

SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT CAREGIVERS STATEMENT OF PURPOSE*

- I. We affirm that serving the needs of people bereaved by suicide is a priority in its own right.
- II. Survivors of suicide loss are affected by the fallout and trauma from suicide in many ways—including increased risk for serious mental health issues and for suicide—and we are dedicated to implementing effective services for survivors commensurate with the impact of suicide on all who are left behind after a fatality.
- III. We believe that reaching out to help survivors is the compassionate and ethical response to suicide that is required of a healthy society.
- IV. We value the efforts of all who have contributed over the years to supporting survivors in their grief, and at the same time, we recognize the challenges we face and the hard work we must embark upon in order to meet the future needs of survivors through integrated, effective, and sustainable programs that reach everyone who wants help.
- V. Therefore, we commit our immediate and earnest efforts to the following:
 - Supporting a comprehensive national response to suicide that includes programs, policies, and services that address survivors’ bereavement needs and decrease the most serious risks to their health and well being
 - Strengthening collaboration among everyone with a stake in suicide bereavement services to improve community-based postvention, including funeral professionals, clergy, law enforcement personnel, emergency medical services and crisis workers, mental health practitioners, grief counselors, support group facilitators, educators, researchers, physicians, and military personnel
 - Promoting the development of universally available survivor support services that are accessible, proactive, age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, effective, and sustainable
 - Advocating for research to better understand the needs of people bereaved by suicide and to develop an evidence base for effective grief interventions and other tools to reduce the negative impact of survivors’ experience of loss
 - Engaging in health communications and other strategies to lessen the stigma related to suicide and suicide loss

We will work with practitioners, stakeholders, and survivors themselves to make certain that people bereaved by suicide receive the help they need, when and where they need it, in ways that increase their capacity and opportunity to live full and fruitful lives. We will combine our efforts with those of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, member organizations of the National Council for Suicide Prevention, and leaders at every level to fulfill the hope that, one day, effective assistance will be readily available for survivors of suicide loss in every community in our nation.

* The “Statement of Purpose” was written by *Franklin Cook, Frank Campbell, Julie Cerel, Jack Jordan, Doreen Marshall, and Vanessa McGann*, who were among those who attended the SAVE Suicide Survivor and Bereavement Leadership Summit held in Minneapolis in October 2010. Others attending the Summit (in *italics*, below) along with additional survivor community leaders reviewed the declaration, including *LaRita Archibald, Virginia Bender, Lidia Bernik, Sam and Lois Bloom, Iris Bolton, Heidi Bryan, Karyl Chastain Beal, Bev and Bill Feigelman, Carla Fine, Linda Flatt, Carol Graham, Nina Gutin, Marilyn Koenig, Michelle Linn-Gust, Alison Malmon, Karen Marshall, John McIntosh, Melinda Moore, Michael Myers, Ken Norton, Kim Ruocco, Tony Salvatore, Barb Smith, Sally Spencer-Thomas, Leslie Storm, and Stephanie Weber*.

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