

Resources for Suicide Prevention: An Introduction

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Outline

- ✓ Effective suicide prevention
- ✓ Relevant resources
 - **Media recommendations**
 - “Postvention” guidance
 - Crisis support
 - Other state and community organizations
- ✓ Role of railroad stakeholders: Questions to ponder



Spectrum of Suicide Prevention and Response

Prevention

Intervention & Treatment

Response

Stop problems from occurring by reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors

Intervene early; provide effective treatment

- Respond to crises
- Assist after a suicide (“postvention”)

Goal

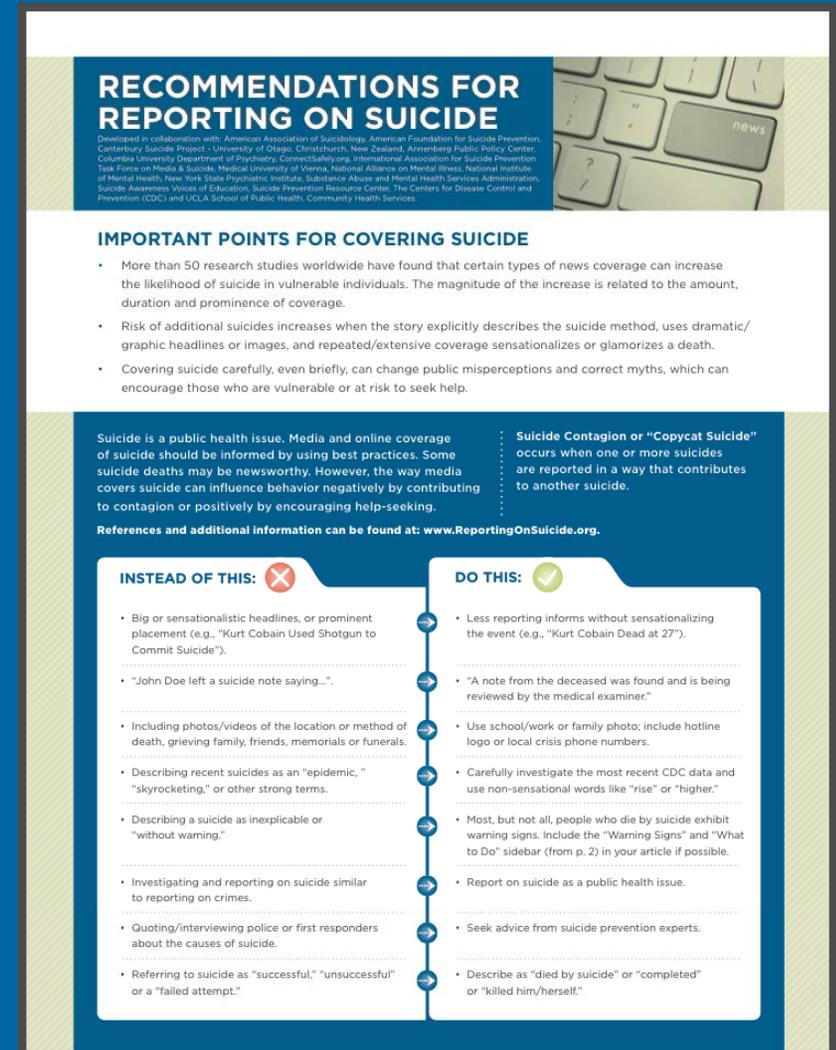
Like Trespassing Prevention, Suicide Prevention Involves...

- ✓ A population focus
- ✓ A systematic planning process
 - Data → Analysis → Intervention → Evaluation
- ✓ Identification of multiple contributors (“risk & protective factors”)
- ✓ Multiple solutions

I. Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide

- Problem: media coverage can increase the risk of suicide in vulnerable individuals (“contagion”).

- Solution: Research-Based, Consensus Recommendations



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPORTING ON SUICIDE

Developed in collaboration with: American Association of Suicidology, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Contagion Suicide Project - University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand, Avenirberg Public Policy Center, Columbia University Department of Psychiatry, ConnecticutSafety.org, International Association for Suicide Prevention, Task Force on Media & Suicide, Medical University of Vienna, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Institute of Mental Health, New York State Psychiatric Institute, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Suicide Awareness Voices of Education, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and UCLA School of Public Health, Community Health Services.

IMPORTANT POINTS FOR COVERING SUICIDE

- More than 50 research studies worldwide have found that certain types of news coverage can increase the likelihood of suicide in vulnerable individuals. The magnitude of the increase is related to the amount, duration and prominence of coverage.
- Risk of additional suicides increases when the story explicitly describes the suicide method, uses dramatic/graphic headlines or images, and repeated/extensive coverage sensationalizes or glamorizes a death.
- Covering suicide carefully, even briefly, can change public misperceptions and correct myths, which can encourage those who are vulnerable or at risk to seek help.

Suicide is a public health issue. Media and online coverage of suicide should be informed by using best practices. Some suicide deaths may be newsworthy. However, the way media covers suicide can influence behavior negatively by contributing to contagion or positively by encouraging help-seeking.

Suicide Contagion or “Copycat Suicide” occurs when one or more suicides are reported in a way that contributes to another suicide.

References and additional information can be found at: www.ReportingOnSuicide.org.

INSTEAD OF THIS: ❌	DO THIS: ✅
• Big or sensationalistic headlines, or prominent placement (e.g., “Kurt Cobain Used Shotgun to Commit Suicide”).	• Less reporting informs without sensationalizing the event (e.g., “Kurt Cobain Dead at 27”).
• “John Doe left a suicide note saying...”	• “A note from the deceased was found and is being reviewed by the medical examiner.”
• Including photos/videos of the location or method of death, grieving family, friends, memorials or funerals.	• Use school/work or family photo; include hotline logo or local crisis phone numbers.
• Describing recent suicides as an “epidemic,” “skyrocketing,” or other strong terms.	• Carefully investigate the most recent CDC data and use non-sensational words like “rise” or “higher.”
• Describing a suicide as inexplicable or “without warning.”	• Most, but not all, people who die by suicide exhibit warning signs. Include the “Warning Signs” and “What to Do” sidebar (from p. 2) in your article if possible.
• Investigating and reporting on suicide similar to reporting on crimes.	• Report on suicide as a public health issue.
• Quoting/interviewing police or first responders about the causes of suicide.	• Seek advice from suicide prevention experts.
• Referring to suicide as “successful,” “unsuccessful” or a “failed attempt.”	• Describe as “died by suicide” or “completed” or “killed him/herself.”

Example Recommendations

(See handout for all)

- ↓ Amount, duration and prominence of coverage
- ↓ Dramatic, graphic, or sensational headlines/images
- ↓ Glamorizing the death
- ↓ Normalizing suicide, presenting it as a solution to problems
- ↓ Explicit description of method, make method seem attractive

- ↑ Accurate information about suicide
- ↑ Suicide is preventable, there is help and hope
- ↑ Resources, how to get help for self or others

SEARCH



The Web



The News Herald

Search

NEWS

WYANDOTTE: Woman commits suicide on railroad tracks; was talking to boyfriend on phone at time of impact

Published: Wednesday, July 11, 2012

Man struck and killed by Metrolink train believed to be a suicide

By City News Service

Posted: 08/07/2012 07:23:27 AM PDT

Updated: 08/07/2012 07:24:14 AM PDT

ORANGE - A man was struck and killed by a Metrolink train Monday in Orange in an apparent suicide, police said.

The train struck the unidentified victim about 1:45 p.m. near the Orange station at 194 N. Atchison St., Sherita Coffelt of Metrolink said.

Witnesses told police the man "calmly walked" on the west track in front of a southbound train about 50 yards north of the station, Orange Police Department Sgt. Fred Lopez said.

According to witnesses, the man turned, faced the train and waited for it to strike him, Lopez said.

Metrolink has two sets of tracks available, so the fatal collision did not result in a service halt, Coffelt said.

Amtrak train kills person in Clifton



A Mesa County Sheriff's deputy looks up at personnel on the engine of an Amtrak train that struck a person on the tracks east of 33 Road Tuesday.

By Paul Shockley

Wednesday, July 25, 2012

One person was killed Tuesday night after being struck by Amtrak's California Zephyr, which witnesses said was barreling into Clifton at speeds estimated at 60 to 70 mph.

The collision was reported just after 6 p.m. on the west side of the 33 Road overpass. The Zephyr was westbound. Yellow tarp and a nearby white blanket covered remains as Mesa County Sheriff's Department deputies worked a crime scene 30 to 40 feet long along the railroad line.

Sheriff's Department Lt. Jim Fogg said they couldn't immediately determine the deceased person's gender. It wasn't also immediately clear if the act was suicide or homicide, Fogg

said.

Emergency dispatch traffic said the person was reported to have intentionally jumped in front of the oncoming train.

The Zephyr came to a stop between the overpass and the crossing at 33 Road and Front Street, before continuing west to Grand Junction just before 8 p.m.

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said there were no injuries to passengers or crew. Approximately 284 people were on the train, he said.

The engineers and conductors who witnessed the act and helped in the death investigation were to be removed and replaced in Grand Junction, a regularly scheduled crew change location, Magliari said.

...the train couldn't stop in time...

...unsuccessfully tried to stop in time....

“[Spokesperson] said people have to either buy a ticket or jump the turnstiles in order to get into the [subway] system, whereas on railroads like [System A or System B] a person can simply walk onto the tracks.”

Metro's public suicide prevention campaign months away

Need help?

Metro's planned suicide intervention hotline won't begin for another few months, the latest delay in the transit agency's nearly three-year-old pledge to fight suicides-by-train even as the death toll mounts.

» No reason for living or lack of sense of purpose

» Anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time

» Withdrawal from friends, family and society

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's toll-free number, 800-273-TALK (8255), for direct help or guidance on how to intervene.

Need help?

The American Association of Suicidology says the best intervention comes before a person heads to the subway. The group urges friends, family and co-workers to take seriously warning signs that include:

» Increased alcohol or drug use

urpose

ping

ity

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's toll-free number, 800-273-TALK (8255), for direct help or guidance on how to intervene.

Suicides by Metro train in 2012

» **Jan. 6:** A 56-year-old Alexandria woman jumped into the path of a train at the Van Dorn Street stop during the morning rush.

» **March 8:** A 52-year-old Northwest D.C. man killed himself by jumping into the path of a train at Foggy Bottom, while the transit agency's board was discussing its suicide prevention plans on the system.

» **March 19:** A man died after hit by a Red Line train at White Flint about 10:15 a.m.

» **Saturday:** A 65-year-old Montgomery Village man killed himself at the Rockville station by getting into the path of the train at 11:17 a.m.



Also, consider general tone

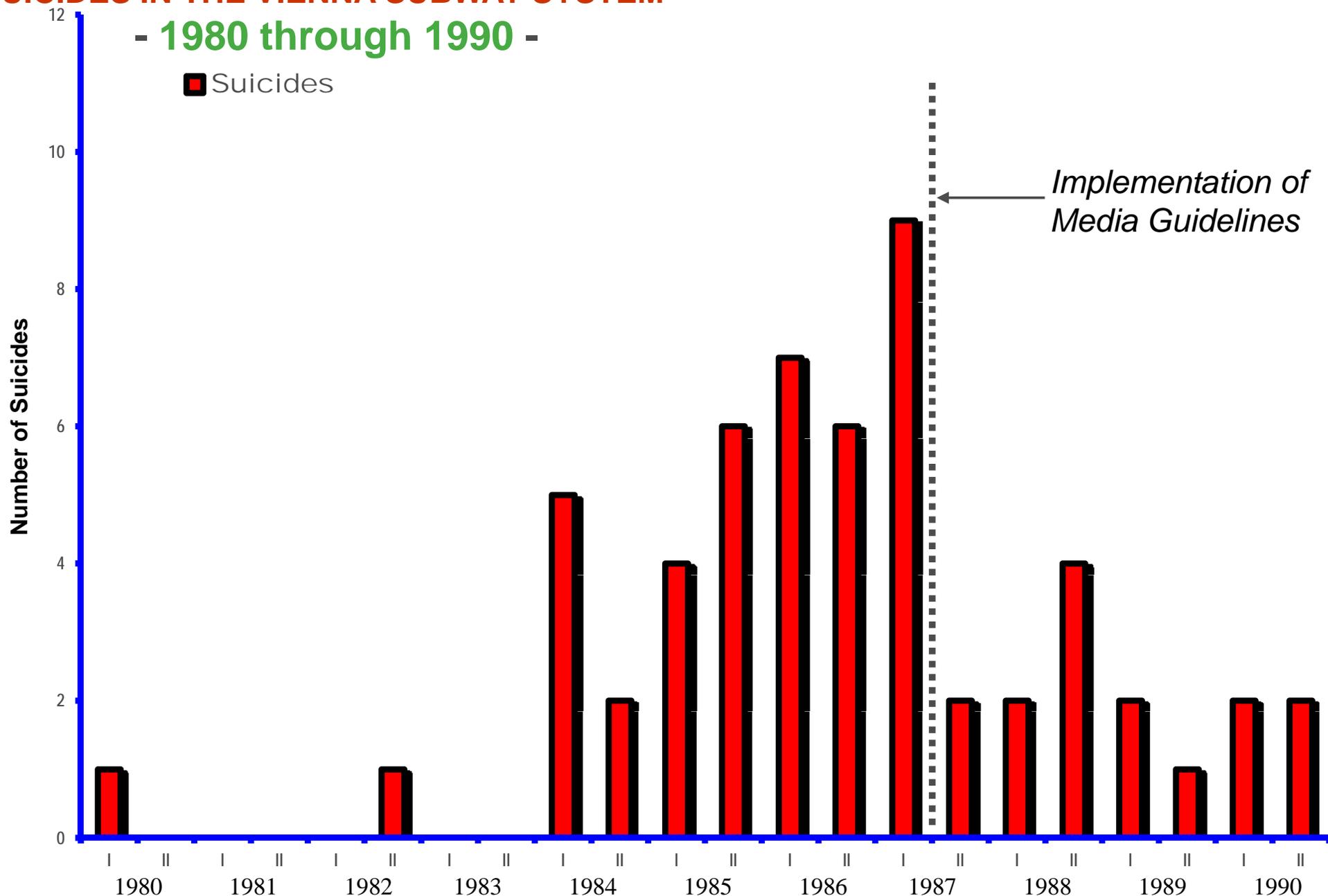
“By 4 p.m., [spokesperson] said, all trains were operating on schedule.”

"Again, you had someone trespassing on the railroad right-of-way..."

66

EVIDENCE OF MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS' EFFECTIVENESS

SUICIDES IN THE VIENNA SUBWAY SYSTEM



I indicates the first six months and II the second six months. The media guidelines of the Austrian Association for Suicide Prevention went into effect in June 1987

For More Info: www.ReportingOnSuicide.org

- Includes standard two-pager & customizable version
- Coming soon! Spanish-language version

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPORTING ON SUICIDE

HOME **READ THE RECOMMENDATIONS** **EXAMPLES** **ONLINE MEDIA** **ASK THE EXPERTS**
SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS **RESEARCH** **ABOUT**

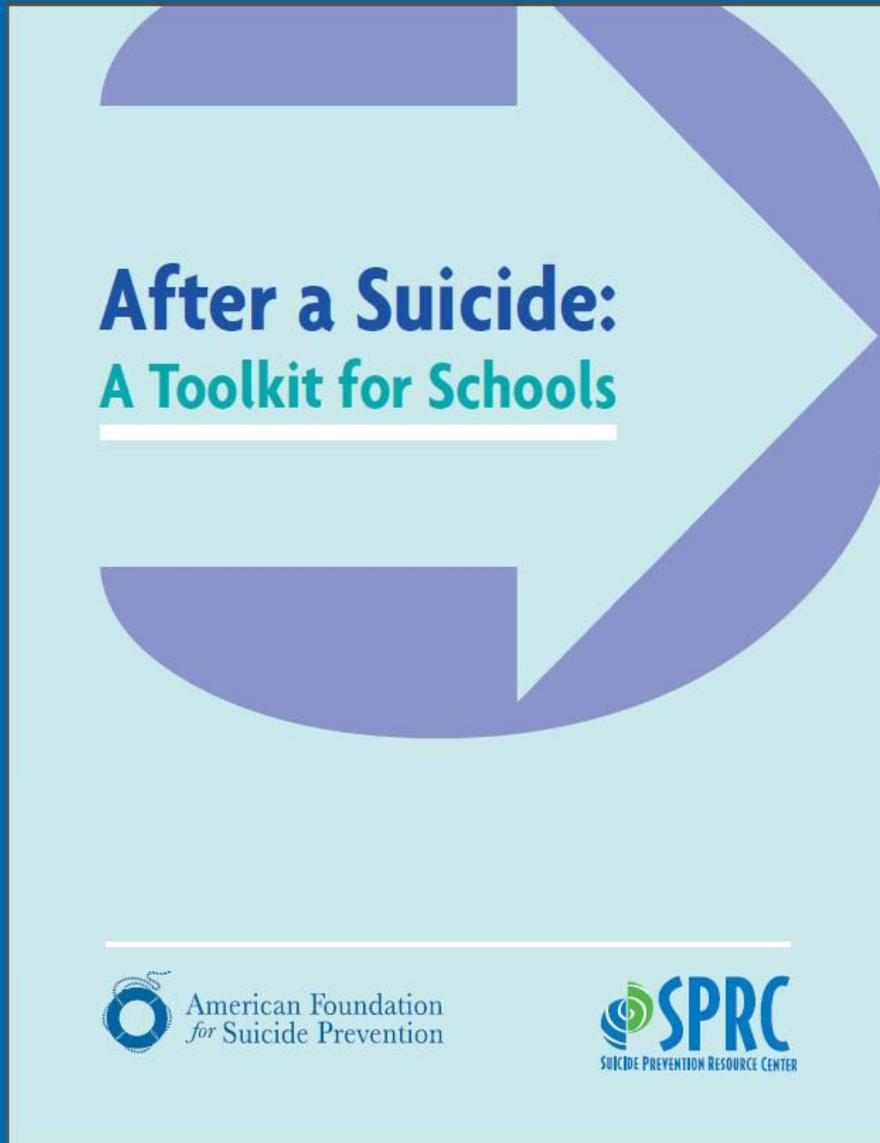


Creating Prevention Messages



- ✓ Media recommendations also apply
- ✓ Additional considerations: Best practices for communications campaigns
 - Use communications in sync with other “E’s”
 - Think creatively about possible behavior changes
 - Best audience?
 - Best messages?
 - Fear messages
 - “KADNAB”

II. Postvention



School Postvention Toolkit

- Get the Facts First
- Crisis Response
- Helping Students Cope
- Working with the Community
- Memorialization
- Social Media
- Suicide Contagion
- Bringing in Outside Help
- Going Forward

http://www.sprc.org/library_resources/items/after-suicide-toolkit-schools

III. Crisis Services

1. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- ✓ Free, confidential, 24/7
- ✓ Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- ✓ Chat: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

2. Crisis Centers

- ✓ Nationwide network
- ✓ Services vary
- ✓ Find a Center:
<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetInvolved/Locator>

CALL US 24 HOURS A DAY



FOR VETERANS PRESS 1
EN ESPAÑOL OPRIMA EL 2

ARE YOU IN CRISIS?

Click to Chat

IV. Other Possible Resources/Collaborators

- ✓ State **government** suicide prevention programs
- ✓ Statewide **coalition or organization** (e.g., NAMI)
- ✓ **Local organizations, e.g.**, community-based suicide prevention, trauma/bereavement, mental health organizations

Starting place for local/state resources:

- ✓ SPRC State/Community pages: <http://www.sprc.org/states>

What is the Railroad Industry's Role?

Issues to ponder and discuss:

- ✓ Who speaks to the media about suicide deaths, and when?
 - How can you engage media and various spokespeople proactively?
- ✓ Your role versus other community partners?
 - Working with the media
 - After a suicide
 - Suicide prevention efforts
- ✓ Educational efforts:
 - Tension between multiple goals? “Trains are deadly.”
 - Partnering to create effective prevention messages



Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Promoting a public health approach to suicide prevention



- Funded by SAMHSA
- Operated by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)

www.sprc.org

SPRC Services and Resources

- ✓ E-newsletter (Weekly Spark)
- ✓ Publications
- ✓ Trainings & webinars
- ✓ Support for the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention
- ✓ Partnership building
- ✓ Website:
 - ✓ Library
 - ✓ Best Practices Registry
 - ✓ Online trainings
 - ✓ ... and much more!

The screenshot shows the SPRC website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'About SPRC', 'Contact Us', 'FAQ', and a search box. The main header features the SPRC logo and the text 'SPRC • Suicide Prevention Resource Center' with the tagline 'Promoting a public health approach to suicide prevention'. A secondary header includes a 'Suicide Prevention Lifeline' logo and the phone number '1-800-273-TALK (8255)'. Below this is a horizontal menu with categories: 'Suicide Prevention Basics', 'News & Events', 'Training Institute', 'Best Practices Registry', 'Library & Resources', and 'Who We Serve'. The main content area features a large image of a group of people at a table, with the headline 'Matt Adler Suicide Assessment Act'. A text block below the image states: 'The Matt Adler Suicide Assessment, Treatment and Management Act makes Washington the first state to require continuing education in suicide prevention for mental health professionals. The bill was signed into law on March 29.' A 'Find out more »' button is positioned below the text. Below the main article, there are several smaller sections: 'From the Field', 'AMSR Training', 'New WA Law', and 'New Technology'. The 'New WA Law' section is highlighted. Below these are six resource boxes: 'Professionals Providing Social Services', 'Health & Behavioral Health Care Providers', 'Director's Blog', 'SAMHSA Youth Suicide Prevention Grantees', 'States & Communities', and 'Colleges & Universities'. At the bottom, there is a section for the 'Action Alliance' and a social media widget for Twitter and Facebook.