



# **MISSISSIPPI**

## **SUICIDE PREVENTION PLAN**

### **FY 2020-2022**

#### **FY2022 PROGRESS REPORT**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>Support Letter</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>Risk factors &amp; Warning Signs</i>	<b>7</b>
<i>Suicide Prevention Goals + Outcomes</i>	<b>9</b>
<i>Call to Action: What can you do?</i>	<b>22</b>
<i>Progress in Action: Snapshots</i>	<b>23</b>



"Because of the stigma that surrounds mental illness, I didn't get help until it was almost too late. I thought my life was hopeless and not worth going on. But after I got help, I know now that life is very hopeful, and I know what to do to keep myself from ever getting to that dark place again." -Lauren

# INTRODUCTION

*The Mississippi Suicide Prevention Workgroup* was formed in April 2016 to finalize the state's efforts in developing a formal plan to help end a public health issue that affects people of all ages, races, and genders - suicide. Though strides have been made in developing awareness and increasing knowledge about suicide in recent years, there is still significant progress to be made. In 2020, 410 Mississippians, including 49 under the age of 25 years old, took their own lives - more than one person each day. Suicide is now the third leading cause of death among adolescents and young adults ages 10 to 24 in Mississippi. Unfortunately, adults are not immune to suicide, with 56% of suicide deaths occurring for people between the ages of 25 and 54. No matter the age, any person who feels the need to take his or her own life is one too many.

Professionals in the fields of mental health, education, strategic planning and more began meeting as a work group in 2016 with the goal of establishing a formal statewide plan to reduce suicide deaths in Mississippi. That work has continued throughout the past five years, and the work group has moved forward with updated and new initiatives like those presented in this plan.

The Assessment portion of the plan gathers data that addresses demographic information about our state and trends in the mental health field that have occurred over the years. The Goals and Objectives are data-driven targets that point to the progress we hope to make with this plan.

Since the inception of the Suicide Prevention Plan in 2016, the work group has released yearly progress reports which outline the status and accomplishments of the goals from each plan.

While we are proud of the strides that have been made in developing awareness and increasing knowledge about suicide, there is still significant progress to be made. DMH and its partners will continue to make suicide prevention a priority.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this report.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## The Mississippi Department of Mental Health Suicide Prevention Workgroup Members

**ILITZA ALVAREZ- MORENO**  
United States Air Force

**DR. MICHAEL ANESTIS**  
New Jersey Gun  
Violence  
Research Center

**WENDY BAILEY**  
Mississippi Department  
of Mental Health

**DR. JOHN BARTKOWSKI**  
Bartkowski & Associates  
Research Team

**CONNIE BOARD**  
Community  
Representative

**JACKIE CHATMON**  
Mississippi Department  
of Mental Health

**CHRISTOPHER CLARK**  
Mississippi Department  
of Health

**JENNIFER CRUTCHFIELD**  
Hinds Community College

**CHANCEY FORT**  
Mississippi Department of  
Education

**RACHEL-CLAIR FRANKLIN**  
Mississippi State University

**KRISTY JOHNSON**  
NFusion Metro - Hinds  
Behavioral Health Services

**JILL GORDON**  
Enrich MS

**BUDDY HALL**  
The Jason Foundation

**JEFF HOLLAND**  
Pinelake Church

**FRANKIE JOHNSON**  
Central Mississippi  
Residential

**KATHERINE KLEE**  
Bartkowski & Associates  
Research Team

**MELODY LANKE**  
Mississippi Alliance To End  
Suicide

**DR. LAURIE LAWSON**  
The Clinton Community  
Christian Corporation

**COURTNEY LITTLETON**  
Mississippi Department of  
Mental Health



"When studying suicide, we like to look at statistics; however, those statistics don't really make it real. It's real when your loved one is one of the numbers."

— TERESA

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Mississippi Suicide Prevention Workgroup Members

---

TASHA LOCK

Mississippi State  
Department of Health

MELODY MADARIS

Communicare

BRAD MARTIN

Mississippi Department of  
Health

ADAM MOORE

Mississippi Department  
of Mental Health

TERESA MOSLEY

Family Representative

MICHAEL NADORFF

Mississippi State University

JA'QUILA NEWSOME

Mississippi Department  
of Mental Health

HEATHER NORTON

Clinton Public School District

CAPT. JOHN POULOS

Mississippi Department of  
Public Safety

SARA SCOTT

Pine Belt Mental Healthcare  
Resources

DR. MANGLE SHANKS

Building Healthy Military  
Communities

HENRY THOMPSON

Jackson State University

SHERRY SHEFFIELD

The American Foundation  
for Suicide Prevention

PATRICIA THORNTON

Community Counseling  
Services

KATHY VAN CLEAVE

The MIND Center

DR. LINDA VASQUEZ

DREAM of Hattiesburg

CHANDREA WALKER

Mississippi Department of  
Education

DR. ESTELLE WATTS

Mississippi College

CHRISTIANE WILLIAMS

Mississippi Department  
of Corrections

VICKI WINSLETT

Mississippi Alliance  
To End Suicide

LEI ZANG

University of Mississippi Medical  
Center

# SUPPORT LETTER

## DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH State of Mississippi

239 North Lamar Street  
1101 Robert E. Lee Building  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201



601-359-1288  
FAX 601-359-6295  
TDD 601-359-6230

Wendy D. Bailey - Executive Director

Mississippi's Suicide Prevention Plan represents an important step for our state to take as we work to ensure mental health and wellness for all citizens. Our public mental health system has worked for years at prevention efforts and to fight the stigma of mental illness. Whether we realize it or not, many of our friends and neighbors have been affected by mental illness or suicide.

Having good mental health is an essential component of good physical health, but in Mississippi, mental health problems are more common than many people realize. One in five people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, and one family in four has a member who has a mental illness who will require some type of treatment. Suicide is a leading cause of death in our nation and in our state, and it affects people of all ages, races, and backgrounds. It is also a preventable cause of death.

Over the last several years, our agency has focused efforts on educating the public about the warning signs and risk factors of suicide. We have also educated young adults on shattering the silence surrounding suiciding and stressed the importance of sharing with other when you experience suicidal feelings. Many survivors of suicide attempts tell us that in the moment after their attempts, they regretted their decision. They also share how they may have changed their minds if more people had recognized they needed help. That is why we are developing this plan. No matter what is happening in someone's life, there are people who care and who want to offer support and help however they can.

By collaborating, sharing resources, and working together towards common goals, we can prevent the tragedy of suicide. This plan would not be possible without the support and involvement of stakeholders from across the state and in numerous fields. Mental health professionals, state agencies, educators, and advocates have all helped in developing this plan. I would like to thank everyone for their participation and contributions. I look forward to seeing the results. I know this is an important step to take as we work to provide a better tomorrow for our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wendy Bailey".

Wendy Bailey  
Executive Director

# RISK FACTORS

## RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDE

A combination of individual, relational, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of suicide. Risk factors are those characteristics associated with suicide—they might not be direct causes.

### RISK FACTORS

- Family history of suicide
- History of trauma
- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- History of mental illness, particularly clinical depression
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Local epidemics of suicide
- Isolation, a feeling of being cut off from other people
- Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- Loss (relational, social, work, or financial)
- Physical illness
- Easy access to lethal means
- Unwillingness to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental health and substance disorders and suicidal thoughts

## PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR SUICIDE

Protective factors buffer individuals from suicidal thoughts and behavior. To date, protective factors have not been studied as extensively or rigorously as risk factors. Identifying and understanding protective factors are, however, equally as important as researching risk factors.

### PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance use disorders
- Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for help seeking
- Family and community support (connectedness)
- Support from ongoing medical and mental health care relationships
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent ways of handling disputes
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support instincts for self-preservation

# WARNING SIGNS

## SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

### TALK

If a person talks about:

- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Experiencing unbearable pain
- Having no reason to live
- Killing themselves

### MOOD

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Loss of interest
- Rage
- Irritability
- Humiliation
- Anxiety

### BEHAVIOR

Specific behaviors to look for include:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as:
  - Searching online for materials or means
  - Acting recklessly
  - Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression

If a person is displaying these warning signs and is experiencing a suicide crisis, get help immediately by dialing 911.



# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 1

Engage and empower Mississippians to help prevent suicide by increasing awareness of suicide as a public health crisis and knowledge of prevention efforts

### STRATEGY

Strategy 1.1 Increase the number of people trained to provide Shatter the Silence Suicide Prevention Presentations in MS by hosting train-the-trainer sessions.



**SHATTER  
THE SILENCE**  
Suicide: the secret you shouldn't keep

### ACTION

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) began hosting train-the-trainer sessions for Shatter the Silence suicide prevention training. The training educates about mental health, stigma related to mental illness, resources to help someone who has a mental illness, warning signs for suicide, what to and not to do when someone has thoughts of suicide, and where to go for help, or information. During FY19 - 22 staff were trained from Contact Helpline, Co-Occurring Disorder Specialists (CODS) from Community Mental Health Centers in the state, Enrich MS, Injury and Violence Prevention Bureau with Mississippi State Department of Health, Mississippi Alliance to End Suicide, Mississippi Department of Corrections, Mississippi Department of Mental Health, Pinelake Church, Region 2,

Communicare, Region 8 Mental Health Services, Region 9, Hinds Behavioral Health Services, Region 10, Weems Community Mental Health Services, Region 12 Gulf Coast Mental Health Center, Region 15 Mental Health Services, South Mississippi State Hospital, and St. Mark's United Methodist Church. A total of 108 people of various professional backgrounds have been trained to present Shatter the Silence Suicide Prevention Trainings in their communities.

# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 1

Engage and empower Mississippians to help prevent suicide by increasing awareness of suicide as a public health crisis and knowledge of prevention efforts

### STRATEGY

Strategy 1.2 Increase the number of professional and community organizations that receive suicide prevention knowledge in their organizational cultures by promoting help-seeking behaviors, mental wellness, resiliency and training in identification of and referral to treatment with emphasis on high-risk populations such as the military, law enforcement and first responders, older adults, correctional settings, and youth.

### ACTION

In FY22, Shatter the Silence suicide prevention presentations were presented to 5,245 Mississippians. 3,046 people were trained in the youth presentation, 1,090 in general adult, 306 in faith based, 458 in law enforcement and first responders, 170 in correctional officers, 50 in postpartum depression, and 125 in military. DMH also provides evidence-based suicide prevention training in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, and Mental Health First Aid. 258 people were trained in these evidence-based trainings during FY22. DMH and our partners at Mississippi State University hosted its virtual 5th Annual Suicide Prevention Symposium, the topic was Mississippi GRITT: Gaining Resilience In Turbulent Times. The symposium received over 500 registrants and 441 participants participated.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
*5th Annual*  
**Suicide Prevention SYMPOSIUM**  
**MISSISSIPPI GRITT**  
**GAINING RESILIENCE IN TURBULENT TIMES**

**TUESDAY**  
*September 28th*  
9:00 A.M. - 5:10 P.M.  
VIRTUAL TRAINING

**DMH**  
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**SHATTER THE SILENCE**  
SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY**  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Click here to register or visit our website at [www.MississippiSuicidePreventionSymposium.com](http://www.MississippiSuicidePreventionSymposium.com)

# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 1

Engage and empower Mississippians to help prevent suicide by increasing awareness of suicide as a public health crisis and knowledge of prevention efforts

### STRATEGY

Strategy 1.3 Encourage faith-based groups to include suicide prevention as a topic of discussion.



**SHATTER  
THE  
SILENCE**  
Suicide: the secret you shouldn't keep

ADULT & YOUTH  
EDUCATION

### ACTION

In 2019, DMH developed a faith-based version of Shatter the Silence Suicide Prevention training. Since then, 12 churches have begun including mental health wellness and suicide prevention as a topic of discussion in their places of worship. These include Askew Grove Church, Canton Bible Baptist Church, Durant Baptist Church, Goodman Baptist Church, Greater Northside M.B. Church, Morning Star Baptist Church, Pinelake Church, South Liberty Missionary Baptist Church, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, St. Paul AME Church, Koinonia Baptist Church, and Zion Baptist Association. These faith-based organizations receive Shatter the Silence Suicide Prevention information to share with their member.



# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 1

Engage and empower Mississippians to help prevent suicide by increasing awareness of suicide as a public health crisis and knowledge of prevention efforts

### STRATEGY

### ACTION

Strategy 1.4 Increase awareness about reducing access to lethal means.

In 2020, 68% of deaths by suicide in Mississippi involved firearms. In FY22 DMH partnered with DREAM of Hattiesburg (DOH), and Boondocks Firearms Training Academy (BFTA), churches, schools, and advocacy organizations, community organizations, and hospitals to raise awareness of self storage of firearms to reduce access to lethal means for individuals in suicidal crisis by distributing educational brochures and displaying posters. 1,760 lethal means informational cards and posters were distributed.



**RESponsible GUN SAFETY**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Every year in Mississippi, almost **300 people** end their lives with a gun. In 2017, firearms accounted for **66% of all suicide deaths** in Mississippi compared to 51% across the nation.

Data Source: National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), National Vital Statistics System (Mississippi Data), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Data & Statistics Fatal Injury Report for 2017 (National Data)

**SAFETY TIPS TO REDUCE SUICIDE BY FIREARMS**

- Lock your guns and bullets in separate locations when not in use.
- Free gun locks may be available through your local law enforcement and [projectchildsafe.org](http://projectchildsafe.org).
- Ask a friend or local police department about temporarily storing guns away from the home of someone showing signs of suicide.

**DMH** Mississippi Department of Health Services  
HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY MISSISSIPPI.  
HELP LINE: 1-877-210-8513



**PREVENT SUICIDE WITH GUN SAFETY**

**WHAT ARE SOME WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE?**

- Comments like "Things will never get better", or "No one would miss me if I were gone"
- Recent difficulties with chronic health issues, relationships, work, school, or legal problems
- Depressive symptoms, withdrawal or isolation from family, friends and hobbies, or becoming suddenly cheerful after a period of depression
- Noticeable change in behavior including mood, appearance, sleeping habits, or eating habits
- Increase in risky behavior including drug and alcohol consumption
- Giving away prized possessions

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

- By putting time and distance between a suicidal person and a gun, you may save a life.
- By following gun safety tips and recognizing possible warning signs, you can prevent suicides.
- If someone you know shows any of these signs of suicide, **ACT**.
- Acknowledge the risk is real. Care enough to listen without judgement. Tell someone to access help.

*If You Don't Know Where to Start:*

**DMH** Mississippi Department of Health Services  
HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY MISSISSIPPI.  
HELP LINE: 1-877-210-8513

**Veterans Crisis Line**  
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 6

**SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**



**DREAM**  
*of Hattiesburg, Inc.*

**BOONDOCKS**

**ACADEMY™**

# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 1

Engage and empower Mississippians to help prevent suicide by increasing awareness of suicide as a public health crisis and knowledge of prevention efforts

### STRATEGY

Strategy 1.5 Increase the number of legislative, licensing, certification and/or training measures that incorporate mandatory suicide prevention activities.



### ACTION

House Bill 263 was passed in the 2017-2018 school year and requires that all school district employees receive suicide prevention training in the 2017-2018 school year, and new employees thereafter. In 2019, House Bill 1283, entitled "The Mississippi School Safety Act Of 2019" required local school districts to conduct, every two years, refresher training on mental health and suicide prevention for all school employees and personnel, including all cafeteria workers, custodians, teachers, and administrators. In November 2019, a focus group of school district staff, and representatives from the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and DMH met to review and select train-

ings and provided their recommendations to MDE. In 2019, DMH received a Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention (GLS) grant aimed at reducing youth suicides through provision of mental health screenings, expanded suicide awareness and gatekeeper training for families, schools, communities, and youth-serving organizations statewide. Shatter the Silence Suicide Prevention training and The Alliance Project (Prevention and Post-Ventio) trainings have effectively trained 10,246 families, schools, communities, and youth-serving organizations statewide in FY22.

# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 1

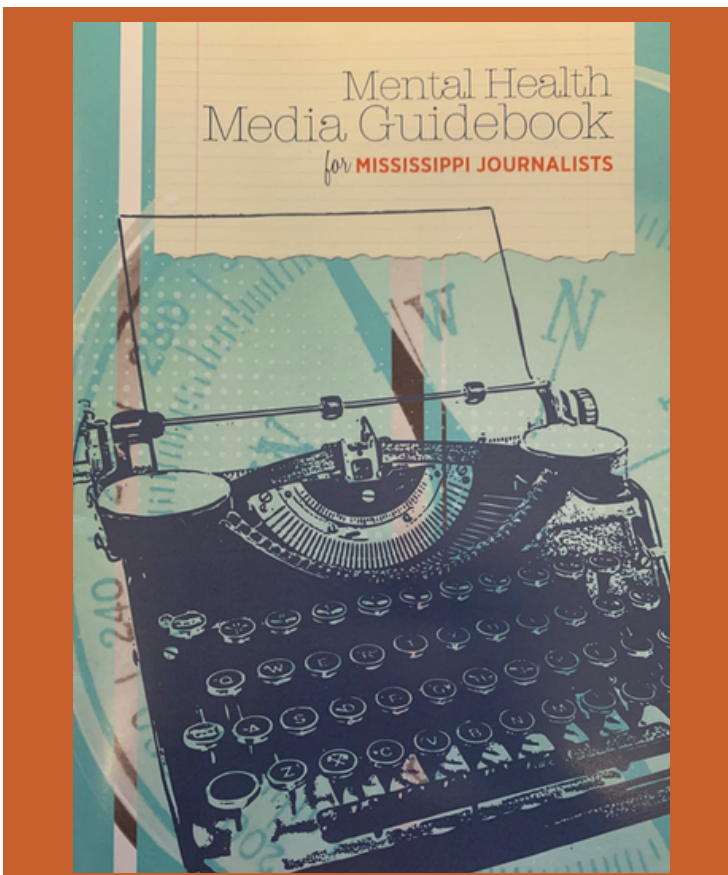
Engage and empower Mississippians to help prevent suicide by increasing awareness of suicide as a public health crisis and knowledge of prevention efforts

### STRATEGY

Strategy 1.6 Increase awareness about safe and responsible suicide reporting and messaging within schools of journalism and mass communication outlets in the state.

### ACTION

DMH developed the Mental Health Media Guidebook for Mississippi Journalists. It was created as a tool and resource to help Mississippi journalists in their effort to seek truth and provide a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues involving mental health. The brochure informs journalists that they can provide a valuable public service by helping increase understanding and awareness of mental health and suicide prevention. In FY23, DMH will work with media outlets and journalism programs at universities to distribute the guide and bring awareness to help professionals in the state and student journalists navigate in the covering of mental illness and suicide.



# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 1

Engage and empower Mississippians to help prevent suicide by increasing awareness of suicide as a public health crisis and knowledge of prevention efforts

### STRATEGY

Strategy 1.7 Increase awareness of postpartum depression and suicidal ideation.

#### Participants will learn:

- Symptoms of the Baby Blues
- Symptoms of Postpartum Depression
- Risk Factors for Postpartum Depression
- Truths About Postpartum Depression
- How to help new mothers
- Treatment for Postpartum Depression
- Postpartum Depression Risk for Suicide
- How to manage after childbirth

### ACTION

In FY20, DMH began bringing awareness to Postpartum Depression (PPD) and suicide by developing social media infographics and a video of a mother sharing her personal account of postpartum depression. DMH established a Postpartum Depression Advisory Workgroup and its first meeting included representatives from area hospitals, mental health providers, medical associations, and public health. In FY21, Dr. Mallory Malkin provided a Postpartum Depression training to 7 Co-Occurring Disorder Specialists (CODS). As a result of the training, a Shatter the Silence version for PPD was developed. FY23, this training will be provided in communities around the state to educate Mississippians about the differential diagnosis of the baby blues, and postpartum depression.

The Baby Blues  
Vs.  
Postpartum  
Depression

SHATTER  
THE  
SILENCE  
Suicide: the secret you shouldn't keep



# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 2

Promote identification, intervention, and care for people at risk for suicide utilizing evidence-based and best practices to improve clinical and community prevention services

### STRATEGY

Strategy 2.1 Increase the number of Mississippians trained in evidence-based or best practice gatekeeper trainings designed to teach participants to recognize risk and protective factors and warning signs of suicide and how to assist someone seek help for suicidal ideation.



Strategy 2.2 Support DMH Certified Peer Support Specialists in obtaining at a minimum three hours of continuing education credits in suicide prevention for certification renewal.

### ACTION

In FY22, there were a total of 6,480 people trained in evidenced-based or best practice gatekeeper trainings. 258 people were trained in Mental Health First Aid. 5,001 were trained in The Alliance Project, a suicide prevention gatekeeper training developed by the Mississippi State University, Department of Psychology. And 1,221 youth were trained in I Got You: Healthy Life Choices for Teens (IGU) training developed by Central Mississippi Residential Facility to provide mental health and suicide prevention education for students in Mississippi.

Two suicide prevention training courses have been selected as recommended courses for suicide prevention training for certification renewal. These include Suicide Risk Factors, Screenings, and Assessments;

Overview of Adolescent Suicide; Community-Based Suicide Prevention; Interventions for Suicide Risk and Postvention for Suicide Loss Survivors; and Identification, Prevention, and Treatment of Suicidal Behavior for Service Members and Veterans.



# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 2

Promote identification, intervention, and care for people at risk for suicide utilizing evidence-based and best practices to improve clinical and community prevention services

### STRATEGY

Strategy 2.3 Develop a standardized Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be utilized by DMH certified providers and mental health facilities in providing mental health services to local school districts to include standardized screening and referral protocols and procedures.

### ACTION

In 2019, House Bill 1283, entitled "The Mississippi School Safety Act of 2019" required local school districts to conduct, every two years, refresher training on mental health and suicide prevention for all school employees and personnel, including all cafeteria workers, custodians, teachers, and administrators. Additionally, the legislation required that DMH develop a standardized Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be utilized by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health certified mental health providers in providing mental health services to local school districts. This MOU was developed with input from DMH certified providers, Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC), and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and made available to MDE and CMHCs in FY21.

### Improving the Mental Health of Mississippi's Children & Youth



# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 2

Promote identification, intervention, and care for people at risk for suicide utilizing evidence-based and best practices to improve clinical and community prevention services

### STRATEGY

Strategy 2.4 Provide online training for appropriate school personnel to conduct initial behavioral health screenings of students experiencing or exhibiting behavioral stress or at risk of harming themselves or others.

Strategy 2.5 Support primary care providers with integration of suicide-risk screening and follow up contacts into existing care coordination models.

Strategy 2.6 Explore creation of a central repository of contact information and standard protocols for DMH programs and DMH-certified providers' crisis staff to initiate follow-up calls to persons post-discharge from inpatient/residential facility and/or who previously attempted suicide and/or drug overdose.

### ACTION

The Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention (GLS) grant partners with Region 8 Mental Health Services to provide mental health screenings in Rankin, Simpson, and Copiah county school districts. In FY22, 1,292 screenings were provided. The number of screening will expand in FY23 to include Madison school district.

DMH is a partner in the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF). The Governor's Challenge is an ongoing effort and requires Strategy 2.5 be promoted through each of its three priority areas. DMH will continue to work for inclusion of suicide, risk screening, and follow up contacts in existing care in FY23.

In FY23, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number transitioned to 988. Funding received in FY21, helped to prepare for this transition. A requirement of the grant is to standardize protocols for follow-up between the person in crisis and the DMH Program or Certified Provider post-discharge.

# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 2

Promote identification, intervention, and care for people at risk for suicide utilizing evidence-based and best practices to improve clinical and community prevention services

### STRATEGY

Strategy 2.7 Host an interactive training targeted to master's level and licensed mental health clinicians who provide counseling and/or assessment in a variety of settings highlighting the importance of suicide risk assessment and demonstrate ways clinicians can recognize, assess, and intervene when working with at-risk clients.



### ACTION

In FY22, 14 Mental Health Therapists, Community Support Specialists and Peer Support Specialists master's level and licensed clinicians from Community Mental Health Centers, Contact Helpline, and the Department of Mental Health participated in an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) instructor training. ASIST is an evidence-based curriculum where participants learn how to prevent suicide by recognizing signs, providing a skilled intervention, and developing a safety plan to keep someone alive. The instructor candidates learned how to facilitate ASIST in their communities. Some of the staff trained make up their local Mobile Crisis Response Teams that provide round the clock crisis intervention services in all 82 counties of the state.

# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 3

Develop postvention services to care for and support individuals affected by suicide deaths and attempts to promote healing and implement community strategies to help prevent further suicides

### STRATEGY

Strategy 3.1 Develop sustainable funding sources for implementing and evaluation of suicide prevention, intervention, and crisis response/aftercare programs in Mississippi to save more lives.



The Alliance Project is funded by subaward to Mississippi State University from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health as part of their larger SAMHSA suicide prevention grant.

#### WHAT ALLIANCE POSTVENTION OFFERS

##### What is Postvention?

Postvention refers to activities which reduce risk and promote healing after a suicide death.

##### Why Postvention?

It is estimated that 115 people are exposed to each suicide death, with 1 in 5 reporting experiencing devastating impacts or major life disturbances.

##### Response Services

Response to communities when a death by suicide has occurred of a youth. Licensed clinician can assist with Postvention services, support the crisis response team, and assist with identified needs.

#### All Alliance Project Services are FREE

##### Postvention Training Components:

- Who should be on your crisis response team?
- What role does each member play on your team?
- How to manage outside influences such as the media.
- Best practices for memorializing students/youth.
- How to build a supportive and healing community environment.
- Practicing your team's approach and updating your response policy.

Please feel free to distribute this information to anyone throughout Mississippi. For more information about services offered by The Alliance Project please contact the Licensed Training & Response Clinician for more details:

Rachel-Clair Franklin, LPC-S, BC-TMH, CHES

662-325-8127 or 662-325-0621 • rfranklin@psychology.msstate.edu



### ACTION

In FY20, DMH received a Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Youth Suicide Prevention grant. The grant is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The purpose of the grant is to support the state with implementing youth suicide prevention and early intervention strategies in schools, educational institutions, juvenile justice systems, substance use programs, mental health programs, foster care systems, and other child and youth-serving organizations. DMH has partnered with Mississippi State University (MSU) to provide The Alliance Project suicide prevention gatekeeper training as well as a postvention training to assist communities after a death by suicide.



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™

# STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 3

Develop postvention services to care for and support individuals affected by suicide deaths and attempts to promote healing and implement community strategies to help prevent further suicides

### STRATEGY

Strategy 3.2 Adopt treatment guidelines for effective comprehensive support for people affected by suicide and promote throughout the state.

Strategy 3.3 Involve suicide attempt survivors and loss survivors in suicide prevention planning including the development of protocols for suicide attempt/loss provider support groups.

Strategy 3.4 Adopt policies and procedures for organizations and communities to respond effectively to suicides and suicide contagion with their communities and support implementation of these policies with education, training, and consultation.

### ACTION

In FY20, Mississippi State University (MSU) developed the Postvention Services training. DMH will work with the Mississippi Suicide Prevention Workgroup to develop guidelines in FY23-26.

The Mississippi Suicide Prevention Workgroup began to establish protocols for suicide attempt/loss provider support groups in FY20 and will continue in FY23-26. The workgroup includes family and friends who have lost a loved one to suicide.

Policies and procedures for organizations and communities to respond effectively to suicides and suicide contagion with their communities are addressed in The Alliance Project Postvention Services

training which is part of DMH's Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention grant. The Suicide Prevention Workgroup will continue to work and formalize these in FY23-26.

# CALL TO ACTION



## What can you do?

Remain aware of suicide warning signs, and don't hesitate to recommend mental health services to a family, friend, or colleague who exhibits these signs.

Resist efforts to stigmatize mental health conditions and suicide. You wouldn't hesitate to seek help for a physical health problem, and you shouldn't hesitate to seek help for a mental health problem either.

Consider resources in your community that could be enlisted in suicide prevention. These can include faith communities, workplaces, schools, parent-teacher associations, clinics, local support groups, and other community organizations.

If you have been trained in suicide prevention, spread the word about the value of such training.

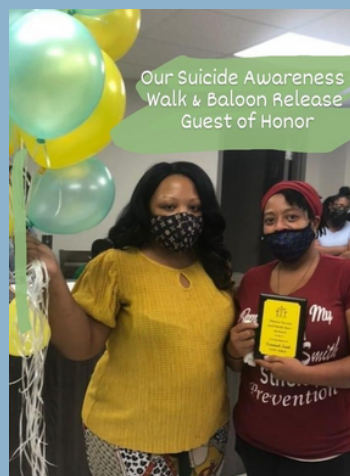
If you haven't been trained in suicide prevention, contact the Mississippi Department of Mental Health to learn about training options available in your area.

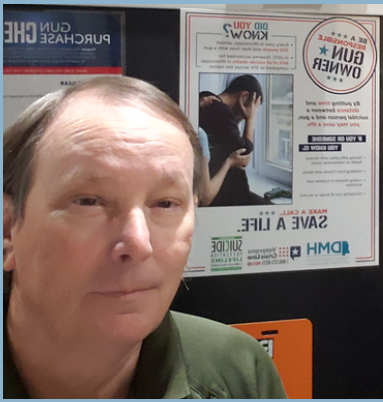
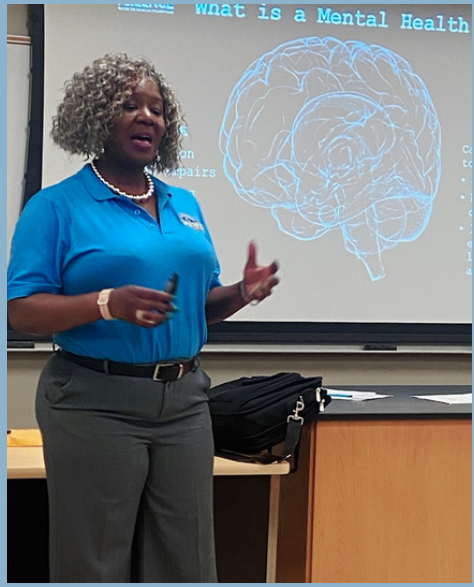
If you or someone you know needs help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255).

Call the Mississippi Department of Mental Health to find resources available in your community at [1-877-210-8513](tel:1-877-210-8513) or visit [www.mentalhealthms.com](http://www.mentalhealthms.com)

The [Shatter the Silence app](#) is available to download at no cost in both the Apple and Google Play stores. The app contains risk factors and warning signs for suicide as well as what to say and not say and resources to help someone who is in suicidal crisis.

# PROGRESS IN ACTION: SNAPSHOTS









*For more information, call the DMH Helpline at  
1-877-210-8513 or visit [dmh.ms.gov](http://dmh.ms.gov).*

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram @DMHMississippi