



### Postvention

#### What is Postvention?

Planned interventions with those affected by a suicide death to stabilize the environment, reduce the risk of contagion and facilitate the grieving process

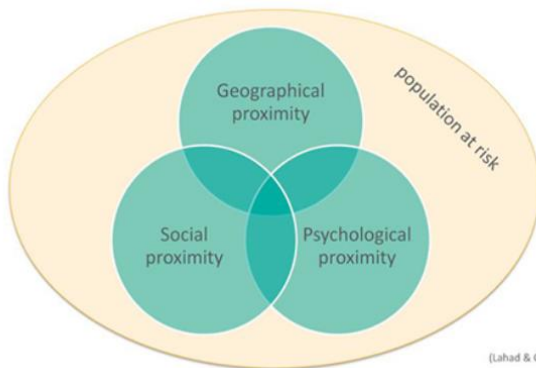
#### What is Suicide Contagion?

The process whereby one suicide or suicidal act within a school, community or geographic area increases the likelihood that others will attempt or die by suicide.

#### What is a Suicide Cluster?

MASS Cluster: suicides that cluster in timeframes irrespective of geography

POINT Cluster: suicides that cluster in timeframe and geography



(Lahad & Cohen, 2006)

Legend Lower risk Higher risk

A visual representation of Lahad & Cohen's (2006) circles of vulnerability model.

#### Postvention Response Game Plan

In order to ensure a proper plan is created, trust and respect amongst providers is key. This can be time and resource intensive. Be patient and build your plan over time.

Here are some different types of supports that might be needed in the aftermath of a suicide:

##### Family Response

This is the most likely form of response needed

- Immediate support at the scene
- Support with death notification
- Obituary/funeral planning
- Connecting with schools and workplaces
- Proactive grief support
- Telling their story
- Advocacy/suicide prevention

##### Whole Community Response

When a suicide was very public or there have been a cluster of suicides an open community session can be helpful

- Understanding suicide
- Identify common responses
- Pathways to care
- Build in safety

##### Targeted Community Response

This response would focus on specific groups that could be impacted such as workplaces, teams or schools

- Understanding suicide
- Identify common responses
- Pathways to care
- Build in safety

##### First Responder-Staff Response

- Understanding suicide
- Identify common responses
- Pathways to care
- Build in safety

##### Media Response

- Encourage the use of media guidelines
- Circulate the messages of life promotion, hope and highlight pathways to care
- Educate on the safe use of social media memorials

##### Witness Response

- Support at the scene
- Proactive follow up
- Trauma/PTSD

The circles of vulnerability model can help determine the degree of emotional impact a death by suicide has on members of a community. Individuals most at risk following a suicide include those in geographical, social and psychological proximity to the individual who died by suicide.

Lahad, M., & Cohen, A. (2006). The community stress prevention center: 25 years of community stress prevention and intervention. Kiryat Shmona, Israel: The Community Stress Prevention Center.



### Grief & Bereavement

#### How is Suicide Bereavement different?

**Reaction to the loss** – Reactions can vary. People may feel responsible, they may feel relief, anger or abandonment.

**PTSD** – Individuals directly exposed to the scene may suffer trauma and some may potentially develop PTSD

**Questioning. Why? What could I have done?** – There are often many more questions than answers with a suicide loss.

**Stigma/Isolation/Prejudices** – Bereaved individuals may experience stigma and become deeply hurt by the prejudices of those around them. This may create a sense of shame and isolation.

**Family Dynamics** – Family members may have conflicting beliefs on whether it was a suicide. This conflict can be very disruptive and negatively impact family relationships.

**Lack of Privacy** – If the death was public or was covered in the media this can add to the burden of those left behind.

## Worden's Four Tasks of Mourning



Retrieved from: <https://www.habitsforwellbeing.com/coping-with-grief-and-loss-insights-into-the-grieving-process/wordens-four-tasks-of-mourning/>

#### Q&A

**Q:** Can you please clarify which media guidelines you share with media?

**A:** The ones that I use are the most up to date [guidelines from the Canadian Psychiatric Association](#). [Mindset: Reporting on Mental Health](#) is a project that was created by Canadian journalists for journalists reporting on mental health and suicide.

**Q:** What is the staff requirement to do this postvention team approach?

**A:** Our Support After Suicide Team consists of a clinician, a peer with lived experience of suicide bereavement and a specially trained OPP officer. The partnership facilitates a joint response to suicide that is a critical strength of the model.

#### Resources

##### Websites

- Together to Live – Postvention <http://www.togethertolive.ca/postvention>
- Together to Live – Postvention tools and resources <http://www.togethertolive.ca/postvention-tools-and-resources>

##### Articles, Guides and Books

- Carson J Spencer Foundation, Crisis Care Network, National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and American Association of Suicidology (2013). **A Manager's Guide to Suicide Postvention in the Workplace: 10 Action Steps for Dealing with the Aftermath of Suicide**. Denver, CO: Carson J Spencer Foundation. <https://theactionalliance.org/sites/default/files/managers-guidebook-to-suicide-postvention-web.pdf>
- Erbacher, T. Singer, j. & Poland, S. (2015). **Suicide in schools. A practitioner's guide to multilevel prevention, assessment, intervention and postvention**. New York: Routledge. 248 p.
- **Postvention in action: The international handbook of suicide bereavement support** by Karl Andriessen, Karolina Krysinika & Onja Grad. Boston, MA.: Hogrefe Books (2017). 423 p.
- Szumilas, M., & Kutcher, S. (2010). **Systematic Review of Postvention Programs**. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 102, 18-29.

##### Video

- Dr. Ian Colman – Contagion and Postvention [https://youtu.be/aQjGPF9b\\_k](https://youtu.be/aQjGPF9b_k)



Together we make a difference.  
**Roots of Hope**  
A Community Suicide Prevention Project  
<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/english/roots-of-hope>

#### Further Questions on Postvention?

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