



Breaking the Silence to Prevent Suicide and Save Lives

A media-led collaboration to prevent suicide through responsible reporting

The Reality of Suicide and the Promise of Hope: Journalism That Makes Communities Safer

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SUMMIT: SAFELY REPORTING ON SUICIDE

KGW.com



INVESTIGATING SUICIDE

Prevention reporting that makes a difference







**Common Data Set
Evidence-Based Guidelines
Common Branding and Graphics**

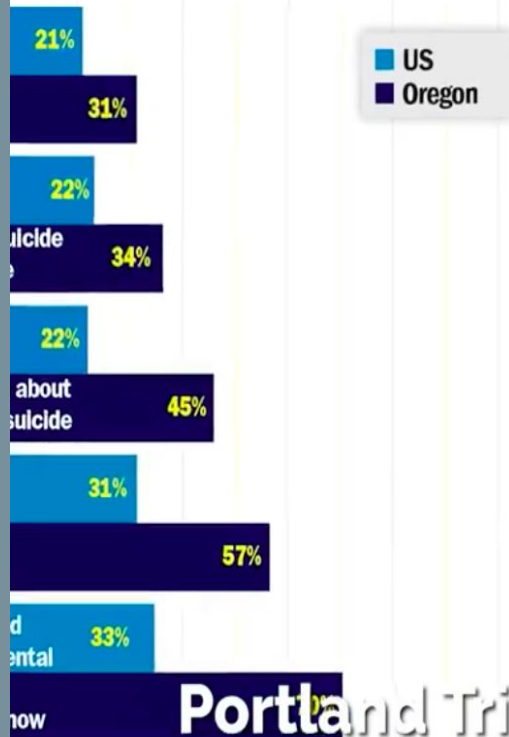


40 Newsrooms

100 Stories



Oregonians say about suicide



Portland Tribune

statistics based on an online-survey of 309 Oregonians, Feb. 13-22, 2019. U.S. statistics based on 2018 survey and Analysis for the National Action Alliance for Suicide

Washington County work links suicide, evictions

Epidemiologist who studied data found new solutions

By **AMANDA WALDROUPE**
Street Roots

When Kimberly Repp saw how high Washington County's suicide numbers were each year, she vowed that she would do something about it.

Repp is the supervisor of the county's public health program and the county's epidemiologist, which makes her responsible for tracking and responding to diseases that affect public health, such as annual flu out-



Kimberly Repp, Washington County's epidemiologist, visits the scene of a death. Her work at these scenes has helped her develop a list of risk factors that contribute to death by suicide.

COURTESY PHOTO:
WASHINGTON COUNTY

BREAKING THE SILENCE

Shining a light on suicide in Oregon



REGULATO

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Gordon R. Fried
The Oregonian/O

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STRAIGHT TALK

WITH L...TER

1-800-273-8255

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE

A photograph of three lit candles in glass jars, one yellow, one orange, and one red, placed on a dark, mossy cobblestone path. The candles are lit, and their flames are visible. The background is a dark, textured surface of cobblestones and moss.

SHATTERING BARRIERS

Survey: Oregonians are more likely to think about suicide — but also more willing to prevent it

By **ZANE SPARLING**
The Tribune

Oregonians are more likely to consider suicide than the average American — with nearly one-third across the state reporting that they've considered taking their own lives, according to a new poll.

KATU
On Your Side



kind is
better



BREAKING THE
SILENCE

KATU TV

Schools gear up for new laws addressing teen mental health

Suicide prevention, redefined sick days, help end stigma

By **COURTNEY VAUGHN**
The Tribune

If it takes a village to raise a child, it also takes a village to save one.

Two new laws aimed at destigmatizing mental health and preventing youth suicides will take effect in schools this year, but experts say laying a better path for young people requires a “community approach.”

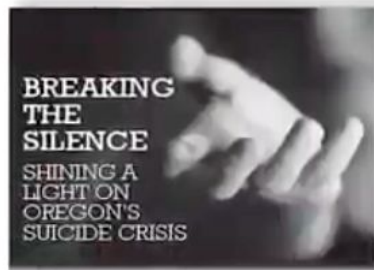
In Oregon, suicide is the

second leading cause of death among young people age 12 to 24.

Data from a 2017 Oregon Healthy Teens survey shows that roughly 18% of high school juniors and nearly 17% of eighth graders reported they had seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months. For LGBTQ youth, the prevalence is even higher.

In 2019, the parents of a teen who took her own life, backed by advocates from Basic Rights Oregon, lobbied state lawmakers to do something about that.

The call to action came in the wake of high school student Adi Staub's death. Staub, who came out as transgender



during her sophomore year, died in 2017. Her parents noted she often was misgendered, sometimes intentionally, and despite expressions of self-destructive thoughts, the gravity of her suicidal ideation went unnoticed by her peers and teachers at school.

In response, Staub's parents fought for schools to

adopt more robust protocols for recognizing suicidal behavior. The result was Senate Bill 52, known as Adi's Act.

Adi's Act requires Oregon schools to develop “a comprehensive district plan on student suicide prevention for students in kindergarten through grade 12.”

The prevention plans must include methods to address “high risk” groups like homeless students or those experiencing trauma, students of color, those with disabilities, mental illness or substance abuse problems, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (also known as LGBTQ) youth.

See **SUICIDE** / Page A3

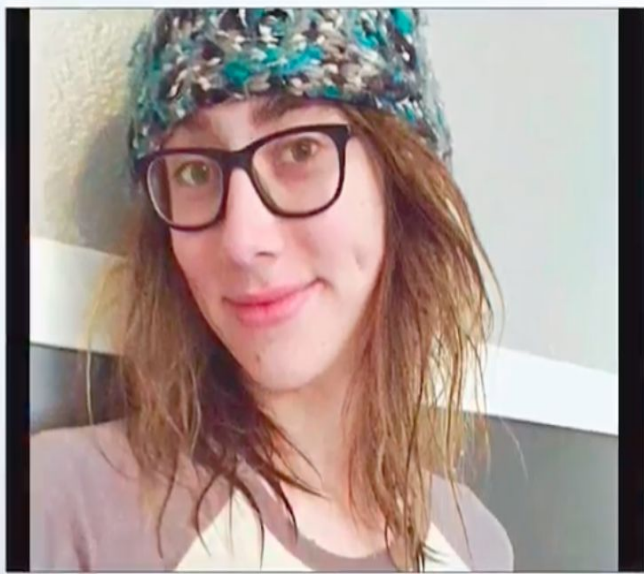
ADI'S ACT

State invests to save students' lives

Bills making way through Legislature changes how Oregon deals with suicide-prevention for young people

BY MARK MILLER
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregonians die by suicide at a rate well above the national average. Gov. Kate Brown and the Oregon Legislature have taken notice. This spring, a number of proposals are before the Legislature to bolster state and local officials' ability to respond and prevent suicides — including one that would bring Oregon in line with most states requiring every public school district to adopt a sui-



Adi Staub, who took her life in 2017, struggled to fit in as a transgender teen, despite the support of her family and many friends. A bill requiring all Oregon schools to develop suicide prevention plans is named after her.

COURTESY PHOTO: LON AND CHRISTINE STAUB

wego, would require school districts, colleges and universities to notify the Oregon Health

a nonprofit group that provides resources for people experiencing suicidal thoughts, said Or-

Geiser said she believes Kirkwood's work has saved lives. The Alliance to Prevent Sui-

are effective in lowering the suicide rate among recipients.

Senate Bill 808, introduced by Sen. Lew Frederick, D-Portland, adds a recurring educational requirement for health care professionals, teachers, school administrators, social workers, therapists and others. They would have to complete at least three hours of continuing education on suicide risk — how to recognize warning signs and respond when a person is having suicidal thoughts, for instance — every six years to be licensed in Oregon.

Because SB 141 and SB 808 would create new state programs, the Legislature will need to figure out how to pay for them if they become law. To move forward, the bills have to pass through the Legislature's budget-writing committee. There, they will vie with dozens of other requests for state money.

Westbrook is glad to see that the Legislature is talking seri-

PREVENTION FUNDS LINKED TO EDUCATION BUDGET

With state expenses growing faster than its revenues, legislative budget writers are looking at cuts in nearly all areas. Public education is a notable exception — which could mean good news for suicide prevention efforts.

"I think most of the focus on suicide prevention is around young people," House Speaker Tina Kotek said, noting that lawmakers also are looking at ways to improve counseling and support services in public schools.

"The problem is, we don't want to start something like that if we can't fund it, and really, the only way to fund it is if there is additional dollars through the investment pack-

#BreakingTheSilenceOR
1.4 Million Impressions in a Week

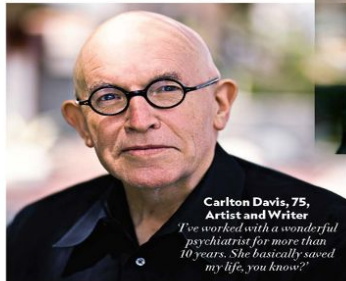


The Results so far:

- The campaign hashtag #breakingthesilence.org saw over 1.4M Twitter Impressions
- Legislative Impacts
 - Adi's Act
 - Mental Health Day
 - \$11 Million in New Suicide Prevention Funding

***With the success of the first series came an important revelation:
Where are the stories from diverse communities?***





Carlton Davis, 75, Artist and Writer
I've worked with a wonderful psychiatrist for more than 10 years. She basically saved my life, you know?



Abel Ibarra, 27, Math Teacher
You're really happy, and then, in a matter of seconds, you're not. It's always that.



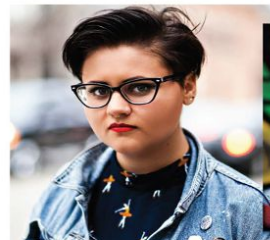
Rebecca Textor, 45, Suicide Prevention Coordinator
Oh my goodness. I would have missed so many experiences in my life.

People
MENTAL HEALTH
 Let's Talk About It



Beverly Kikuta, 33, Administrative Assistant
It's helpful hearing stories. Maybe what I feel is legitimate after all!

They are students, musicians, tech workers & entrepreneurs. They have one thing in common:



Ashley Loftin Murray, 27, Peer Support Specialist
Healing is nonlinear. I try to make meaning out of those ups and downs.

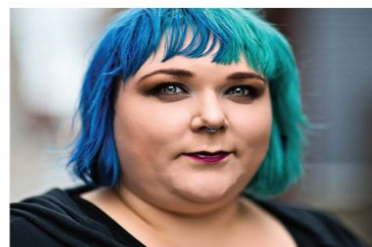


Pablo Schmidt-Escobar, 35, Personal Trainer
I understand that you really have only one life. I want to enjoy what I have.

THEY ATTEMPTED SUICIDE AND SURVIVED

By **JEFF TRUESDELL**
 Photographs by **DESE'RAE L. STAGE**

HERE ARE THEIR STORIES



Jess Stohlmann-Rainey, 34, Program Development Director
Our focus should be on creating a world worth living in.



Shayda Kafai, 35, College Lecturer
When I didn't die, I was able to access resources that helped me grow resilient.



Deanna Echanique, 35, Artist
It grounds me, knowing what I was to where I am. I love life too much now.



Melody Moezzi, 40, Attorney
In my community like other Iranians, after Muslim it's not something we talk about. If American society doesn't talk about it, we definitely don't.



Rene Severin, 26, Welder
I'm here. I survived, so I can't go back there again at all.



Tina Smith, 44, Proposal Coordinator
When you have felt that deeply at the high and the low of it, I think it makes you less judgmental.



Andy Grant, 53, Life Coach
I'm not good at ending my life, so there must be a better way to live.

Goal for the next BTS run is to make sure all communities are represented

When you invite community members to define their own needs and to participate as full partners in decision making, you are acknowledging them as *the experts in their own lives, families, and communities*.

This approach *builds trust and respect* and is well worth the time invested. A community-guided approach will contribute to more effective programming as well as to community ownership and sustainability.

- Cultural content, norms and beliefs, privilege and power issues, disparities in access to care, and historical trauma experienced by minority groups.
- Having sensitivity toward differences in communication styles and making concerted efforts to reach out to special populations are both key in building strong relationships and in increasing cultural responsiveness.
- Trust and respect

Goal for the next BTS run is to make sure all communities are represented



Every year, nearly 50,000 people in America die by suicide and tens of thousands of people think about suicide, but instead, find a way forward- a path toward hope.

But almost no one know these stories. Journalists have always shied away from reporting on suicide - we don't tell the story of suicide and we don't tell the stories of hope either.

It's time to Break the Silence on Suicide nationwide.

***To learn more about this model, view the
[Breaking the Silence in Oregon video](#)***

