



UNIVERSITY of GUYANA



Media Saving Lives

A Webinar Presentation for World Suicide Prevention Day 2016

Connect. Communicate. Care.

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Context for Suicidal Behaviors

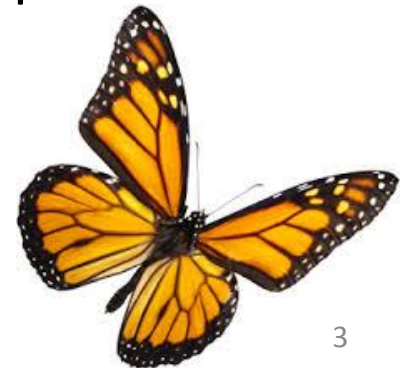


- *Focus on Media.*
- *Wider definition of media.*
- *Human behavior produced by complex interplay of factors .*
- *Nested in an ecological and even evolutionary context.*
- *Bio-psycho-socio-cultural*
- *Most news stories focus on one or two of these areas.*
- *Context is important.*

Production of Stories- Key Ideas

Media Framing

- Process by which an issue is portrayed in the news media. Media frames provide boundaries around a news story and determine what is and is not newsworthy or notable.
- Helps decide what to include in a story and what to leave out
- May be conscious, instinctive or culture-bound.
- Draws attention to certain details and relegates other elements to the background or leave out some aspects completely



How Media Frames Work

The news media generally use two main frames: **episodic and thematic.**

Episodic: depicts public issues in terms of concrete separate instances. focus on discrete events that involve individuals located at specific places and at specific times (e.g., nightly crime reports; Used about 80 percent of the time in newscasts (Us figures higher for Guyana).

Thematic news frames: used less than 20 percent of the time; place public issues in a broader context / reports as themes or trends by focusing on general conditions or outcomes

The type of news frame used has a profound effect on the way in which individuals attribute responsibility:

Episodic framing tends to elicit individualistic rather than societal attributions of responsibility

Thematic framing has the opposite attributes responsibility to wider causes outside of individuals. (Iyengar, 1991).



Agenda Setting

- Agenda-Setting: The role played by mass communication media in establishing the salient issues and images **to which the public reacts**.
- The process by which issue proponents (**interest groups**) **work to gain the attention** of media professionals, the public and public policy makers.
- Heavy evidence that the **news media are the primary agenda-setting** agents.
- An issue that is **covered by the news media will set the agenda for how the public reacts** as measured in public opinion polls and how policy makers will respond through legislation.
- Agenda setting also refers to the ability that the media have to **not only reflect reality but also determine reality**. The media determine reality by **how much attention** they pay to any particular issue.
- *For instance, if the news media "cover" social and medical needs to support anti suicide extensively, the public and policy makers will generally respond accordingly, with policies and programmes,.*



Suicidal Behavior and Media - Key Ideas

- Self harming behaviors occur in a wide and complex **bio-psycho-social** context;
- Media coverage and or portrayals can have both **positive** and **negative** effects on self harm;
- Media content and technology interact with other factors to produce their effects on individual health;
- Media cannot be held as the root/only cause of self harm but are heavily implicated.
- Ideations –formation of mental images about performing an action are generally transmitted through media;
- Media responsible for bringing attention to issue at this moment played large part in mobilizing public awareness and political support
- E.g..Mosely conducts ongoing conversation online , NP coverage consistent



Traditional Media Effects on Self Harm

- Consistent association between reporting and portrayals of suicide via Traditional media and actual suicide deaths (Pirkis et al., 2010).

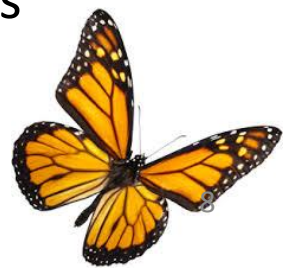
Recent studies of newspaper reports demonstrated

- a dose-response relationship, whereby the greater the coverage, the larger the increase in suicides.
- Re television effect most noticeable immediately after the material is aired.
- Re non-fiction books the association was consistent and temporal (i.e. the exposure to the book preceded the suicide).
- Conclusive evidence that portrayals of suicide in the news and information media can precipitate **copycat acts** in **particular circumstances**.
- Evidence that individuals may initially **learn** about suicide through the media.



Possible Causes of These Triggers

- More likely where media reporting or portrayal **is dramatic** (Phillips, 1974; Stack, 1987)
- Features **details** of a **specific method of suicide** (Ashton & Donnan, 1981; Hawton et al., 1999; Schmidtke & Häfner, 1988)
- Coverage is widespread or repeated (Stack, 1987, 2003),
- Where the media consumer shares demographic characteristics with the suicide model/victims (Niederkrötenhaler, Till, Kapusta, et al., 2009).
- Act is seen as **iconic**
- Gives details of **place**
- Gives spicy **personal details** out of the **full context** of the persons life
- Music: may have **mood altering** effects
- **Layered effects**: Evidence that media coverage of some other issues (stigmizing, distressing) may also affect identity, esteem, mood and cognitions which underlie some self harming behaviours



Werther or Papageno?

Werther Effect

Short-term triggering effects of media presentations : Effects do not tend to last beyond a few weeks (Bollen & Phillips, 1982; Phillips, 1974)

- Some people **may respond quickly** to media presentations of suicide, acting impulsively or putting previous thoughts about suicide into action, while others may make a more considered response (Schmidtke & Häfner, 1988).

Papageno effect

- Stories that recount a suicidal person engaging in adaptive, non-self-harm behaviors and choosing to live is associated with a decrease in the suicide rate. (Niederkrötenhaler et al., 2010).
- Worrying trend **that ANY type of media story may in fact present a trigger ;**
- Looking at **longer-term effects, normalizing the idea that suicide is an appropriate response to problems.** This may be especially the case where media portrayals achieve iconic status. (Kaie (3) 2009 (friends) 2015 (40 days)



Special Role of Visuals

- **Establishes images** in people's minds, which may be re-awakened at times of stress or depression (Holmes, Crane, Fennell, & Williams, 2007).
- Often an important part of disorders such as health anxiety, social phobia and agoraphobia (spaces) (Hackmann & Clark, 1999; Wells & Hackmann, 1993).
- Images may play a role in **modeling**, **demonstrating**, and **glamorizing** self-harming behavior (Zahl & Hawton, 2004)



Internet

- Mounting evidence of a consistent, temporally-based association between web-based suicide-related content and eventual suicides (Pirkis et al., 2010).
- Internet as powerful socializing agent where emergent subcultures focused around particular web content (Arnett, 1995).

Recent study showed that explicit depictions of people engaging in self-harming behaviors, are common and frequently viewed, with the top 100 such videos being viewed more than two million times and 58 per cent having no content warning (Lewis, Heath, St Denis, & Noble, 2011).

- Pro-suicide 50% / within first few seconds of search



Internet - Risk Factors

- Those with **history of suicidal ideation may be five times more likely** to access information about suicide on the internet (Katsumata, Matsumoto, Kitani, & Takeshima, 2008).
- **Cyber-bullying**, or the use of various forms of the internet to harass others of growing concern (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007 and Brown & Bobkowski, 2011).
- Studies suggest that **adolescents involved in internet harassment also experience a range of other psychosocial difficulties**, such as aggression, isolation from caregivers and delinquent peers (Ybarra, Espelage, & Mitchell, 2007).



Social Media : “Cyberbullycide”

There are several specific ways that social media can increase risk for prosuicide behavior.

Cyberbullying typically - intentionally and repeated targeting by another child or teen in the form of threats or harassments or humiliated or embarrassed by means of cellular phones or Internet technologies such as e-mail, texting, social networking sites, or instant messaging.

Cyber harassment and cyber stalking typically refer to these same actions when they involve adults.

A review of data collected between 2004 and 2010 via survey studies indicated that lifetime cyber bullying victimization rates ranged from 20.8% to 40.6% and offending rates ranged from 11.5% to 20.1%.



“Cyberbullycide”

Cyberbullying, when directly or indirectly linked to suicide, has been referred to as cyberbullicide.

victims of cyber bullying were almost 2 times as likely to attempt suicide than those who were not. These results also indicated that cyber bullying offenders were 1.5 times as likely to report having attempted suicide than children who were not offenders or victims of cyber bullying

- **Guyana Case: Mondale Smith Story [In real life: Sleeping beauty did not wake up**
OCTOBER 4, 2015 | BY [KNEWS](#) | FILED UNDER [NEWS](#) *The Patrice Vanbuckley nee DeAbreu Story* By Mondale Smith
<http://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2015/10/04/in-real-life-sleeping-beauty-did-not-wake-up/>]
- Guyana – cybercrimes legislation should include remedies in law for this kind of thing



Media Positive Responses

:Online Therapy

- Online therapy is of increasing interest with the internet and text messaging being used for treatment with some apparently positive results (Newman, 2004) Rochlen, Zack, & Speyer, 2004).
- Online peer-to-peer interactions for health concerns, such as depression, eating disorders and diabetes control (Eysenbach, Powell, Englesakis, Rizo, & Stern, 2004).
- Applied techniques to violence in Guyana in Generation G and Guyanese for Peace
- Everyone is concerned but -**Caution** that many sites and services may not be serviced by professionals with the correct skill mix or may not provide committed continuous contact which is needed



PAHO/WHO Guyana Responds

- **Session 1:** Opening by Guyana's President H.E. David Granger and other key government and media functionaries contextualized the problem and the media's role in it.
- **Session 2: Understanding Suicide and Suicidal Behavior** - introduced participants to each other and to the basic causes of suicide using a humanist psychological and bio-psycho-social framework.
- **Session 3: Understanding Media Effects** -This interactive presentation built upon the key concepts of suicide ideation and the bio-psycho-social context of it; focused attention on the ways in which key processes such as the papageno and whether effects are achieved through different forms of media. This session also introduced the concepts of agenda setting, uses and gratifications and framing theory.
- **Session 4—GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING And Self Care Of Journalists** as first responders.

PAHO Organized and funded a two day workshop Friday April 29 and Saturday April 30, 2016 from 9.30am to 3.30pm at the Regency Hotel, Guyana. Over 60 journalists.



Guidelines For Reporting

- Take the opportunity to educate the public about suicide prevention
- Avoid language which sensationalizes or normalizes suicide, or presents it as a solution to problems (not desired outcome/ associations with crime and judgment; Epidemic , exclamations , extra bold headlines)
- Avoid prominent placement and undue repetition of stories about suicide
Avoid explicit description of the method used in a completed or attempted suicide
- Avoid providing detailed information about the site of a completed or attempted suicide
- Word headlines carefully



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Guidelines for Reporting....

- Exercise caution in using photographs or video footage
- Take particular care in reporting celebrity suicides
- Show due consideration for people bereaved by suicide
- Provide information about where to seek help
- Recognize that media professionals themselves may be affected by stories about suicide (WHO)
- Place story in context
- Choose language carefully





Apply recommendations to online content. Consider implementing procedures to manage message boards for posts that may be harmful or from people in crisis.

Present information about suicide in ways that may be helpful:

- Reporting the broader issue of suicide, including policy, practice, research, rates, trends and other areas of public interest.
- Information about risk factors and warning signs, the importance of taking suicidal thoughts seriously and how to seek help.
- Personal stories about people who have overcome suicidal thinking, to promote hope and encourage others to seek help.
- Reports that show the impact of suicidal behaviour on individuals and communities to increase understanding about these experiences.

Source : MindCraft



I Thank You. Questions?

