

# State Technical Assistance Webinar

August 20, 2025



# Funding Sponsor

The Children's Safety Network is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under the Child and Adolescent Injury and Violence Prevention Resource Centers Cooperative Agreement (U49MC28422) for \$5,000,000 with 0 percent financed with non-governmental sources. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.



# Engagement



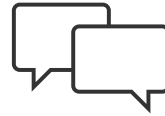
Closed **Captions** can be viewed by clicking the CC button at the bottom of your Zoom screen.



We will provide **verbal descriptions and summaries** of slide content and chat messages.



**Follow-up materials** such as recordings and handouts will be available and meet or exceed compliance guidance.



Use the **chat feature** to ask questions and make comments throughout.



Please **stay muted when not speaking**.



Please turn your **camera on**, if possible, to facilitate our engagement.



This **session will be recorded** and posted in the CSLC web portal



**Rename yourself** with your state abbreviation and full name.



# Community Guidelines

We ask during today's session that you:

- Focus on intentional presence
- Bring a curious stance
- Be partners in learning
- Honor others' perspectives, experiences and learning styles
- Take care of yourself as needed



# Today's Presenters



**Jennie Blakney**

New Jersey Department of Health



**Lanette Mantle**

American Academy of Pediatrics

# Nothing About Them, Without Them

Partnering with Youth in Creating a Statewide  
Youth Centered Suicide Prevention and  
Awareness Campaign

---

Jennie Blakney, M.A.Ed – State Adolescent Health Coordinator/Program Manager  
Child and Adolescent Health, New Jersey Department of Health

Lanette Mantle, MPH – Program Manager, The New Jersey Chapter,  
American Academy of Pediatrics

# A Public Health Approach to Youth Suicide Prevention

## Goals

- Improve a youth's Readiness to Thrive by increasing resiliency and protective factors
- Improve Readiness to Support by increasing the number of youth-serving organizations who are able to identify and work with youth at risk of suicide
- Improve Readiness to Care by increasing the capacity of clinical service providers to assess, manage and treat youth at risk for suicide
- Improve Readiness to Embrace by increasing continuity of care and follow-up of youth at risk for suicide; or those exposed to death by suicide

## Partnerships

- Lead: New Jersey Department of Health
- State Partners: NJ Department of Children and Families, Children's System of Care, NJ Department of Human Services and The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education
- Subawardees: NJ Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, NJ Council of County Colleges and Empower Somerset and Monmouth University
- Community Partners: The Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide, NJ Chapter American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Mental Health Association of Monmouth County, NJ Traumatic Loss Coalition, Konsious Youth Development Services (KYDS) and many more!

# Accomplishments

- ▶ Four youth summits reaching over 400 youth and school staff across the state
- ▶ Prevent Suicide NJ (PSNJ)  
<https://www.preventsuicidenj>
- ▶ Department of Children and Families (DCF) Project Connect
- ▶ The Youth Planning Committee
- ▶ A Suicide Prevention and Awareness Campaign for youth, by youth





# Youth Planning Committee

- ▶ Range of 13 youth spanning across New Jersey, ages 14 through 19
- ▶ Youth were recruited from partner events, PSNJ bi-annual suicide prevention summits, and through school and youth-serving organization partnerships
- ▶ An 8-week-long program consisted of:
  - Workshops from mental health advocates, professionals, and organizations
  - Peer-to-peer connections and dialogue about real issues teens are facing today
  - Several sessions with a media company to create a statewide social media suicide prevention campaign
  - Education about wellness, mental health awareness, helping peers, advocacy, and safe messaging
  - Creating social media posts for our pages that are relevant to young people

# Creating the YPC Summer Program

- ▶ Although we know that one best practice of developing a campaign for a target population is to include them in the process, it turns out that public health campaigns are rarely co-designed in partnership with the target audience (*Thorn, et al., 2020*)
- ▶ In this study, young people reported using social media platforms to communicate about suicide in a number of different ways:
  - ▶ To share their own experiences of suicidal thoughts and behavior
  - ▶ To support others, in particular their friends
  - ▶ To discuss and commemorate those who had died by suicide, including friends and family as well as public figures
- ▶ Thus, given the potential for harm, educating and empowering young people to have these conversations safely about suicide is critical

# Creating the YPC Summer Program

## Recommendations

- ▶ Young people wanted to see bite-sized sections of the guidelines come to life via shareable content such as short videos, animations, photographs, and images
- ▶ They wanted to feel visible in campaign materials and wanted all materials to be linked to resources and support services

## Potential Harm

- ▶ Certain content (graphic info or images) can cause distress or may lead to imitative suicidal behavior in others
- ▶ Young people may be exposed to expressions but feel ill-equipped to respond
- ▶ Social media needs to be viewed as part of the solution, not just the problem, due to its reach, accessibility, and acceptability

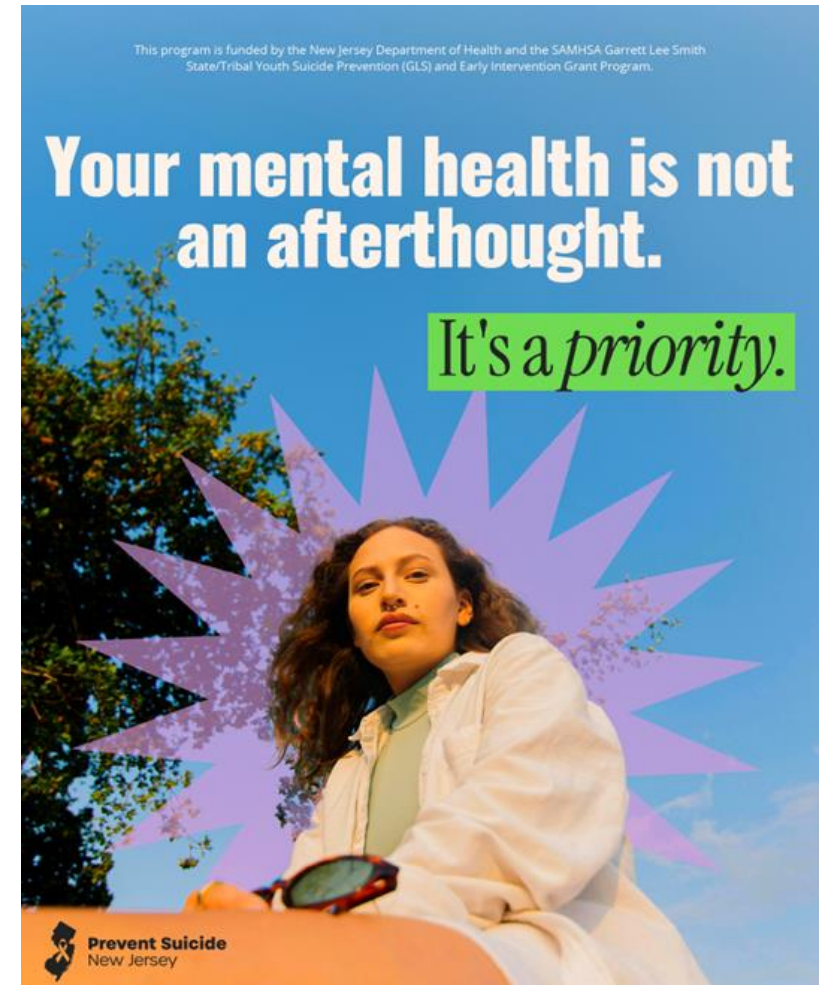
# Reducing Potential Harm During the Program

- ▶ Parents/guardians were contacted at the start of the summer program with an overview of the workshops and subject matter
  - Written informed consent was obtained at the start of the summer program from young people and parents (if under the age of 18)
- ▶ Certified Mental Health Consultant present during the entirety of the program
- ▶ Workshops on self-care, safe messaging, and NJ-specific resources
- ▶ After each workshop, members were given reflection surveys where they could have a private opportunity to address any concerns and reach out for support
- ▶ Surveys were examined regularly to identify young people who indicated they wanted support with a staff member or certified mental health consultant



# Youth Suicide Prevention Campaign

- Campaign's audience: 14-22 years old (high school & college)
- Created various graphics, stickers, and slogans that resonate with young people in today's climate
- Themes include academic stress, reaching out to friends, learning about resources, and finding community support



**NJHealth**  
New Jersey Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics

Be a *lifeline*.  
Check in on your friends.

Share our toolkit with youth suicide prevention resources.

This program is funded by the New Jersey Department of Health and the SAMHSA Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention (GLS) and Early Intervention Grant Program.

Struggling with mental health? Call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or visit [PreventSuicideNJ.org](https://PreventSuicideNJ.org)

**Prevent Suicide New Jersey**

This program is funded by the New Jersey Department of Health and the SAMHSA Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention (GLS) and Early Intervention Grant Program.

Your *Mental Health* is not an afterthought.  
It's a *priority*.

**NJHealth**  
New Jersey Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics

Struggling with mental health? Call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or visit [PreventSuicideNJ.org](https://PreventSuicideNJ.org)

**Prevent Suicide New Jersey**

This program is funded by the New Jersey Department of Health and the SAMHSA Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention (GLS) and Early Intervention Grant Program.

Feeling Stressed?  
Try this:

- Take a quick walk outside
- Do some light stretching
- Try chewing gum or humming to yourself
- Spend 5 minutes focusing on the present moment
- Reach out to someone or ask for help

**New Jersey Chapter**  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
**NJHealth**

Struggling with mental health? Call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or visit [PreventSuicideNJ.org](https://PreventSuicideNJ.org)

**Prevent Suicide New Jersey**

This program is funded by the New Jersey Department of Health and the SAMHSA Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention (GLS) and Early Intervention Grant Program.

Your *Mental Health* is not an afterthought.  
It's a *priority*.

**NJHealth**  
New Jersey Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics

Struggling with mental health? Call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or visit [PreventSuicideNJ.org](https://PreventSuicideNJ.org)

**Prevent Suicide New Jersey**

# Evaluation of Youth Planning Committee for Suicide Prevention

## Youth Planning Committee Participants

- ▶ 13 youth, ages 14-19
  - ▶ mean= 16.32, SD = 1.25
- ▶ 69% either 16 or 17 years old
- ▶ 77% going into 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- ▶ 92.3% knew someone who experienced suicidal ideation (n = 12)
- ▶ 69.3% knew someone who had made an attempt (n=9)
- ▶ 46.2% knew someone who died by suicide (n = 6)

# Youth Planning Committee Evaluation: Youth Methods

- ▶ Online post assessment with a retrospective pre-assessment
- ▶ Using Likert scale questions
  - ▶ poor to excellent
  - ▶ strongly disagree to strongly agree
- ▶ Questions included:
  - ▶ Demographics
  - ▶ Perceptions of the workshop series
  - ▶ Sense of belonging, connection and safety
  - ▶ Perceived level of knowledge about suicide, warning/protective factors, help-seeking and support
  - ▶ Perceived likelihood of intervening to support a friend and seeking help themselves
- ▶ Sum scores created for perceived action (lower score indicated better likelihood of action, 9 items)



# Perceptions of Youth Planning Committee

- ▶ Overall quality of the summer workshop series
  - ▶ 61.5% excellent
  - ▶ 38.5% very good
- ▶ All would recommend workshop series to other youth
- ▶ All youth were confident (46.2%) or very confident (53.8%) in ability to connect someone to help if worried about their emotional health or risk for suicide

# Sense of Belonging, Connection and Safety

|   | Strongly Agree | Agree    | Neutral |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| Sense of connection with others in group  | 23.1%          | 53.8%    | 23.1%   |
| Felt safe sharing in group  | 53.8%          | 46.2%    |         |
| Felt my opinions & comments received by my peers without judgement                        | 84.6%          | 15.4%    |         |
| Felt supported by the leaders of group  | 84.6%          | 15.4%    |         |
| Appreciated access to a mental health provider  | 69.2%          | 30.8     |         |
| Important to have access to a mental health provider when reviewing content about suicide | 84.6%          | 15.4%    |         |
| The content was triggering to me/ made me upset   | SD: 69.2%      | D: 23.1% | 7.7%    |

# Readiness to Develop Social Media Campaign

- ▶ All youth felt confident (23.1%) or very confident (76.9%) in knowledge to help develop a safe public awareness campaign to prevent suicide for youth
- ▶ Two main ideas emerged about the focus of the campaign
  - ▶ How and where to get help
  - ▶ Building a sense of community and not feeling alone

## Theme 1: How and Where to Get Help

“How to talk someone down from an emotionally charged state, what sorts of language to use when talking to them”

“The main message of the campaign should be that many easily-accessible resources are available to teens for every specific need they may have. A lot of struggling youth simply don’t know who they can turn to so bringing awareness to resources is extremely important.”

## Theme 2: Building a Sense of Community and Not Feeling Alone

“ how they are not alone and there is always help”

“It should have some help create [sic] a sense of community so that people don’t feel alone during their challenge with mental health”

“That no one is alone and that there is help”

# Best Part of Workshop: Collaboration and Safe Environment/Space

“I think the best part of the workshops was the connectedness and sharing of thoughts and ideas by all members of the group”

“I think the best part of the workshop was being able to share my opinions and have my opinions being validated and accepted. I never once felt uncomfortable or felt unheard which I really appreciated. I always felt support throughout this experience”



## Why Youth Voice

“My biggest take away is that you  
are never alone  
in your mental health journey”



For additional questions please reach out to our presenters:

- Jennie Blakney [jennie.blakney@doh.nj.gov](mailto:jennie.blakney@doh.nj.gov)
- Lanette Mantle [lmantle@njaap.org](mailto:lmantle@njaap.org)

# THANK YOU

# Upcoming Events

## State Technical Assistance Webinars (STAWs)

*Wednesdays at 2:00 PM ET*

October 15<sup>th</sup>

December 17<sup>th</sup>

February 18<sup>th</sup>

April 15<sup>th</sup>

## CSN Public Webinar

September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 2:00-3:00pm ET

Multi-Tiered Approaches to Preventing Bullying and Suicide:  
Promoting Digital Wellness and Supporting Schools

# Thank you!

1

Please fill out our brief evaluation:



3

Visit our website:

[childrenssafetynetwork.org](https://childrenssafetynetwork.org)

2

Follow us on social media:



[Children's Safety Network](#)



[Children's Safety Network](#)



[@ChildrensSafety](#)



[Children's Safety Network](#)