. Establish a communication response team to provide support and information during emergent or crisis situations.

**Goal D. Support a nimble and effective communication strategy to respond to and promote policy change in alignment with the YSIPP.**

Action Steps include: identifying types and recommending general content of communication materials to support Alliance work in the area of policy response and development.

**Goal E. Measure utilization and impact of activities recommended by the Oregon Youth Suicide Prevention Communication Plan.**

Action Steps include: U of O will coordinate with Outreach and Awareness and Data and Evaluation Committees to develop an evaluation strategy and submit to the Executive Committee for approval.