

**Suicide**  
*Prevention, Intervention*  
*and*  
*Post-vention*

Presented by  
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*Contact CMI or explore the website for additional information on  
school crisis response training and resources.*



Cheri Lovre  
Bio

Cheri Lovre, MS, Director of CMI, has over 30 years of experience in the field of prevention, crisis response, grief, trauma and many related topics. Because of her range of experience, she has developed a philosophy and a specific approach toward the unique needs of children in grief and survivors of trauma, and the range of interventions schools can implement both to facilitate coping, adjusting and healing for students and staff as well as taking the inherent opportunity in tragedy to teach and model empathy, thus improving school climate. The focus of much of her professional life has been working with schools in the aftermath of student and staff deaths, suicides, suicide clusters, homicides, natural disasters, traumatic events, shootings, arrests of staff for internet child pornography, teacher-student sexual misconduct and a range of other tragedies that overwhelm a district's usual abilities to cope.

On-site responses of national awareness include spending a week following the shootings at Thurston High School (Springfield, OR - May 1998), Columbine (Littleton, CO - April, 1999), Nickel Mines Amish School Shooting (Lancaster County, PA - October, 2006), a humanitarian response to Sri Lanka following the Asian tsunami (December, 2004), and two years in New York and New Jersey following 9/11/2001.

In keeping with her belief in the importance of self-care, she is a distance cyclist, riding the Seattle-to-Portland bike event annually (204 miles) and fundraises for MS and rides the MS City to Shore (Cherry Hill, NJ to Ocean City, 125 miles). She also loves music (piano and choir), kayaking and canoeing, and international travel (she has been on all seven continents). She believes in the benefit of daily solitude for reflection, meditation or prayer of some sort for all of us in this rushed and troubled world.

***Mission Statement***

We appreciate your interest in Crisis Management Institute (CMI) training and consultation. At CMI our greatest expertise is in the school setting, addressing crisis response, peaceable schools and violence prevention. Our services include on site crisis response, trauma intervention and violence prevention at the time of need anywhere in the world, as well as training and technical assistance in planning and development stages. Our trainings encompass a wide range of topics, and there are many options from which to choose.

When we're called into a crisis, hearts have been shattered; lives torn asunder. Our opportunity is to provide ethical, compassionate, effective, soulful support that will enable people resume their lives in acceptance of their "new normal" and able to find joy and meaning as they move forward in a life filled with lessons and a deepened perspective.



## Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Post-vention

Attempts \_\_\_\_\_ Deaths \_\_\_\_\_ How often attempts \_\_\_\_\_ deaths \_\_\_\_\_  
Passing thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_ Up or down \_\_\_\_\_ Total deaths \_\_\_\_\_

What I believe about people who commit suicide: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

notes:

***Suicide takes practice*** -- "Suicide is like an addiction."

**Suicide: thinking error** - lost opportunity/narrow field of options

- Each repetition = narrow field of options
- Like an addiction, increase dose

**What is the good news?**

- Schools must be doing something right!
- 25% begin, small %age die by suicide

**So what to do?**

- Get beyond our judgments/fears
- Learn warning signs—esp. language
- **Never deny/minimize/refocus**
- Move *toward* the issue, not away
- Questions: "Really? How often? Plan?"
- Refer!!! • Keep a paper trail

**Language to use with students:**

- Suicide is a mistake. It is the biggest mistake you can make.
- Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.
- Who or what would you live for?

**Conceptually:**

- Teach kids it is OK to be "average"
- Take all threats/language seriously
- Successful interventions involve the whole family/support system
- Suicide is predominantly cognitive problem • Thinking error.
- Help kids understand the complexities of life—that we all struggle...
- No one person can cause or stop a suicide.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Most dangerous times**

- After a prevented attempt • When depression meds begin to work
- When a kid suddenly looks better • If complicated by drugs, alcohol
- If family history of suicide/depression

**High risk groups**

- Drug/alcohol users • Some Native American youth • Multiple losses
- Sexual orientation/identity crisis • PAST ATTEMPT!!!!

**Personality**

- Stuffer of feelings—poor communication
- Uses drugs
- High achiever
- High stress life, low management skills • Eating disordered
- "Other" directed • Chronic low self-esteem

**Warning signs**

- Previous attempt • Give clues • Poor choices about safety • Depression
- Self-mutilation • Change in peer group • Increased acting out behaviors
- Giving away belongings • Hopeless/powerless language • Loss of hygiene
- Recent suicide of another • Sudden cheerfulness after depression
- Setbacks after slow, lengthy recovery • Radical change in personality
- Talking about funerals, death • Closure of friendships, relationships
- Talk about death, "leaving," being gone • Sudden focus on others
- Promiscuity • Increased risk-taking

**Break in Content for Scenario**

*Notes:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*What would you like to learn, or what would help you feel most confident about being in a Safe Room following a suicide?:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*As you now consider this whole greater concept of suicide, what could you do personally to make a difference?:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Suicide Prevention Education

### Suicide prevention education

- Timing and groundwork are crucial • Involve outside experts, agencies
- Be sensitive to people who may have had a family history of suicide

### According to Capuzzi

#### 1 - Policy

- Board approval • Legal advice • Clear guidelines about goals and objectives
  - Remove stigma, remove mysticism • Prevent suicide

#### 2 - Staff Training

- Requirement for all staff • Annual • Inservice new teachers
- Handouts of warning signs, language • Importance of teachers' (staff) role
- Referral process • Follow - up with student after attempt

#### 3 - Parent Training

- Stress education - "come to learn!" (Not "come if your student is at risk")
- Target entire community—don't limit • Review curriculum if desired
- Goals:
  - To address their fears, gain support
  - Recognition of signs, getting help

#### 4 - Groups for Low Risk Youth

- Youth who are lower risk suicidal • Family history of suicide • Depressed
- Recovering from attempt & doing well • Any who are referred by staff

#### 5 - Intervention Team

- Ability to assess level of risk immediately
- Be able to get youth at risk into treatment immediately
- More on that in a moment...

#### 6 - NOW provide prevention education!

- Last step in the process • Done over time (not one lesson)
- Time for discussion • Means of students self-disclosing privately
- Follow-up over time • Repeat annually • Coordinate with outside agencies

## Intervention Team

***Each building identifies those who will be on this team and provides training for them.***

***This team will:***

- Deal with students who might be suicidal at the time this comes to light
- Student is walked down to the team by a teacher or staff person, never left alone
- Need to be able to respond with no notice
- Helpful to have one in every middle and high school, w/ similar training for elementary school counselors.

**Primary Intervener**

- Will do the assessment • Student sees as only "helping person"
- Is the only one the suicidal student will likely relate to as the helping person
- Private place • Very initial assessment • Clears calendar • Continues

**Secondary Intervener (Just outside the room)**

- Covers" while Primary clears calendar • Supports Primary
- Follows "runner" • Works w/ parents • Other details as appropriate

**Communicator**

- "Third" intervener • Calls parents if serious • Arrange transport
- Investigates availability of inpatient • Involve mental health services
- Other tasks as requested

*What I learned:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*What I need to address:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Who needs to know?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Next steps?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Resources and Materials for Crisis Response

- ✓ Media Relations for Schools: Including Crisis Communications (An Administrator's Guide)
- ✓ Regaining Balance: Leading Your School Through Loss
- ✓ Safe Passage: Surviving Catastrophic Events
- ✓ The Crisis Resource Manual
- ✓ The Catastrophic Events Resource Manual
- ✓ The All Staff Preparedness Video Kit
- ✓ The Emergency Kit CD

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## Online Professional Development

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- ✓ De-escalating Angry Students
- ✓ Suicide Prevention, Intervention
- ✓ Mental Illness in Children
- ✓ Self-Mutilation, Self-Injury
- ✓ Youth in Grief
- ✓ Facilitating Safe Rooms

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## Site Licenses (District Access 24/7 to resources)

- ✓ All-Staff Preparedness Online Resource *(25 five-minute segments to guide you through crises)*
- ✓ Rapid Response Teams *(Building-based ICS/NIMS compliant training, charts and scenarios)*

Sometimes something written some time ago is surprisingly pertinent in current times. Such is the case with the after word that Kurt Vonnegut wrote for the book "Free to Be You and Me" by Marlo Thomas.

"I've often thought there ought to be a manual to hand to little kids, telling them what kind of planet they're on, why they don't fall off it, how much time they've probably got here, how to avoid poison ivy and so on. I tried to write one once. It was called "Welcome to Earth." But I got stuck on explaining why we don't fall off the planet. Gravity is just a word. It doesn't explain anything. If I could get past gravity, I'd tell them how we reproduce, how long we've been here, apparently, and a little bit about evolution. And one thing I would really like to tell them about is cultural relativity. I didn't learn until I was in college about all the other cultures, and I should have learned that in the first grade. A first grader should understand that his or her culture isn't a rational invention; that there are thousands of other cultures and they all work pretty well; that all cultures function on faith rather than truth; that there are lots of alternatives to our own society. Cultural relativity is defensible and attractive. It is also a source of hope. It means we don't have to continue this way if we don't like it."

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