

ALABAMA HIGHER EDUCATION SUICIDE PREVENTION CONFERENCE

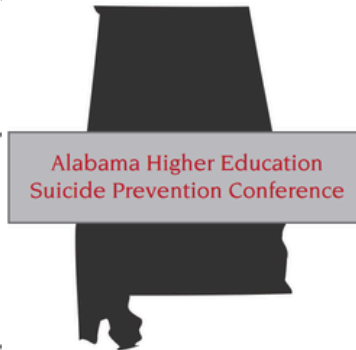
PARTNERING FOR PREVENTION:
CAMPUS + COMMUNITY IMPACT



Troy University
231 Montgomery St
Montgomery, AL 36104

August 28, 2026
Trojan Suicide Prevention Programs

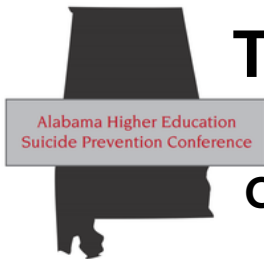
Welcome



Greetings to you from the Troy University Suicide Prevention Coalition! Welcome to the 7th Biennial 2026 Alabama Higher Education Suicide Prevention Conference.

This conference is an opportunity to share ideas and increase your knowledge of best practices as it relates to research and practice-based intervention, strengthening of awareness, prevention, and support systems

Important Note: All Times are Central



Trojan Suicide Prevention Programs

Website: www.mhrsp.org

Contact: troysuicidepreventionprograms@gmail.com



Evaluations

Thank you for your participation in the 2026 Alabama Higher Education Suicide Prevention Conference. In order to continually improve the conference and provide you with beneficial experiences, we ask that you complete the Conference Evaluation Form.

The evaluation form can be completed at the following link:

https://troy.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9sIIMJEaBWjyUYu



Alabama Higher Education
Suicide Prevention Conference

Trojan Suicide Prevention Programs

Sponsors



Alabama Department
of Mental Health
connecting mind and wellness

Contact: Maegan Huffman
maegan.huffman@mh.alabama.gov

Suicide Prevention Coordinator

www.mh.alabama.gov

PROJECT ZERO SUICIDE

Ending Suicide in Alabama

More than half of people who die by suicide see a medical provider within 30 days of death.

Nearly 2 in 3 medical providers feel as though their skills are insufficient for providing care to an individual at risk of suicide.

Zero Suicide is an evidence-based, system-wide framework for universal suicide screening, assessment, and treatment. The approach is built on the principle that with the right interventions, suicide deaths are preventable. In Zero Suicide settings, every patient is screened, and those at risk are provided safety-promoting care and follow-up. The Zero Suicide model of care is structured to create a suicide-safe organizational culture where all persons involved with patient care have the skills, knowledge, and leadership to save lives.

- **Zero Suicide** aligns leadership, clinical practice, and organizational culture to promote suicide-safe care for all patients, fostering a coordinated, organization-wide commitment to suicide prevention.
- This collective commitment cultivates a culture of low-stigma, high-quality care that both improves patient outcomes and enhances provider performance and well-being.
- By engaging healthcare providers, community partners, individuals with lived experience, and other stakeholders, Zero Suicide extends suicide prevention beyond clinical settings to create a connected network of support and build suicide-safer communities.

VitAL's **Project Zero Suicide** is a statewide effort to lower the number of suicides in Alabama to zero. Project Zero Suicide seeks to create suicide safer spaces for all Alabamians through healthcare implementation, stigma reduction, and community engagement and education. Project Zero Suicide focuses on reaching rural and underserved communities to ensure safer, more effective, and equitable access to mental health care for every Alabamian.

Seven Elements of the Zero Suicide Framework:



LEAD

Lead system-wide culture change committed to reducing suicides.



TRAIN

Train a competent, confident, and caring workforce, folding in pre-existing strengths.



IDENTIFY

Identify individuals with suicide risk via comprehensive screening.



ENGAGE

Engage all at-risk individuals using valid assessments and safety planning techniques.



TREAT

Treat identified patients using evidence-based therapies that focus on suicidal ideation & safety.



TRANSITION

Transition individuals through care with warm hand-offs and supportive contacts.



IMPROVE

Improve policies & procedures through continuous quality assessment.



The Project Zero Suicide team can help with provider and staff education, patient engagement tools, patient handouts, and in engaging your community to create suicide safer spaces. Reach out today to explore how you can join this work and how the Project Zero Suicide team can support your organization or community! Scan the QR Code to connect.

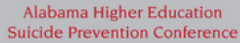
Michael Hunter
Project Manager
tmhunter2@ua.edu
205-561-8336

Pam Williams
Project Coordinator
clark039@ua.edu
205-523-3933

Jordan Scrivner
Project Coordinator
jescrivner@ua.edu
228-229-7815



VitALAlabama.com

The logo features a black silhouette of the state of Alabama. A grey rectangular box is overlaid on the lower-left portion of the state, containing the text "Alabama Higher Education Suicide Prevention Conference" in red.

Alabama Higher Education
Suicide Prevention Conference

Trojan Suicide Prevention Programs

Sponsors



ASPARC

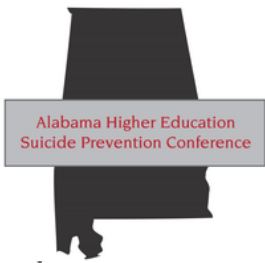
**Alabama Suicide Prevention and
Resources Coalition**

Suicide Prevention Coordinator

info@asparc.org

www.mh.alabama.gov

(205) 677-6116



Trojan Suicide Prevention Programs

EXHIBITORS

Telemetrynd

Contact: Weston Jacey
wjacey@telemetrynd.com
www.tellemetrynd.com



PASTORAL INSTITUTE

Pastoral Institute

Contact: Jerome Dingle
jdingle@pastoralinstitute.org
www.pastoralinstitute.org



nami | **Alabama**
National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI Alabama

Contact: Alicia Snead
asnead@namialabama.org
www.

EXHIBITORS



STEAM Enlightenment Foundation

<https://linktr.ee>

256-375-5641

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**Central Alabama Veterans
Health Care System**

Central Alabama Veterans Healthcare System

Contact: Brittany Townsend
brittany.townsend@va.gov



admin@samfound.org

www.samfound.org

256-996-2161



Alabama Institute for Behavioral Health and Research

Contact: John M. Duffey, Sr
jmduffey@alabamainstitute.com
www.alabamainstitute.com

EXHIBITORS



**Association for Distance Education
and Independent Learning**
adeil.org



**Alabama Department of
Veterans Affairs**
www.va.alabama.gov
[334-242-5077](tel:334-242-5077)



LIGHT OF THE WORLD

INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION, LLC

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WWW.

256-375-5641



CENTERSTONE

Centerstone's Military Services
MilitaryServices@centerstone.org
[https://centerstone.org/military-
services/](https://centerstone.org/military-services/)

866-726-4560

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

August 28, 2026

8:30 AM

Registration Opens

8:50-9:00 AM

Welcome and Announcements

9:00-9:50 AM

Panel Discussion

10:00-10:50 AM

Breakout Session 1

11:00AM-12:50 PM

Lunch and Keynote

**Kevin Hines - Keynote, Q&A,
Informal Meet & Greet**

1:00-3:50 PM

Breakout Sessions 2, 3, and 4

3:50-4:00 PM

Wrap Up/Closing Remarks

ALL TIMES CENTRAL
TROY UNIVERSITY

Keynote Speaker Kevin Hines



Kevin Hines' story is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and a reminder for us to love the life we have. Kevin is a multi-award-winning filmmaker, bestselling author and an award-winning global suicide prevention and mental health advocate. Two years after he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at age 19, he attempted to take his life by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge. He is now one of only 40 people who've survived that 220-foot jump. Kevin's story is now the only evidence-based story of a suicide attempt survived.

Though that fall would break his body, it did not break his spirit. Since that fateful day, Kevin has dedicated his life to spreading a message of hope and openly discussing mental health, often times becoming a bridge between people who have made similar attempts and their parents, siblings, children, spouses and friends.

Kevin released a memoir, "Cracked, Not Broken: Surviving and Thriving After A Suicide Attempt," in 2013 that went on to become a bestseller and produced the 2018 multi-award-winning documentary Suicide: The Ripple Effect. His compelling story has impacted diverse audiences at schools, corporations, law enforcement organizations, religious groups, the military, health care organizations and more. He has been told by thousands of people that his story helped saved their lives and he never takes that for granted.

In 2016, Mental Health America awarded him its highest honor, the Clifford W. Beers Award, for his efforts to improve the lives of, and attitudes toward, people with mental illnesses. He was also awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Council for Behavioral Health in partnership with Eli Lilly, and he was named a Voice Awards Fellow and Award Winner by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has awarded him more than 70 military excellence medals as a civilian.

Kevin currently resides on the east coast with his wife, Margaret, but visits San Francisco often where he's worked toward the creation of a safety net for the Golden Gate Bridge. Thousands of people have attempted suicide from the bridge since Kevin survived.

Conference Schedule

8:30 am	Registration Opens	
8:50 - 9:00am	Welcome and Announcements	Whitley Hall Gold Room - 2 nd Floor
9:00-9:50am Panel Discussion	Julie Smith, SAM Foundation Cheryl Dodson, ASPARC John Duffey, Sr, AIBH	Whitley Hall Gold Room - 2 nd Floor
10:00-10:50am Session 1	Session 1.A THE DECISION POINT: One Student. Multiple Warning Signs. Your Move. <i>Jerome Dingle, LCSW</i> <i>Cassidy Abbott, APC</i>	Gold Room - 2 nd Floor
	Session 1.B Neurodivergence and Suicide Prevention <i>Katie Beaugez, LPC</i>	Room 140
	Session 1.C A Novel Mental Health Awareness Training for College Campuses <i>Kayla Varney, MPH</i> <i>Diana Patel, PhD</i>	Civic Room - 1 st Floor
	Session 1.D Mental Health of Women in the Military and Veterans: Implications for Suicide Risk and Prevention <i>Meg Milligan, PhD, Licensed Psychologist</i> <i>Kenya Giles Spencer, MSW, LICSW-PIP</i> <i>Charles Jeffrey Sandoz, PhD, retired LPC and LMHC</i>	Room 324

11:00am-
12:50pm
Lunch and
Keynote

Kevin Hines

**Award-Winning Global Speaker,
Documentary Filmmaker, and Bestselling
Author of *Cracked Not Broken***
Q&A and Informal Meet & Greet included

**Whitley Hall
Gold Room -
2nd Floor**

1:00-1:50pm
Session 2

Session 2.A

**The Kevin Hines Impact: How Survivor
Storytelling Creates Powerful Partnerships**
*Maggie Bell, MA
Julie Smith
Nicole Goggans*

**Whitley Hall
Gold Room - 2nd
Floor**

Session 2.B

Building Resilience Through Adversities
Zina Cartwell, MS, CPM, ICPS

Room 140

Session 2.C

**Teaching Hope: Preparing the Next Generation
of Helping Professionals for Suicide Prevention**
Jaide Mills, MA, ALC

**Civic Room - 1st
Floor**

Session 2.D

**Risk Factors and Risk Reduction Actions for
High-Risk Veteran College Students**
John Duffey, Sr, MA, LPC

Room 324

2:00-2:50pm
Session 3

Session 3.A

**Alabama's Comprehensive Prevention Plan:
Early Findings for Students and Community
Members**
*Anne Brisendine, DrPh, CHES
Angela Sullivan, PhD
Ryan Threath, MA, CHES
Niya Bonner, MSW, MPH
Gerald Friedman, MPH*

**Whitley Hall
Gold Room - 2nd
Floor**

Session 3.B

**Prescription Misuse, Other Drugs, and
Mental Health in Colleges**

Britney Robinson, MS, APS

Catina Allen, CMHC

Room 140

Session 3.C

**"I Just Don't Want to be Here": Examining
Explicit Bias, Implicit Bias,
Microaggressions, and Culture**

Mary R. Sewell, DSW, MSW, LMSW

Meg Milligan, PhD, Licensed Psychologist

**Civic Room - 1st
Floor**

Session 4.A

**Building the Village: Campus-Community
Partnerships for Suicide Prevention**

Jaide Mills, MA, ALC

**Whitley Hall Gold
Room - 2nd Floor**

Session 4.B

**Hidden in Plain Sight: Understanding &
Addressing Suicidality in Neurodivergent
College Students**

Tawana Farley, LPC, NCC

Room 140

Session 4.C

**Where's My Casserole? Suicide Prevention,
Creating Collaboration Across States**

Rachael Holloman, MS, LPC

Cheryl Dodson

Christi Collins

**Civic Room - 1st
Floor**

**3:00-3:50pm
Session 4**

3:50-4:00pm

Wrap Up and Closing Remarks

Content Sessions

THE DECISION POINT: One Student. Multiple Warning Signs. Your Move.

This interactive session uses a live case simulation to examine how campuses and community providers respond to students experiencing escalating suicide risk. Participants make real-time decisions from early warning signs through crisis response and post-crisis reintegration. The session addresses prevention gaps, stigma, and system barriers while promoting collaboration, continuity of care, and practical suicide prevention strategies.

Jerome Dingle, LCSW, Therapist, Pastoral Institute

Cassidy Abbott, APC, Resident Counselor, Pastoral Institute

Neurodivergence and Suicide Prevention

This presentation will enhance skills for working with neurodivergent college students experiencing suicidality. Participants will be able to utilize skills in working with three neurodivergent populations: ADHD, autism, and brain injury. This presentation will support clinicians and educators in understanding risk factors that contribute to suicidality, using strategies for intervention that support unique mental health needs, and utilizing resources that promote holistic wellness.

Katie Beaugez, LPC, Advocate Counseling Alabama

A Novel Mental Health Awareness Training for College Campuses

Awareness, Interaction, Direction (A.I.D.), is a low-cost mental health awareness training that teaches participants to recognize and respond to individuals in mental distress and connect them to resources. A.I.D. is a modular training that is delivered in 60- or 90-minute sessions with customizable scenarios. A.I.D. has improved individuals' confidence in supporting others and has increased mental health awareness on our campus while building knowledge, hope, and belief in recovery.

Kayla Varney, MPH, Research Associate, Kent State University

Diana Patel, PhD, Project Coordinator, Kent State University

Mental Health of Women in the Military and Veterans: Implications for Suicide Risk and Prevention

Women in the military and veteran communities experience unique mental health challenges that interact and contribute to increased suicide risk, including PTSD, military sexual trauma, depression, anxiety, substance misuse, and transition stress. This presentation examines gender-specific risk and protective factors and highlights evidence-based, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive suicide prevention strategies that strengthen resilience, improve access to care, and reduce suicide risk.

Meg Milligan, PhD, Licensed Psychologist, Professor, Troy University

Kenya Giles Spencer, MSW, LICSW-PIP

Charles Jeffrey Sandoz, PhD, retired LPC and LMHC, Troy University

Content Sessions

The Kevin Hines Impact: How Survivor Storytelling Creates Powerful Partnerships

Leaders of the SAM Foundation discuss how Kevin Hines' story has impacted community members in their QPR training sessions. They share how local survivors have been encouraged by Kevin's example to share their own experiences, creating stronger partnerships for the nonprofit's mission. We use a roundtable with audio-visual aids and QA time. At a conference featuring Kevin, we want attendees to learn how they can continue to use his and other survivors' stories to elevate awareness about suicide.

Maggie Bell, MA, Interim Executive Director, SAM Foundation

Julie Smith, Vice-President, SAM Foundation

Nicole Goggans, President, SAM Foundation

Building Resilience Through Adversities

Building Reliance through Adversities equips participants to strengthen resilience and trust during challenges. Grounded in real-world experiences, it explores adaptive strategies and mindset shifts that sustain performance and well-being. Delivered through interactive discussion, case examples, and guided reflection, the session aligns with conference goals by promoting collaboration, empowerment, and practical tools for navigating adversity.

Zina Cartwell, MS, CPM, ICPS, Prevention Director, Central Alabama Wellness

Teaching Hope: Preparing the Next Generation of Helping Professionals for Suicide Prevention

This interactive presentation introduces the Four Pillars of Suicide Prevention Education: Recognize, Respond, Refer, and Reflect. Participants will explore practical strategies for teaching these core competencies through experiential learning, reflection, simulation, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Designed for educators and campus professionals, the session provides actionable ideas to strengthen suicide prevention education and prepare future helping professionals.

Jaide Mills, MA, ALC, Doctoral Student, Liberty University, Private Practice Owner

Risk Factors and Risk Reduction Actions for High-Risk Veteran College Students

Student veterans represent a growing and valuable population within higher education, bringing leadership experience, resilience, and diverse perspectives to college campuses. However, many veteran students also face unique challenges that may increase their vulnerability to mental health concerns and suicide risk. This presentation examines suicide risk factors among veteran college students and highlights practical, evidence-informed strategies that higher education professionals can use to promote awareness, prevention, and student success.

John Duffey, Sr, MA, LPC, Executive Director, Alabama Institute for Behavioral Health

Content Sessions

Alabama's Comprehensive Prevention Plan: Early Findings for Students and Community Members

This team has been charged with updating the statewide suicide prevention plan for the next 5 years. With a mixed-methods approach, a summary of suicide prevention in Alabama has been developed using secondary data and primary surveys and interviews. We will present early findings of our assessment, with a focus on student mental wellness and other efforts in higher education. We will engage attendees in a feedback activity to gather insights to inform strategy development for the final plan.

Anne Brisendine, DrPH, CHES, Assistant Professor, UAB School of Public Health

Angela Sullivan, PhD, Assistant Professor, Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Services, UAB School of Public Health

Ryan Threatt, MA, CHES, Program Manager, Applied Evaluation and Assessment Collaborative, UAB School of Public Health

Niya Bonner, MSW, MPH, Program Manager, Applied Evaluation and Assessment Collaborative, UAB School of Public Health

Gerald Friedman, MPH, Program Manager, UAB School of Medicine, DrPH Student, UAB School of Public Health

Prescription Misuse, Other Drugs, and Mental Health in Colleges

This presentation examines prescription medication misuse, substance use, and mental health concerns among college students. Participants will explore commonly misused medications, contributing mental health factors, warning signs, and prevention strategies. Through discussion and current trends, attendees will gain practical approaches to reduce stigma, support student well-being, promote healthy coping skills, and strengthen campus prevention and intervention efforts.

Britney Robinson, MS, APS, Behavioral Health Prevention Program Manager, Council on Substance Abuse

Catina Allen, CMHC, Program Manager, COSA

"I Just Don't Want to Be Here": Examining Explicit Bias, Implicit Bias, Microaggressions, and Culture

"I Just Don't Want to Be Here": Examining Explicit Bias, Implicit Bias, Microaggressions, and Cultural Awareness in Suicide Assessment and Professional Practice is an interactive presentation designed to increase participants' awareness of how personal assumptions, bias, and cultural experiences influence assessment, communication, and decision-making across behavioral health, social work, counseling, healthcare, and educational settings.

Mary R. Sewell, DSW, MSW, LMSW, Behavioral Health Therapist, University of Kentucky

Meg Milligan, PhD, Licensed Psychologist, Professor, Troy University

Content Sessions

Building the Village: Campus-Community Partnerships for Suicide Prevention

This interactive presentation explores how colleges can strengthen suicide prevention by building coordinated partnerships across campus and community systems. Participants will examine practical strategies to improve connectedness, continuity of care, referral pathways, and collaboration among faculty, student affairs, counseling, healthcare, and community providers. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas that support a campus-wide culture of prevention and student wellness.

Jaide Mills, MA, ALC, Doctoral Student, Liberty University, Private Practice Owner

Hidden in Plain Sight: Understanding & Addressing Suicidality in Neurodivergent College Students

This presentation explores hidden suicidality in neurodivergent college students, including those with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder, where distress is often masked by perfectionism, social strain, and internalized struggles. Using a trauma-informed, neurodiversity-affirming lens, this session provides practical strategies to improve identification, reduce stigma, and strengthen campus-community suicide prevention efforts.

Tawana Farley, LPC, NCC, Private Practice

Where's My Casserole? Suicide Prevention, Creating Collaboration Across States

This presentation began with the lived experience and power of storytelling to work across state lines to promote suicide prevention. Learn the power of storytelling, strength of partnership, empower community members and prevent burnout among professionals and compassion fatigue in everyone who assists in suicide prevention.

Rachael Holloman, MS, LPC, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health

Cheryl Dodson, Certified QPR Trainer, Executive Director, ASPARC

Christi Collins, Certified Peer Support, QPR Trainer, ASPARC

Professional Development Hours for the 2026 Alabama Higher Education Suicide Prevention Conference



The Troy University Department of Counseling and Rehabilitation has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP #4223. The Troy University Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation, and Interpreter Training is solely responsible for all aspects of this program.

You are responsible for signing in to the conference, the keynote, and each of the breakout sessions that you attend. If you purchased continuing education at the time of registration for this conference, you will also be sent a link to indicate which sessions you attended. This information should match the sign-in sheets.

Once the conference is complete you will be sent a link to complete the conference CEU Form. Upon completing this form, you will receive a certificate for the number of hours you attended.

CEU Certificates will be emailed no later than December 31, 2026. You may earn as many as 6 clock hours for the total conference. Requests received after December 31, 2026 will cost an additional \$15.00. Replacement certificates will be an additional \$10.00. Presenters may not receive NBCC hours credit for their own presentations.

Certificates of Attendance will be available.

About Us



This coalition is meant to provide education and raise awareness of suicide prevention and intervention, create community conversations and action, and to provide an umbrella of local community resources, as well as national resources, in an effort to prevent suicide. The Trojan Suicide Prevention Coalition is a joint effort by Troy University Faculty and a funded Alabama Higher Education Suicide Prevention Grant (awarded by the Alabama Department of Public Health) to increase awareness, education, and prevention of suicide. Drs. Kanessa Miller Doss, Sherrionda Crawford, and Shelley Reed coordinate and facilitate this program.

Contact: troysuicidepreventionprograms@gmail.com

