





# Suicide, Addiction and Depression...

**Jaime W. Vinck MC, LPC, NCC**

*Chief Executive Officer – CPF Recovery Ways*

**Michael Gaziano, LCSW**

*Executive Clinical Director – Recovery Ways*

*September 2020*







# STATISTICS



## United States

- 47,000 die by suicide annually
- 2nd leading cause of death ages of 10 and 34
- 4th leading cause of death the ages of 35 and 54
- In 2021 CDC reports 1.4 Million Attempts more than 3 Million report suicidal thoughts
- **There is one suicide** for every estimated 4 suicide attempts in the elderly.



# STATISTICS



- Every death by suicide leaves behind at least **130 people** who report that they knew the person who died, and between **4-6** who loved them.
- This creates about **one million people** per year in the US who are directly impacted by the suicide of someone close to them.
- In 2021 CDC reports 1.4 Million Attempts more than 3 Million report suicidal thoughts

.



# STATISTICS



## **Contagion / Cluster**

8-18% increase in two months following media stories on a celebrity's suicide.

30% increase in death by same method when media reports method



# What's So Complicated ?

*August, 2022*



**DEPRESSION**

**SUBSTANCE  
USE**

**SUICIDE**



# Behavioral Indicators Personality Traits



- Aggression
- Impulsivity
- Pessimism
- Hopelessness
- Poor perceived social supports



# External (Environmental Factors)



- Childhood Abuse
- Financial troubles
- Unemployment
- Relationship Disruption
- Notable Primal Humiliation







# Substance Use Disorder

## Gender Differences

- Males outnumber females in suicide 4:1
- Association of Suicide and SUD in women is markedly stronger
- Mortality rates for women with Alcohol use disorder are 17 times higher than men with Alcohol use Disorder



# Role of Alcohol



- Alcohol Use Disorders
  - Increased since COVID
- Acute Alcohol Intoxication
- Risk Factors with AD
  - Relationship Disruption
  - Male
  - Age



# Alcohol as Catalyst for Suicide – Why

## Decreasing Inhibitions and increases depressed mood

1. Increased psychological distress
2. Increased aggressiveness
3. Propel suicidal ideation into action through suicide-specific alcohol expectancies

Provide Motivation

Belief Alcohol reduce physical pain

4. Constrict cognition, which implementation of alternative coping strategies and ramifications.

Hufford, 2001



# Alcohol Education = Suicide Prevention

- 22% of all suicides involve alcohol intoxication -> legal limit
- Suicide is leading cause of death among those with AUD



# Anthony Borduin



“Drinking. Bourdain still drinks, and sometimes confesses to drinking too much. But that is rare. He is usually shown casually drinking a beer or wine with dinner.”

“Bourdain, in other words, is not a 12-step, abstinence automaton-nut. He has a good life, and he knows how to keep it. Smart, thoughtful people often arrive at such a point, even after some serious detours.”

— *Psychology Today* 2014



# Drug Addiction

- As compelling as alcohol
- Opioid Use Disorder
- Cocaine Dependence
- Polysubstance



# Chris Cornell



Vicky Cornell recalled the year before her husband's death, when she said he fell back into addiction after being sober since 2003.

"Approximately a year before he died, he was prescribed a benzodiazepine to help him sleep," she said. "He had torn his shoulder ... the pain in the shoulder was waking him up at night and it was keeping him up."



# Co-Occurring Mood & Physical Disorders

- Major Depressive Disorder
- Bi-Polar Disorder
- Hormones
- Neurological Disorders
  - Lewy Body Dementia



# Robin Williams



“Do I perform sometimes in a manic style? Yes. Am I manic all the time? No. Do I get sad? Oh yeah. Does it hit me hard? Oh yeah.”

— *Robin Williams*



# Co-Occurring Mental Illness

- Post Traumatic Stress
- Veterans – 20 die by suicide daily
- First Responders
- Personality Disorders
- Generalized Anxiety



# Chester Bennington



“My whole life, I’ve just felt a little off,” Bennington said in conversation with Music Choice earlier this year. “I find myself getting into these patterns of behavior or thought – especially when I’m stuck up here [in my head]; I like to say that ‘this is like a bad neighborhood, and I should not go walking alone.’” (Bennington suffered molestation as a young boy, and struggled with addiction, on and off, throughout his life.)



# The Ten Characteristics of Perfectly Hidden Depression

1. Perfectionism with a constant, critical inner voice.
2. Heightened or excessive sense of responsibility.
3. Difficulty with accepting and expressing painful emotions.
4. Worry/Need for control over herself and her environment.
5. Intense focus on tasks, using accomplishment as a way to feel valuable.
6. Active concern about the well-being of others, while not allowing anyone into his inner world.
7. Discounts or dismisses hurt or abuse from the past, or the present.
8. Accompanying mental health issues, involving control or escape from anxiety.
9. A strong belief in "counting your blessings" as the foundation of well-being.
10. Intimate relationships may be difficult, but are accompanied by professional success.



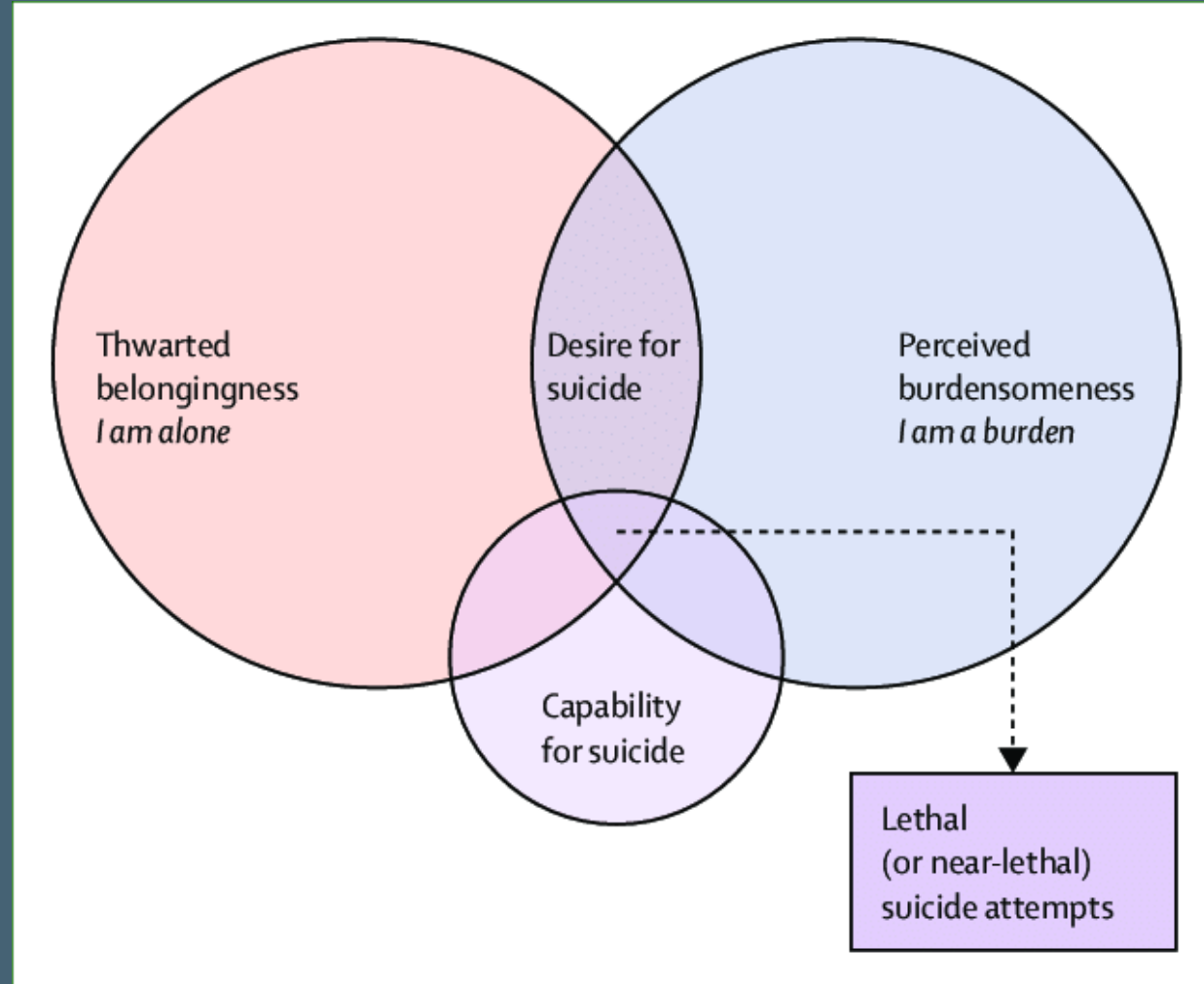
# Cheslie Cryst



*"Cheslie led both a public and a private life. In her private life, she was dealing with high-functioning depression which she hid from everyone — including me, her closest confidant — until very shortly before her death," wrote the grieving mom, who herself was a pageant winner, winning the Mrs. North Carolina title in 2002.*



# Interpersonal theory of Suicide, Thomas Joiner





# Why People Die by Suicide, Thomas Joiner

- Burdensomeness
- Failed Belongingness
- Impulsivity
- Childhood Abuse
- Lethal Self-Injury
- Genetic Impact



# Burdensomeness and Belongingness

- Human Needs
- Feeling Effective or Competent
- “Perceived” Burdensomeness
- Lack of belongingness



# Kate Spade



“Kate was really isolated and lonely. Kate had been married to husband Andy Spade since 1994, but they “had a very difficult relationship,” according to Rob. He reflected, “She really didn’t talk about him very much. They didn’t spend a lot of time together. but I think they were living apart.”

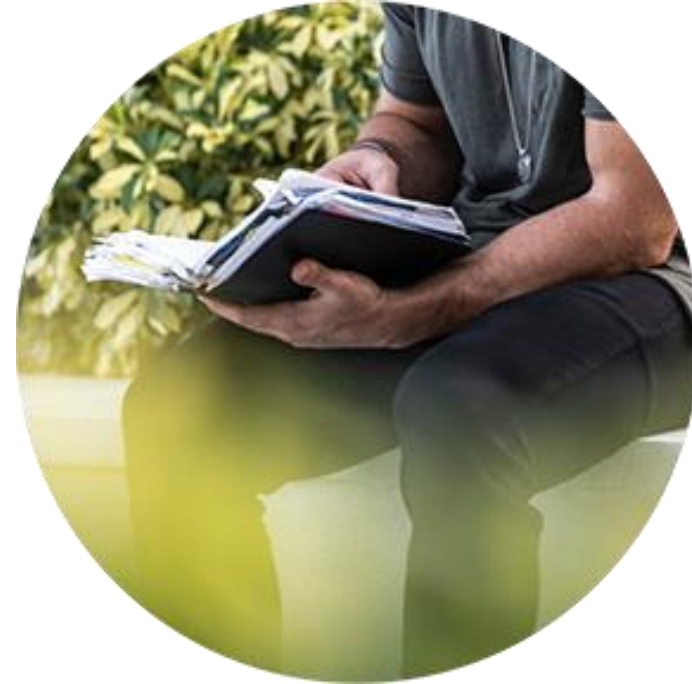
As for her final days, Shuter pointed out, “Behind the scenes, it was loneliness. It was probably drinking too much, it was longing for a world that didn’t exist anymore... She found modern technology difficult, she found Twitter annoying, she found Facebook rude. This was someone that really valued her private life and I don’t think Kate could live in the cruel world that we live in today.”



# Lethal Self-Injury

## Most Basic Instinct = Self Preservation

- Fearlessness
- Provocative Experiences
- Pain Tolerant
- Knowledge of Self-Injury
- Habituate to the Behaviors
- *Reduced fear of provocative experiences =*
- *Capability for lethal self-injury*





# Firearms

- Half of all completed suicides happen with firearms – and in the case of using a firearm 85% end in death
- Pandemic
- Impulsivity



# Naomi Judd

- Struggled for decades with Treatment Resistant Depression, Childhood Trauma (death, divorce, SUD) Hep C (career ending)





# Impulsivity as a Factor in Suicide

- Daredevil Behaviors?
- Reckless Driving?
- Theft of Material items?
- Spend Impulsively?
- Injured in Accidents?
- Lower levels of Serotonin Metabolites
- Serotonin-System Problems
- Theory of “Spur of the Moment” Suicide
- Primal humiliation



# Childhood Abuse/Trauma

- Multiple attempts risk 8 times greater for sexual abuse
- Physical and sexual abuse higher risk for lethal self injury
- Desire for death through increase of feelings of burdensomeness and lack of belongingness
- Attachment template
- Autonomic Nervous System Dysregulation





# Adverse Childhood Experience

**Relationship  
between early  
childhood  
trauma and  
health and  
well-being  
problems  
later in life.**

Source: World Health  
Organization

Death



Birth





# Stigma

What prevents people from getting help?

- Judgment
- Loss of Profession
- Historical view
- Funerals
- Life Insurance
- Legacy



# Suicide Myths that feed stigma and Facts

- Mentioning Suicide Could put the idea in someone's head
- Suicide is due to personal weakness or flaws
- There is nothing you can do if someone wants to die
- Suicide is a selfish act
- **Talking about suicide** does not increase the risk
- Contemplating suicide is not due to character, it is multi layered, and complex.
- No one wants to die – they want the pain to stop
- Those who attempt suicide feel that the world is better off without them.



# Risk Factors & Warning Signs



- Risk factors indicate that someone is more likely to consider, attempt or die by suicide, but indicate little or nothing about immediate risk
- Warning signs indicate an immediate risk for suicide, and are especially concerning if they are new, have increased or are related to a painful event, loss or change



# Risk Factors

- Prior Suicide Attempt
- Family History of Suicide
  - Shame, Legacy, Grief
- Trauma
- Substance Use Disorder
  - Alcohol
  - Drugs
- Mood Disorders



- # Risk Factors
- Relationship Disruption
  - Job or Financial Loss
  - Feeling like a burden
  - Failed Belongingness
  - Lack of social supports (lonely)
  - Impulsivity – 15 minute
  - Aggression / Anger
  - Lethal Self-Injury
  - Social Contagion
  - Humiliation



# Warning Signs



- Talking about wanting to die
- Withdrawing from Life
- Talking about being a burden
- Sudden lift in mood with no change in circumstance (False sense of recovery).
- Buying a Firearm or accessing other means (pills) **Call to Action**



# Protective Factors

## Most Basic Instinct = Self Preservation

- Resilience
- Optimism
- Employment
- Family Support
- Supportive Spouse
- Children
- Religious or Spiritual Belief





## To Self

Ask:

Is my judgment clouded in any way?

What has kept me alive to this point?

Is the story I'm telling myself true?

What am I getting out of this?

What can I do to provide comfort?



## To Others

Ask:

Are you thinking of ending your life?

Do you have a firearm?

What are you willing to do to stay alive right now?

Are you open to me or someone else staying with you until we find some help?



# When there is a loss – how do I help?

- No inquiry about warning signs or circumstances
- Avoid blaming or shaming
- Show empathy
- Be present for month and years to come
- Don't wait to be asked to help
- Don't tell them it will be ok or you know they feel



# A suicide survivor speaks

## TedX Talk



# You Are Not Alone.....Treatment Options



- Support Groups
- EAPs are available
- Family Members are Eligible
- Virtual Care
- Intensive Outpatient
- Day Treatment
- Residential



Call 9 – 8 – 8

**Nation's Largest Suicide Prevention  
Organization Celebrates National  
Suicide Hotline Designation Act  
(S.2661) Becoming Law**



# Resources

Sher, L., et al, Depressed patients with co-occurring alcohol use disorders: a unique patient population. J. Clin Psychiatry. 2008

CDC. Suicide Facts at a glance. 2017

Yuodelis-Flores, Christine, MD, Ries K. Richard, MD, Addiction and Suicide: A Review, University of Washington, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Joiner, Thomas, Phd, Why People Die by Suicide, President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2005.

Elkin, Chris, MA, Substance Abuse and Suicide: A guide to Understanding the Connect and reducing risk. 2018



Thank You

