

# “I Wasn’t Expecting That! Safety Planning for Suicidal Thoughts Expressed Over Phone or in TSN Groups”

Presented By:

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# Webinar Agenda

- Why should a TSN Coordinator be prepared?
- True Story from a fellow TSN Coordinator
- How can a TSN Coordinator start to get prepared?
- What further training/research should a TSN Coordinator do to be prepared?

# Disclaimer

- This webinar is to raise awareness of a serious topic that affects patient safety and professional liability.
- Due to time constraints, this webinar is not a full training on crisis intervention.
- TSN Coordinators should research their own state laws, hospital policies, and professional licensure guidelines as well.



# Why should a TSN Coordinator be prepared?

## Major risk factors for suicide include:

- Prior suicide attempt(s)
- Misuse and abuse of alcohol or other drugs
- Mental disorders, particularly depression and other mood disorders
- Access to lethal means
- Knowing someone who died by suicide, particularly a family member
- Social isolation
- Chronic disease and disability
- Lack of access to behavioral health care



“For men in the middle years, stressors that challenge traditional male roles, such as unemployment and divorce, have been identified as important risk factors.”

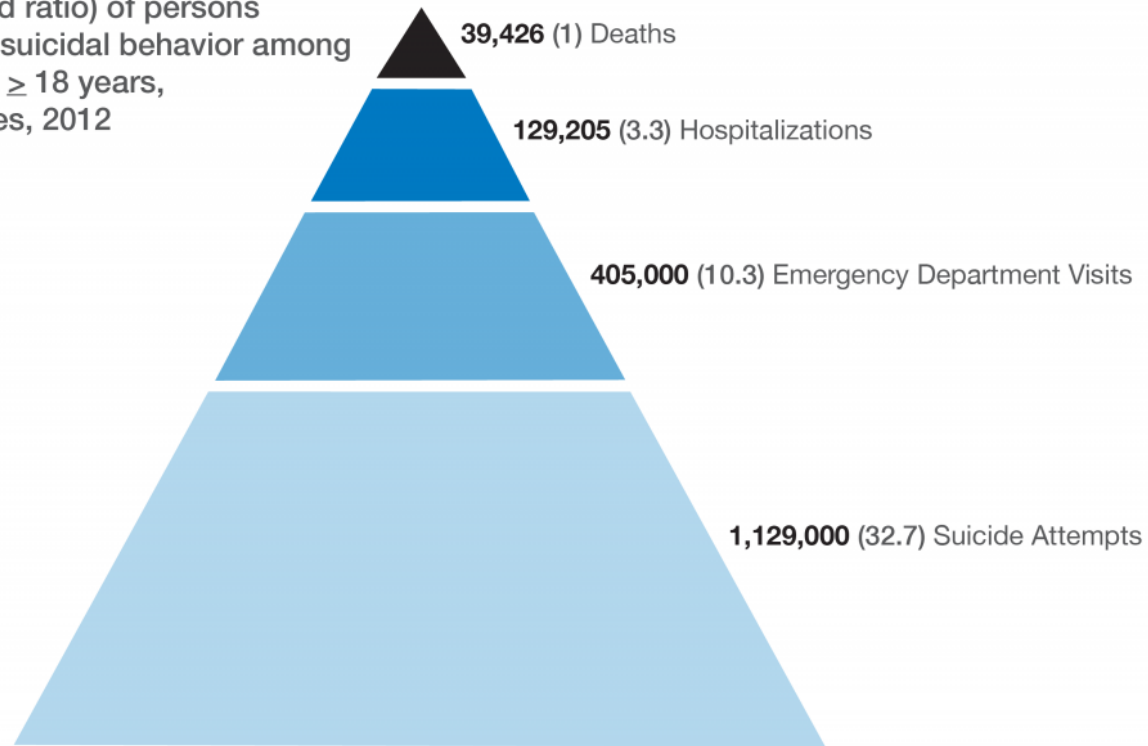
Source: <http://www.sprc.org/about-suicide/risk-protective-factors>

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# Why should a TSN Coordinator be prepared?

## Suicidal Behavior Among Adults in the United States, 2012 ( $\geq 18$ years of age)

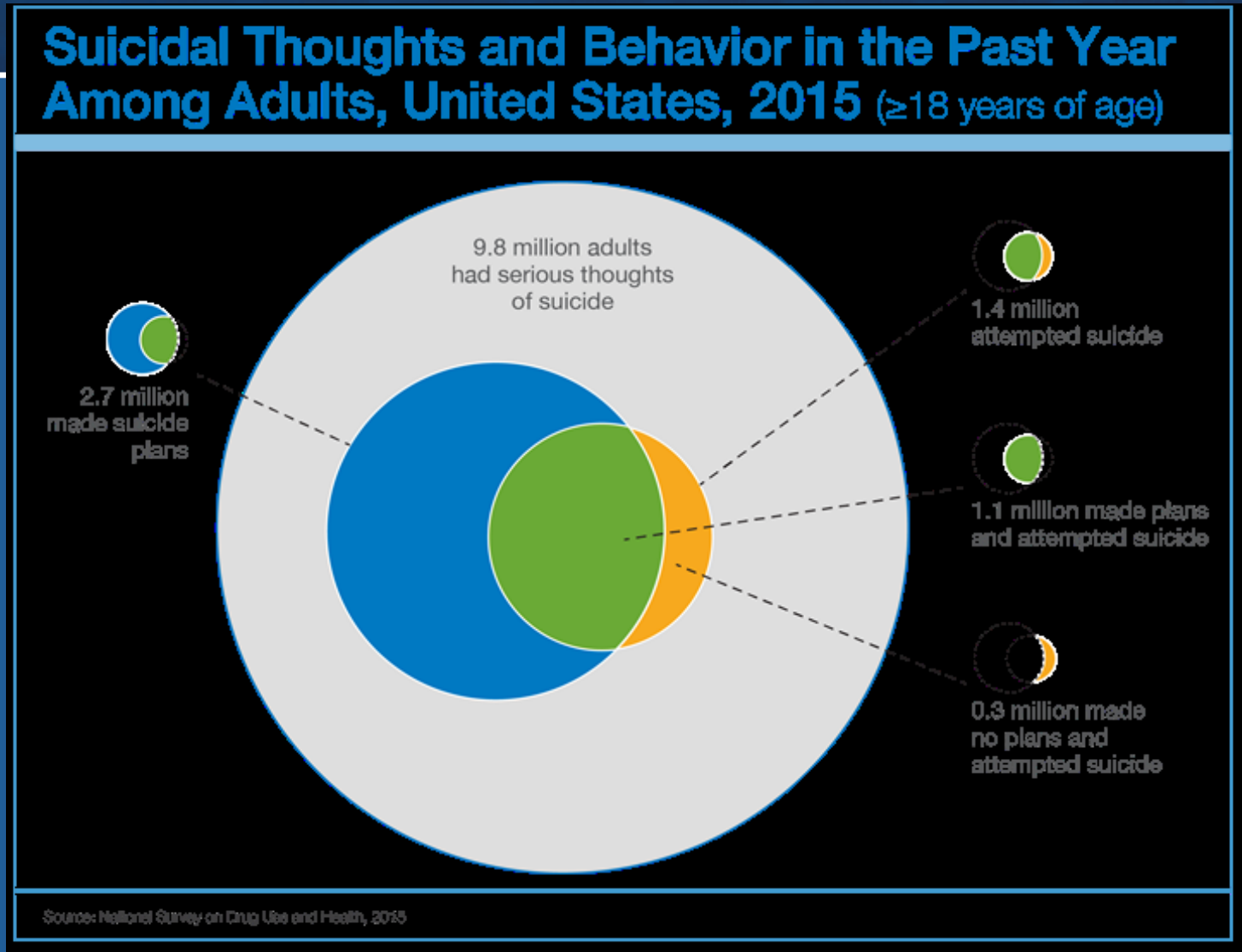
Number (and ratio) of persons  
affected by suicidal behavior among  
adults aged  $\geq 18$  years,  
United States, 2012



Source: Personal communication, Alex Crosby, CDC, 2015

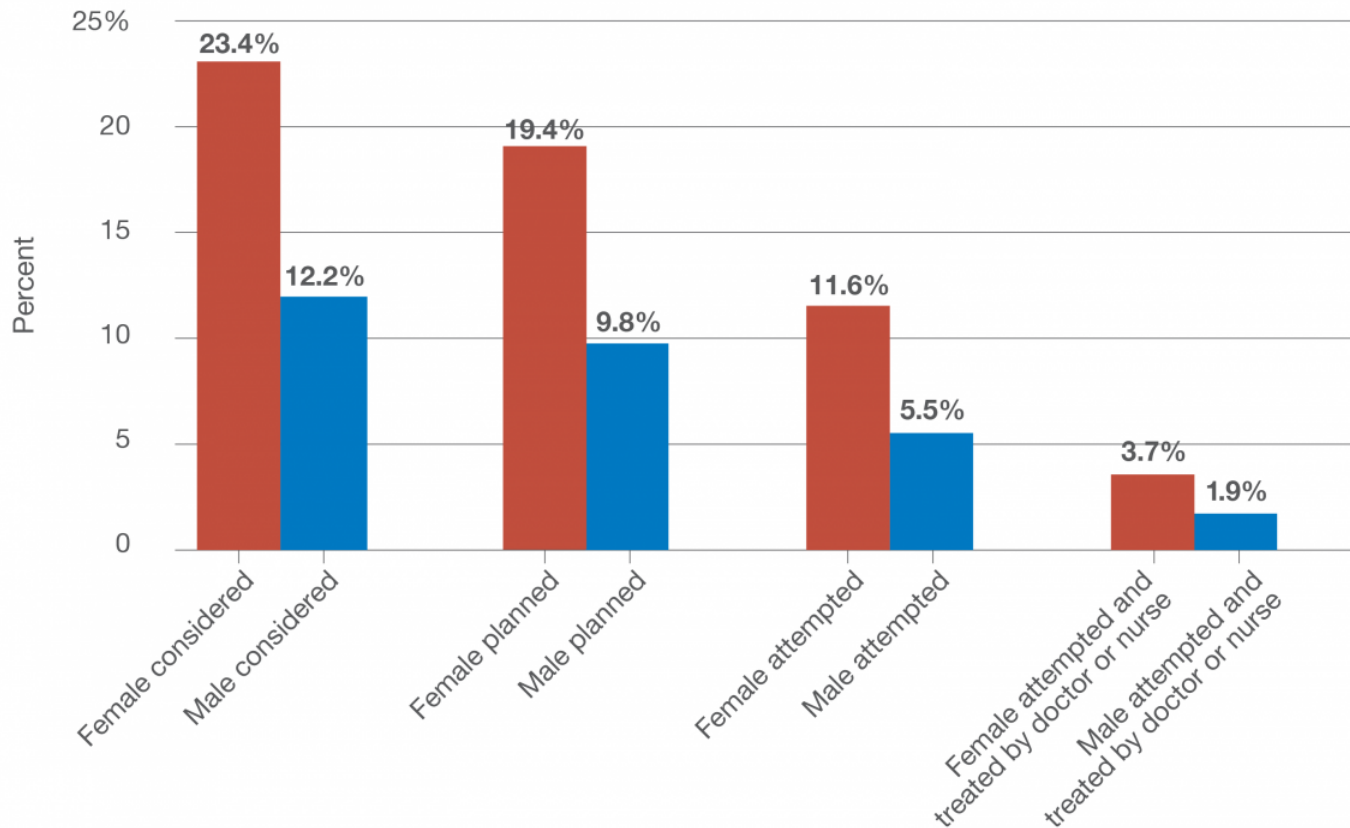


# Why should a TSN Coordinator be prepared?



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## Percentage of High School Students Reporting Suicidal Behavior, United States, 2015 (past 12 months)



Source: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 2015



# Why should a TSN Coordinator be prepared?

## Major protective factors for suicide include:

- Effective behavioral health care
- Connectedness to individuals, family, community, and social institutions
- Life skills (including problem solving skills and coping skills, ability to adapt to change)
- Self-esteem and a sense of purpose or meaning in life
- Cultural, religious, or personal beliefs that discourage suicide

Source: <http://www.sprc.org/about-suicide/risk-protective-factors>

## American Trauma Society

### Mission Statement:

“Saving Lives. Improving Care.  
Empowering Survivors.”



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# True Story from a Fellow TSN Coordinator

## Frannie Grissom, BSN, RN

*TSN Coordinator, R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center  
at the University of Maryland Medical Center*



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# How can a TSN Coordinator start to get prepared?

- **Know your state law, hospital policy, and professional licensure guidelines** for addressing patients with suicidal thoughts in the outpatient setting or over the phone
- **Communicate with your supervisor** and TSN team the specific TSN policy so everyone is in agreement ahead of time
- Know the plan ahead of time to help you **stay calm, confident, and compassionate to the survivor in crisis**
- **Discuss Confidentiality and Limits to Confidentiality with patients** at the beginning of groups or phone calls so there are no surprises to anyone

# How can a TSN Coordinator start to get prepared?

## Discuss Confidentiality and Limits to Confidentiality:

At the beginning of TSN Groups (or TSN phone calls), say something like . . .

“We want this group to be a safe place for survivors to share and support each other in recovery. What we say in group, stays in group, with just a couple of exceptions.

“If anyone shares thoughts of harming themselves or harming others, we would need to get a safety plan in place before you leave and include other support to keep you and others safe.”



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# How can a TSN Coordinator start to get prepared?



**More Americans die by suicide each year than are killed by car accidents...**

**So why aren't we talking about it?**

Always stay with someone who is in crisis. If you or a friend is in danger, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY**  
WWW.SUICIDOLOGY.ORG

Source:  
<http://www.suicidology.org/resources>

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# How can a TSN Coordinator start to get prepared?

## Develop and practice your Safety Plan:

- Remember this person has just shared something he/she is really struggling with because help is needed. TSN is here to help.
- If suicidal thoughts expressed in a group setting, find a safe space for this patient to talk privately--preferably with both you and another team member.
- If you are on the phone, keep the survivor talking on the phone but get a co-worker's help at the same time, if necessary, to call 911.
- Determine where the survivor is currently calling from so that emergency personnel can respond to the scene if necessary.



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# How can a TSN Coordinator start to get prepared?

## Develop and practice your Safety Plan (Cont.):

- Listen and validate the person's experience while you assess the seriousness of the situation.
- Ask two questions:
  1. “Are you currently having thoughts of harming yourself or others?”
  2. “Do you have a plan of how you would harm yourself or others?”
- The patient's answers to these questions (and your assessment of the situation) determine your next steps
  - Yes: Safety Plan Involves Emergency Personnel or Emergency Department
  - No: Safety Plan for the future and do follow up



# Example Safety Plan:

## [www.lifelineforattemptssurvivors.org/safety-plans](http://www.lifelineforattemptssurvivors.org/safety-plans)

### Patient Safety Plan Template

#### Step 1: Warning signs (thoughts, images, mood, situation, behavior) that a crisis may be developing:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Step 2: Internal coping strategies – Things I can do to take my mind off my problems without contacting another person (relaxation technique, physical activity):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Step 3: People and social settings that provide distraction:

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_
3. Place \_\_\_\_\_
4. Place \_\_\_\_\_

#### Step 4: People whom I can ask for help:

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

#### Step 5: Professionals or agencies I can contact during a crisis:

1. Clinician Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Clinician Pager or Emergency Contact # \_\_\_\_\_

2. Clinician Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Clinician Pager or Emergency Contact # \_\_\_\_\_

3. Local Urgent Care Services \_\_\_\_\_  
Urgent Care Services Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Urgent Care Services Phone \_\_\_\_\_

4. Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

#### Step 6: Making the environment safe:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Safety Plan Template ©2008 Barbara Stanley and Gregory K. Brown, is reprinted with the express permission of the authors. No portion of the Safety Plan Template may be reproduced without their express, written permission. You can contact the authors at [bhs2@columbia.edu](mailto:bhs2@columbia.edu) or [gregbrow@mail.med.upenn.edu](mailto:gregbrow@mail.med.upenn.edu).

The one thing that is most important to me and worth living for is: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Source:

<http://lifelineforattemptssurvivors.org/safety-plans/>

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# Suicide Prevention App

STAY CONNECTED  
TO YOUR SUPPORT  
NETWORK.

MY3  
Suicide Prevention App

DOWNLOAD

Available on the  
App Store

Get it on  
Google play

MY3

Ella Morrison

Richard Cook

Add Contact

EDIT

GET HELP NOW  
Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

CALL 911

Source:

<http://lifelineforattemptsurvivors.org/safety-plans/>

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# How can a TSN Coordinator start to get prepared?

## Important Considerations:

- **Confidentiality**
- **Documentation**
- **Involving your Supervisor**
- **Working with youth**



# What further research should a TSN Coordinator do to be prepared?

- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center**
  - [www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
  - 1-800-273-8255 (National Helpline)
  - The Crisis Text Line: 741741
  - [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**
  - 1-800-662-4357 (National Helpline)
  - [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)
- **American Association of Suicidology**
  - [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

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# What further research should a TSN Coordinator do to be prepared?

- **Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention**
  - [www.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org](http://www.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org)
- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**
  - [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)
- **Mental Health America**
  - [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)
- **National Institute of Mental Health**
  - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>

What further research should a TSN Coordinator do to be prepared?



**Peers engaging peers to prevent suicide.**



# What further research should a TSN Coordinator do to be prepared?

- **Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide**
  - <http://www.sptsusa.org/>
- **You Can NOT Be Replaced**
  - [www.youcannotbereplaced.com](http://www.youcannotbereplaced.com)
- **The Trevor Project**
  - [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)
  - 866-488-7386 (Crisis Lifeline for LGBTQ Youth)
- **Teen Line**
  - [www.teenlineonline.org](http://www.teenlineonline.org)
  - Call 1-800-852-8336 or Text “TEEN” to 839863

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# Question and Answer

