



Working Minds: New Developments in Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

2014 Texas Suicide Prevention Symposium
San Marcos, TX
August 12, 2014



Sally Spencer-Thomas, Psy.D.
CEO & Co-Founder
Carson J Spencer Foundation
Sally@CarsonJSpencer.org
720-244-6535 | www.CarsonJSpencer.org
www.WorkingMinds.org

III

=

mc

88

Rad

Radius

226.0754

I

HAVE

A

WHEEL

TO BE OR

NOT TO BE



Who is this?





Carson Spencer 1969-2004

www.CarsonJSpencer.org





大波
神奈川
浪

Social Media

@sspencerthomas

@workingmindscjs

#AAS14

#SuicidePrevention

#Passion4Living

#ManTherapy



#SPSM

#MHSM

#MentalHealth

#SHRM

@SHRM

@EAPA

@HRMagazine

@TodaysHRNews

@HRActually

@Action_Alliance

@SPRCTweets

@AASuicidology

Overview

- Why Suicide Prevention in the Workplace?
- Comprehensive Approach – New Developments
- Case Study





About CJSF: Vision

“We envision a world where leaders and communities are committed to sustaining a passion for living.”





Carson J Spencer Foundation Programs



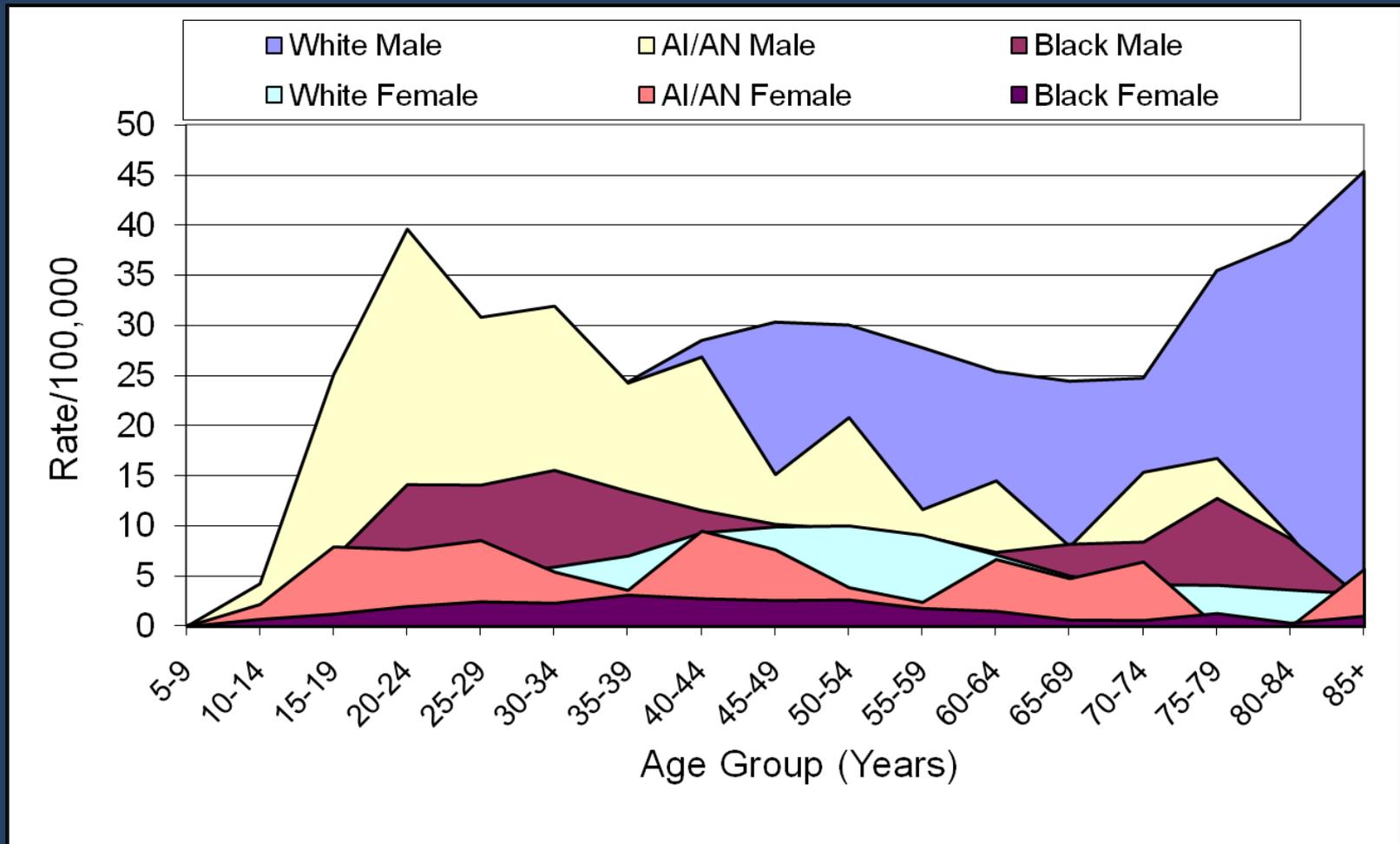


WHY THE
WORKPLACE?

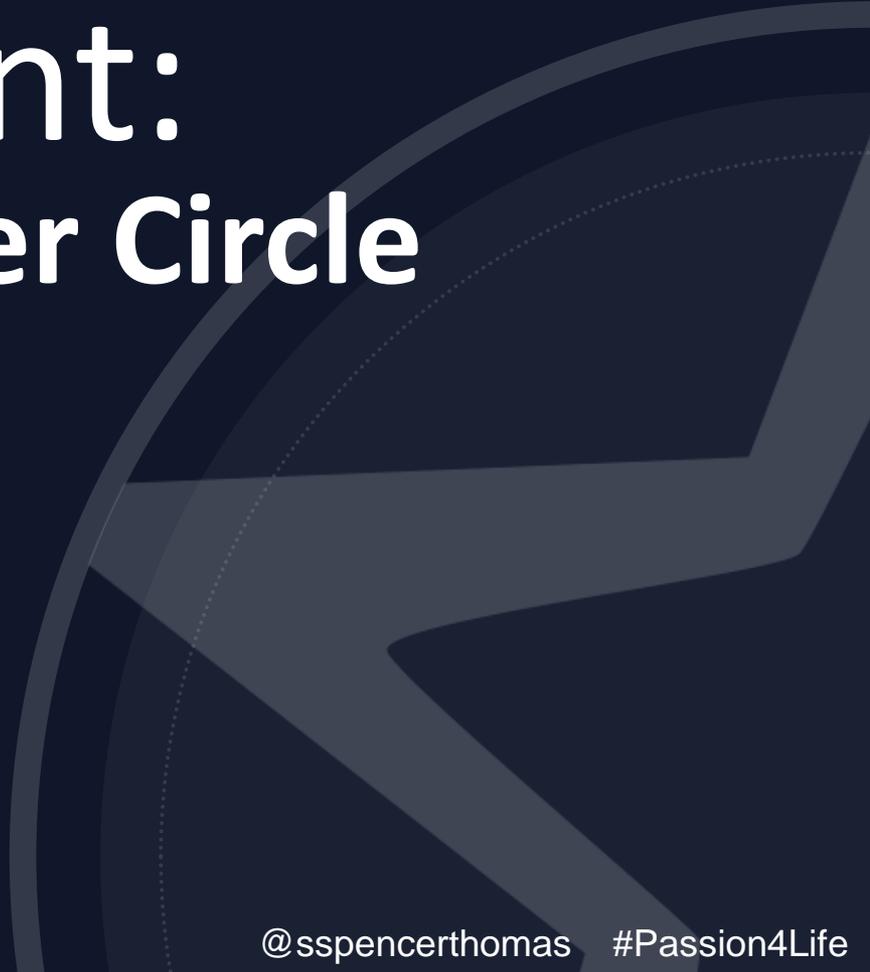


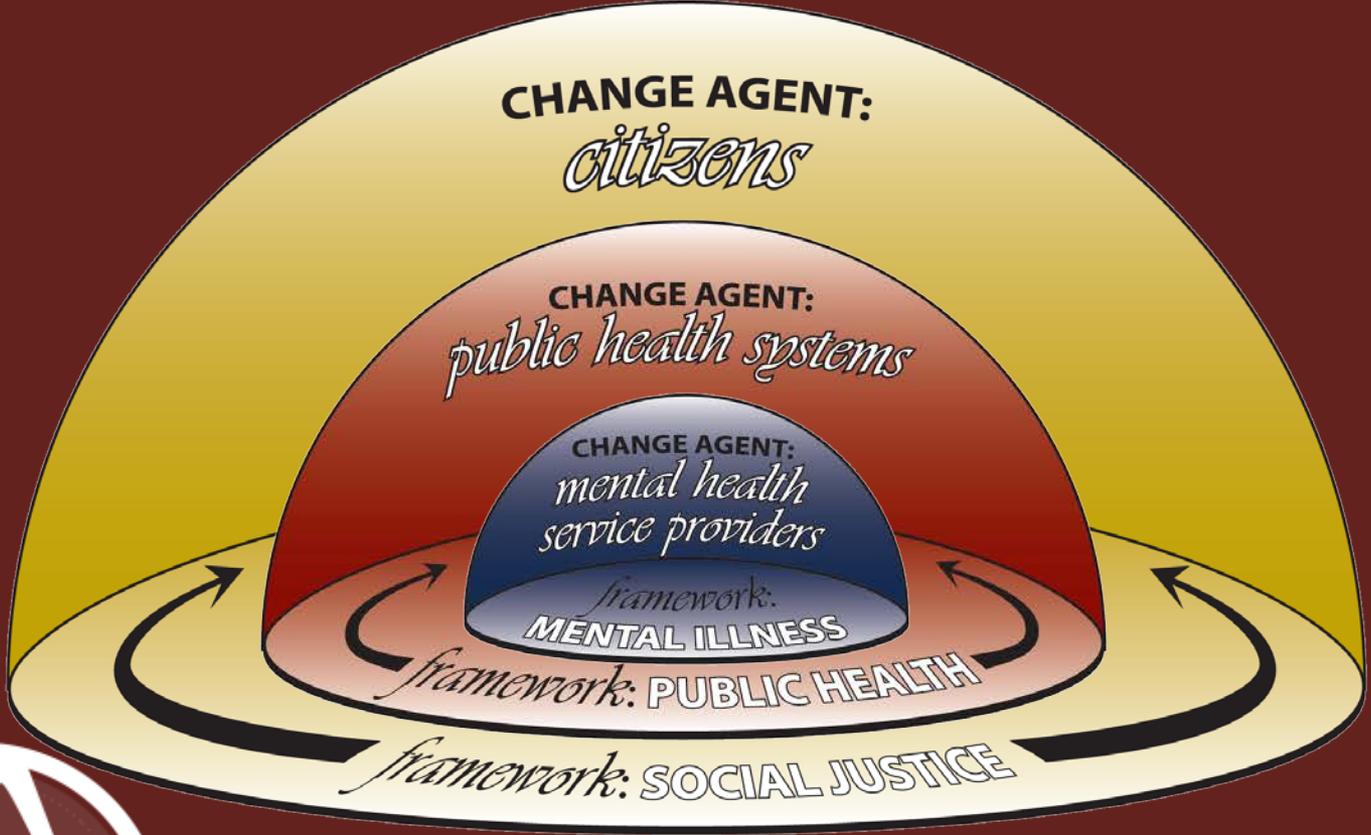
“The workplace is the last crucible of sustained human contact for many of the 30,000 people who kill themselves each year in the U.S. A co-worker’s suicide has a deep, disturbing impact on work mates. For managers, such tragedies pose challenges no one covered in management school.”

Suicide Rates by Age, Race, and Gender United States



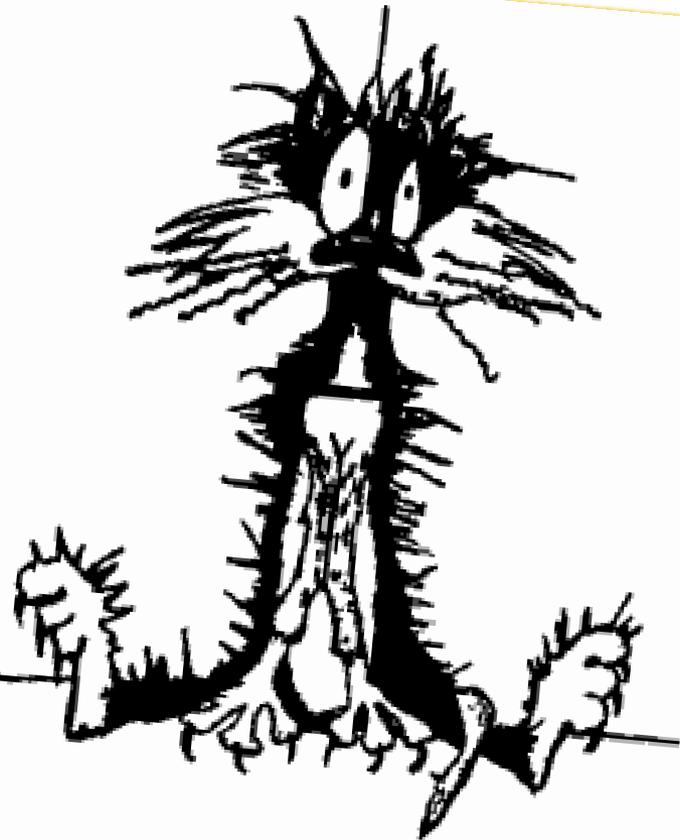
Tipping Point: Engaging a Wider Circle

An abstract graphic on the right side of the slide. It features several overlapping circles of varying shades of blue and grey. A prominent, jagged, light blue line cuts across the circles, resembling a stylized 'S' or a path. The overall aesthetic is modern and geometric.





Before Work



After Work





Many Ways Suicidal Behavior Affects the Workplace

- Employee suicides occur on site
- Employee suicides occur off site
- Recently terminated employees die by suicide
- Suicides by loved ones of employees occur
- Vendors, Clients, Associates
- Suicidal behavior affects workplaces



Why the Workplace?

- Community-wide prevention
- Belonging
- Effectiveness/Purpose

Why the Workplace?

- Built-in dissemination
- Built-in referral
- Social responsibility
- Holistic movement
- Workplace Violence



Suicides and the Workplace

On average, surviving partners/spouses estimate that the death of their loved one intimately and directly affected an average of **20** co-workers.

Berman (2011)

Workplaces Most at Risk



Male dominated (esp. white males)
Access to lethal means
“Acquired capacity” – fearless,
reckless and/or stoic
Exposed to trauma
Culture of substance abuse
Fragmented community/isolation
Humiliation/Shame/Purposelessness
Entrapment

Seek First to Understand

- Executive Roundtable
- Needs and Strengths Assessment/Baseline Data
 - Focus Groups
 - Surveys (attitudes, knowledge, behavior)
 - In Depth Interviews
 - Data Analysis
 - Environmental Scan
 - Literature Review





Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

Air Force Model: A Comprehensive Approach



COMPREHENSIVE BLUEPRINT FOR WORKPLACE SUICIDE PREVENTION

SCREENING

MENTAL
HEALTH
SERVICES AND
RESOURCES

SUICIDE
PREVENTION
TRAINING

LIFE SKILLS
AND
SOCIAL NETWORK
PROMOTION

**GOAL:
PROMOTE
MENTAL
HEALTH AND
SUICIDE
PREVENTION**

CRISIS
MANAGEMENT,
POLICY & MEANS
RESTRICTION

EDUCATION
AND
ADVOCACY

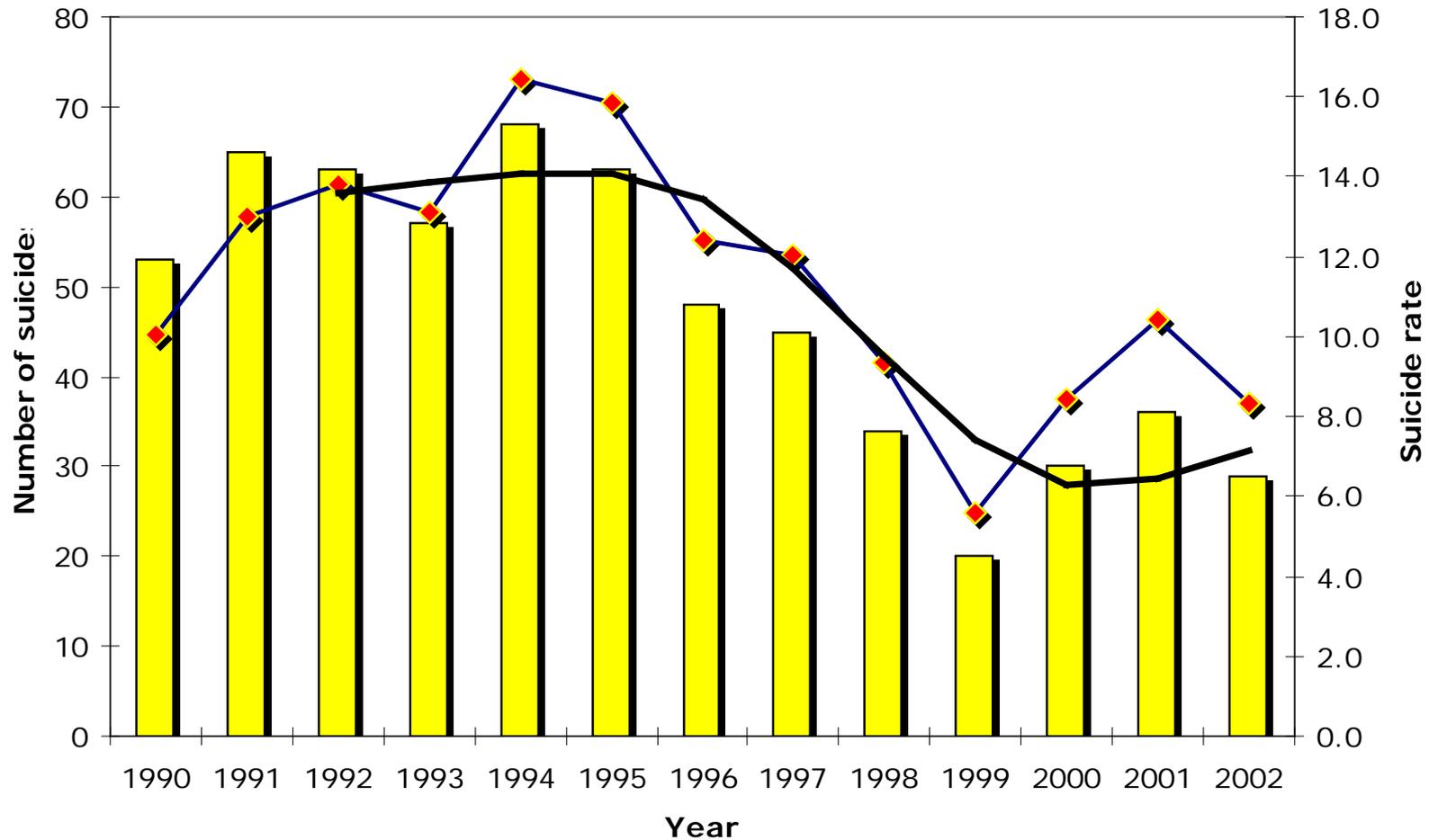
SOCIAL
MARKETING

LEADERSHIP

Comprehensive Blueprint for Workplace Suicide Prevention

adopted from the Air Force Model, the Jed Foundation/Suicide Prevention Resource Center, and Working Minds.

U.S. Air Force Study



Number of Suicides per Year

Rate per 100,000

3 per. Mov. Avg. (Number of Suicides per Year)

Leadership: Common Thread of Success

“Visible, vocal, visionary” – be bold!

Suicide Prevention = “Health and Safety Priority”

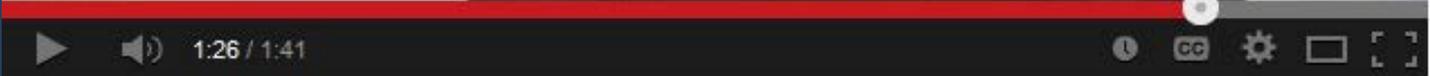
Leaders with Lived Expertise

Hierarchy influence/Peer influence

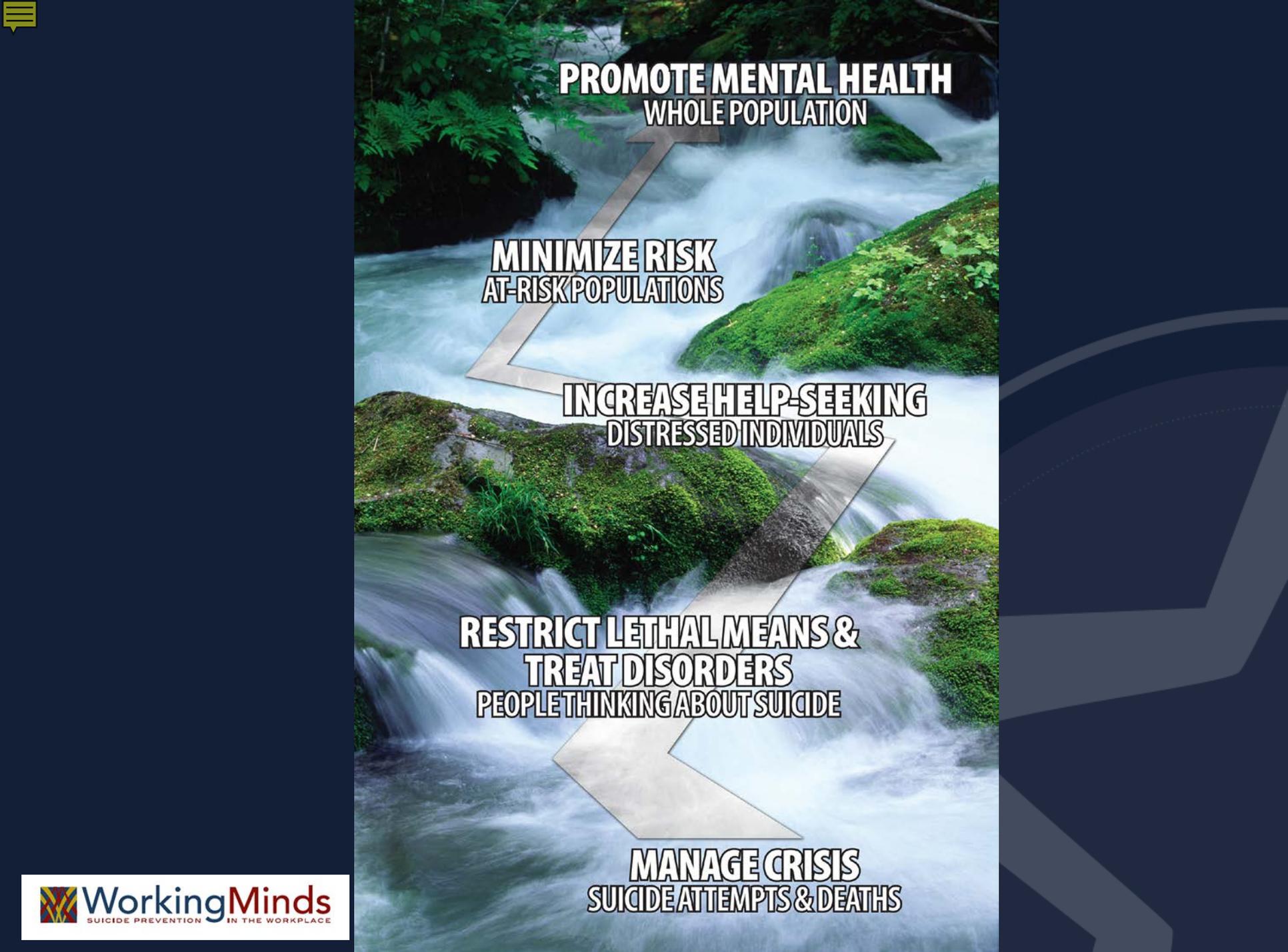




Yost Zakhary
IACP President
Director, Woodway, Texas
Public Safety Department



Breaking the Silence: Suicide Prevention and Law Enforcement



PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH
WHOLE POPULATION

MINIMIZE RISK
AT-RISK POPULATIONS

INCREASE HELP-SEEKING
DISTRESSED INDIVIDUALS

**RESTRICT LETHAL MEANS &
TREAT DISORDERS**
PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE

MANAGE CRISIS
SUICIDE ATTEMPTS & DEATHS

Upstream Prevention: Promote Protection

- Promoting social networks
- Mental Health Literacy
- Life Skills



Midstream: Early and Effective Intervention

- Gatekeeper Training
- Screening
- Promote help-seeking
- Assure quality mental health services



Downstream: Crisis & Postvention



Restrict means

Dignity and empowerment

Safe and effective grief and
trauma support



A MANAGER'S GUIDE TO SUICIDE POSTVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE

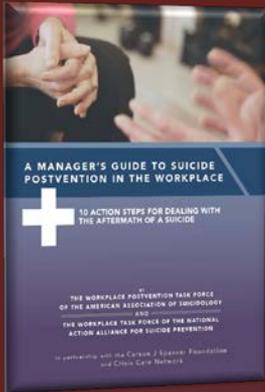


**10 ACTION STEPS FOR DEALING WITH
THE AFTERMATH OF A SUICIDE**

<http://carsonjspencer.org/ManagersGuidebook.pdf>

Manager's Guide (2013)

- Gives leadership 10 action steps:
 - Immediate trauma response
 - short-term recovery
 - long-term strategies for helping employees cope down the line
- Succinct checklists, communication templates and flow charts
- Goal is to help to reduce the impact of the suicide event by offering a blueprint for action
 - Minimize contagion
 - Honor life lost/space for grieving
 - Help workplace return to functioning





Case Study: Denver Fire Department

History: “Bake it In, Not Bolt it On”

- South Metro Fire
- “Firefighters Coping with the Aftermath of Suicide”
- Grassroots
- Needs and Strengths Assessment
- Strategic Plan: Year One



• Leadership & Communication

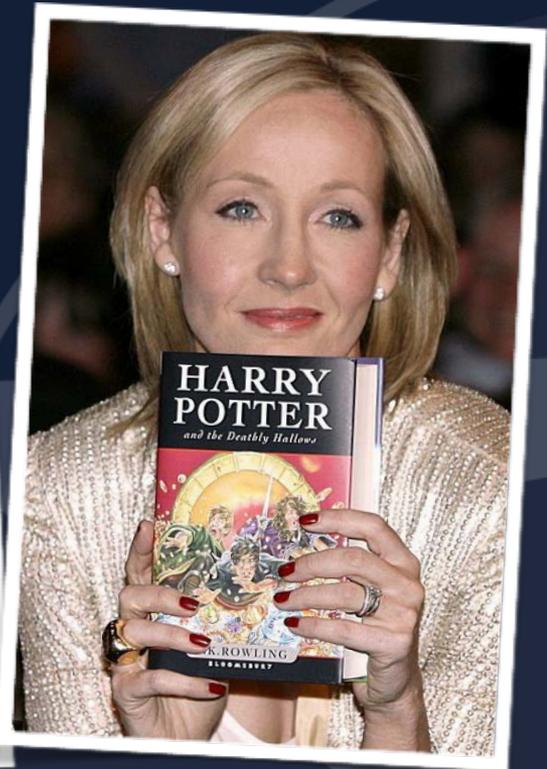
• Department Survey

• Train Trainers – train department

• Health Fairs

• Online Mental Health Resource

You Just Never Know What is on The Other Side of Your Distress





THANK YOU!