

Preventing Suicide

A Discussion with Research America Members

Bob Gebbia, CEO, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention,

September 14, 2022



This discussion is timely as
September is National Suicide
Prevention Month



More importantly, mental health and suicide prevention have become priorities, especially as a result of the pandemic



The Pandemic Impacted our Mental Health

Isolation

Human Loss

Social & Political Unrest

Increased Depression, Anxiety, Substance Use

Financial Loss



Mental health became a priority

Use of tele-mental health

New Federal funding

Focus on health disparities

More information, less stigma

Increased demand for AFSP's research,
programs & advocacy



Our Mission

Save Lives and Bring Hope to Those Affected by Suicide

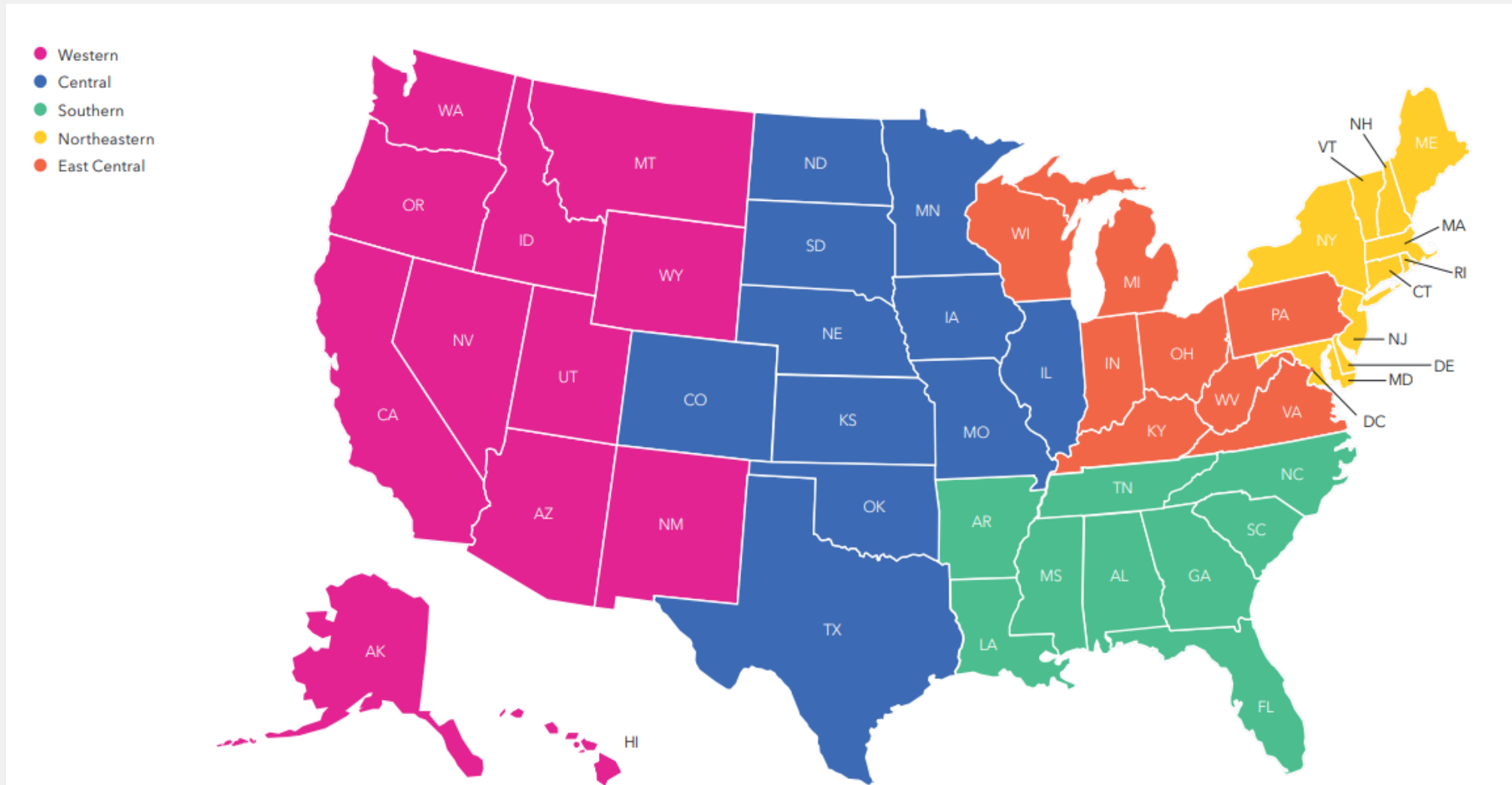


Our Positioning

We are the voluntary health organization that gives those affected by suicide a nationwide community empowered by research, education and advocacy to take action against this leading cause of death.



AFSP has 74 Chapters across all 50 States



Recently formed a chapter in Puerto Rico





**Suicide is a
health issue.**





**Suicide can
be prevented.**



The Scope of the Problem



Scope of the Problem

- Suicide is the 12th leading cause of death in the U.S. 45,979 people died by suicide in 2020
- Someone dies by suicide every 40 seconds
- Rates have been trending up slightly among youth, were high in 2020 for adults 25 to 34 years of age
- For every suicide, approx. 25 others attempt
- Suicide impacts families & friends, schools, workplaces and communities



Who is at risk?



RESEARCH

Risk Factors



RESEARCH

Health Factors

Mental Health Conditions

- Depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Eating disorders
- Personality disorders
- Psychosis
- PTSD
- Substance use disorders



RESEARCH

Other Health Factors

- Serious or chronic health conditions
- Chronic pain
- Serious head injuries



RESEARCH

Historical Factors

- Family history of suicide
- Family history of mental health conditions
- Childhood abuse
- Previous suicide attempts
- Loss



RESEARCH

Environmental Factors

- Access to lethal means
- Exposure/contagion
- Prolonged stress
- Stressful life event



PREVENTION

Protective Factors

- Mental health care
- Family and community support
- Problem-solving skills
- Cultural and religious beliefs



PREVENTION



**Mental health care
is an important
ingredient for
preventing suicide.**



PREVENTION



The law requires insurance plans to cover mental health services the same as physical health services.



Past year highlights





Chapters delivered 2,000 progs (virtually & in-person), *TSL*, now in Spanish, with modules for older adults, workplaces, firearms owners, LGBTQ audiences

Launched new programs: *It's Real: Teens and Mental Health, Supporting Those At Risk, and Finding Hope*





Facebook Live • September 17th • 3PM ET

Elevating Voices for Long-Lasting Change

Virtual Town Hall Series

Hosted by **Dr. Christine Moutier**, Chief Medical Officer of AFSP

Michael Lindsey, Ph.D., MSW, MPH, Executive Director, NYU McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research; and Chair, Workgroup of the Congressional Black Caucus Task Force on Black Youth Suicide

Bonnie Watson Coleman, U.S. Representative

Nikkie Pitre, Executive Director, Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute



Developed programs to address MH & SP among underserved populations

Formed a partnership with National Latino Behavioral Health Assoc., culturally appropriate content available in Spanish

Strengthened our partnerships on LGBTQ suicide prevention

Created a quarterly Virtual Town Hall Series: *Elevating Voices for Long-Lasting Change*

Revised research grant priorities





Healing Conversations provides support to the recently bereaved



International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day had 221 sites, in 50 states, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and in 20 countries





Our Interactive Screening Program engages with people who may be struggling anonymously and works to connect them with services

It is in use at colleges, medical schools, workplaces, healthcare systems, VA, community settings

The program reached a record of 175 sites, has connected 250,000 people





Research

Discovering better ways to prevent suicide through research. Findings from our studies have shaped prevention efforts around the world. Today, AFSP is the leading private funder of suicide prevention research.

Funded 34 new studies, bringing the current investment in research grants to \$28M

AFSP funds a wide range of research: neurobiological, genetic, psychosocial, clinical, community interventions, and more

Held an *International Research Summit* with the International Academy for Suicide Research, 550 researchers, from 37 countries discussed latest findings, gaps in knowledge



Top 10 Research Findings

1. Suicide is related to brain functions that affect decision-making and behavioral control, making it difficult for people to find positive solutions
2. Limiting a person's access to methods of killing themselves can dramatically decrease suicide
3. Ninety percent of people who die by suicide have an underlying – and potentially treatable – mental health condition
4. Depression, bipolar disorder, and substance abuse are strongly linked to suicidal thinking and behavior
5. Specific treatments and intervention – such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Safety Planning – have been proven to help people manage their suicidal ideation and behavior



Top 10 Research Findings

6. There isn't a single reason when someone dies by suicide, life stresses combined with risk factors, such as childhood trauma, substance use, chronic physical pain – can contribute to someone taking their life
7. Asking someone if they're thinking about suicide won't "put the idea in their head" – and might start a caring conversation
8. Certain medications used to treat depression or stabilize mood have been proven to help reduce suicidal thoughts and behavior
9. If someone can get through the intense, and short, moment of active suicidal crisis, chances are they will not die by suicide
10. Most people who survive a suicide attempt (85 to 95 percent) go on to engage in life





Held our annual Advocacy Forum virtually, advocates urged support for research, tele-mental health, implementation of 988

Federal appropriations for Lifeline and crisis services increased significantly

Capitol Days held in 50 States & D.C., we championed 203 bills, 53 signed into law

Our army of volunteer field advocates is growing, now over 40,000





988 is live

**It's a big accomplishment
and cause for celebration**



988 is live

It's also just the beginning ... of a transition to a more robust, more comprehensive, more effective crisis response system



Is 988 ready?



Federal investments have increased the Lifeline's capacity, and added incentive grants to states

Local crisis center capacity must be strengthened, or wait times will increase, calls will go unanswered, people won't get help

Centers must be adequately staffed, and trained to ensure quality, culturally competent care



Can 988 save lives?

Yes, we must invest in a comprehensive crisis system, that includes:

- Use of mobile crisis outreach when needed
- Follow-up to callers
- Reduced reliance on law enforcement, emergency departments

Diverts from current efforts that do not always ensure safety, or treat underlying mental health conditions or suicidality



Can 988 save lives?

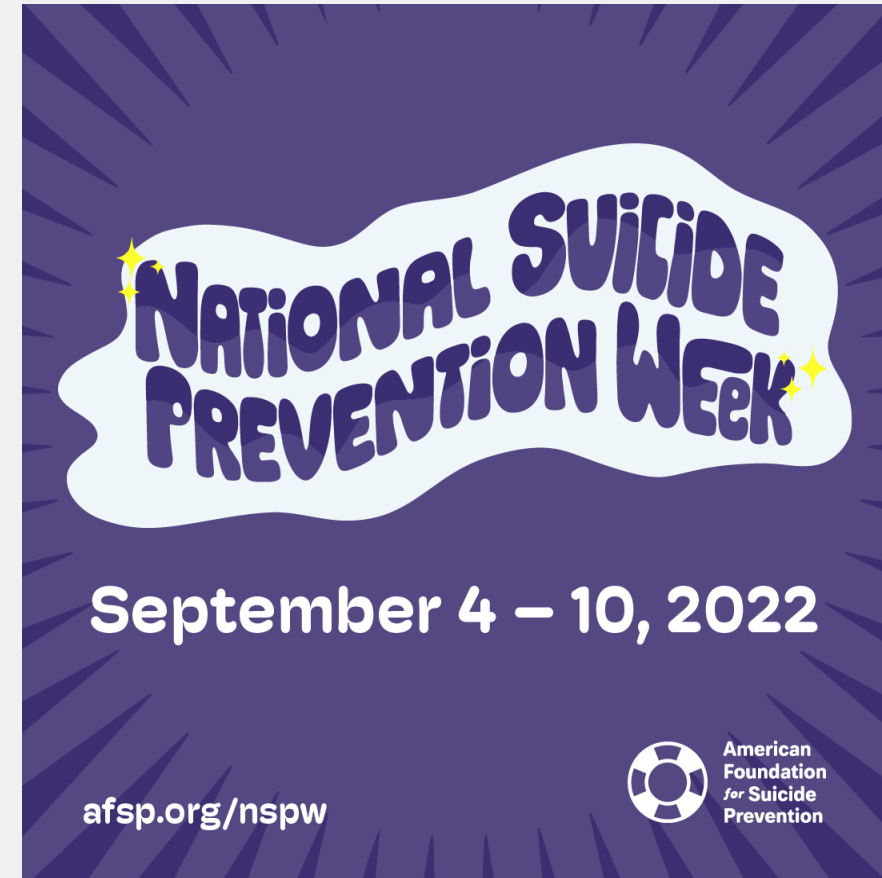
Yes, this model has life-changing, life-saving potential



AFSP is a leading voice for public
education...on caring for mental
health, preventing suicide...
and **we are reaching millions**



September is National Suicide Prevention Month



National Suicide Prevention Month

The campaign for the Out of the Darkness Walks offers hopeful messages, helping people know they are not alone and that more must be done to support mental health and suicide prevention



Loss & Healing Messaging



Messages of hope and healing on social media through graphics crafted by our content experts

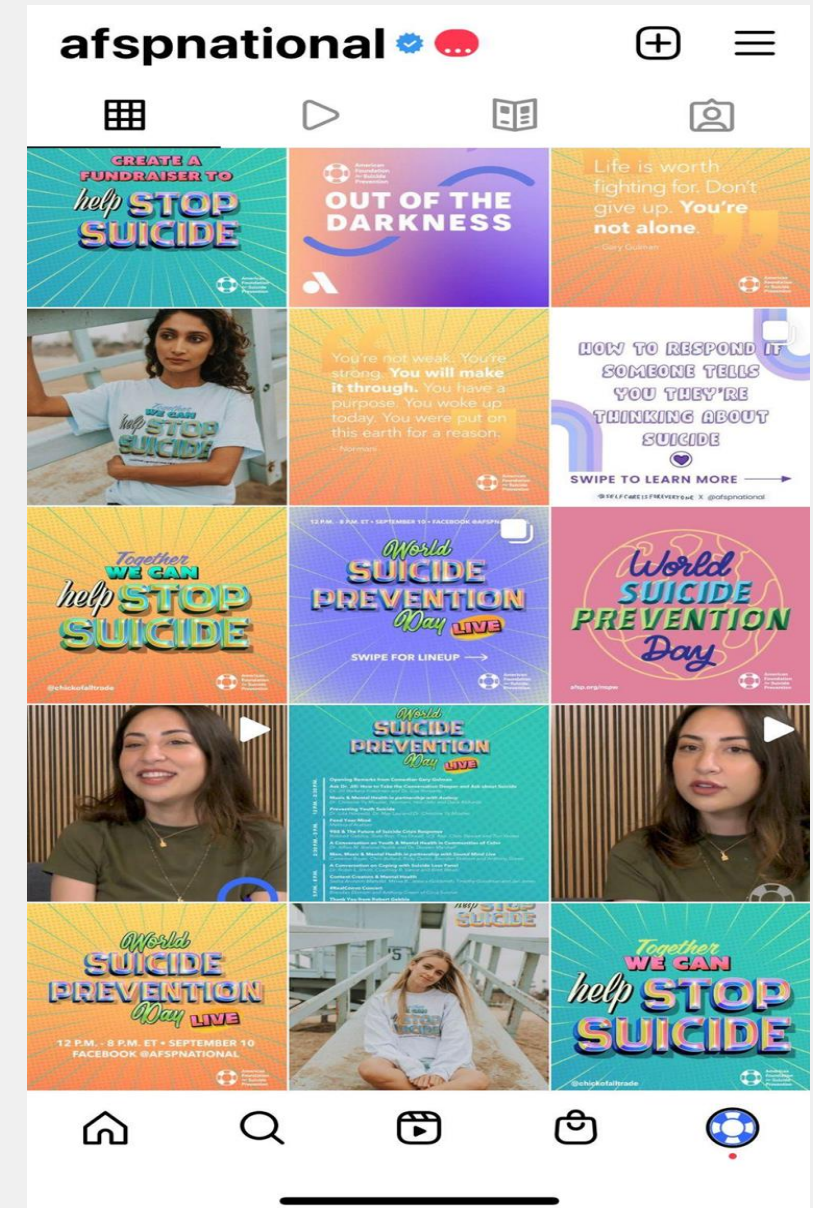


Social Media Performance

Followers: @AFSPnational has **742,000 followers** across all social media accounts, over **1.1 million** with chapter pages

Paid Social Media: reached **2.8 million people**

Social Media Impressions: @AFSPnational had over **80 million total impressions**

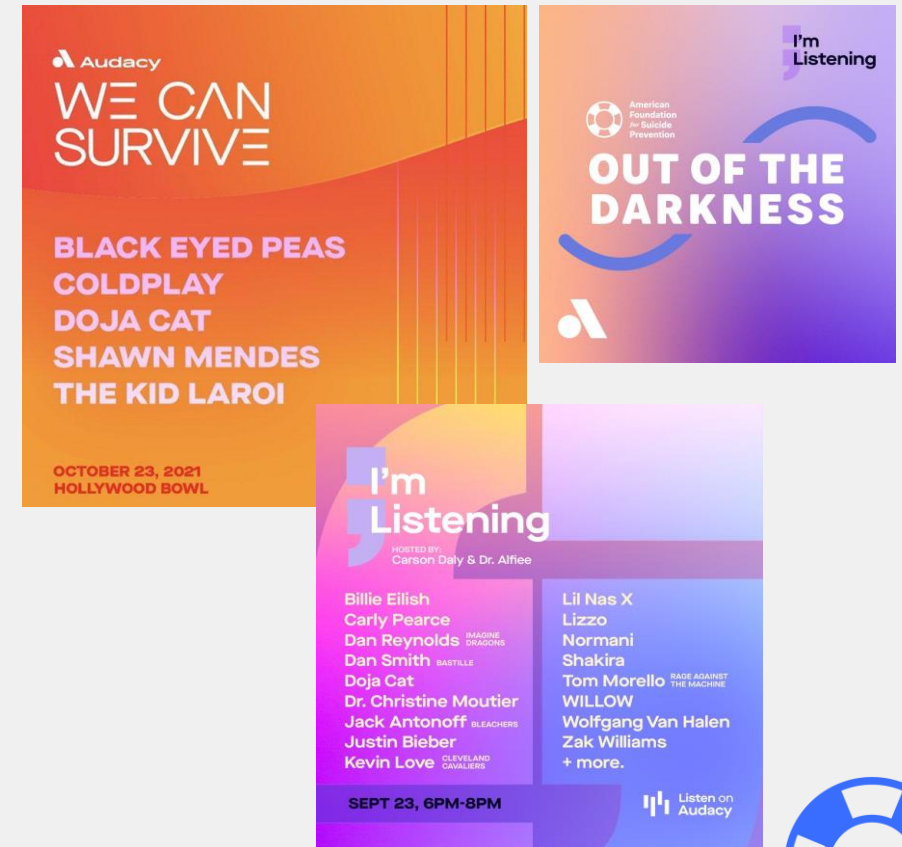


Audacy Partnership

AFSP has national partnership with Audacy

Examples include:

- Co-branded **exclusive Out of the Darkness Walks radio station**.
- Community Walk **PSA radio campaign**
- **Guest panelists** on Audacy's *I'm Listening* Broadcasts
- Beneficiary of the *We Can Survive* Concert at Hollywood Bowl



Media & Entertainment

Provided advice on dozens of TV, film, other creative projects for entertainment platforms

Our analysis – at various stages, from earliest conception, to script drafts, and rough cut footage – allows us to work with content creators to encourage safety when storylines involve suicide, and accurately portray mental health for audiences

VIACOMCBS



NBCUniversal

hulu

NETFLIX

HBO



SEIZE THE AWKWARD

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW



CAMPAIGN RESULTS + AWARDS

SEIZE THE AWKWARD

Social Media & Video Engagement

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 58M | 2.3M | 75K | 43.2K | 52.9K | 28.4K |
| Total Video Views | Video Likes | Video Shares | Hashtag Uses | Social Mentions | Followers |

Donated Media

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| \$51M | 4.3B |
| Total Donated Media | Total Impressions |

Fulfillment (Web + Instagram)

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 2.3M | 28.4k |
| Total Sessions | IG Followers |

Campaign Ad Awareness & Impact

54% of young adults are aware of at least one of the campaign PSAs

61% of young adults are extremely/very comfortable supporting a friend who is struggling

67% of young adults talked to a friend about what they were going through, in past 6 months

Harris Poll Public Perception Survey

Release date: Oct 4, 2022

AFSP, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, and National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention partnered to conduct a national public perception survey (2,000 adults) to understand public attitudes about mental health and suicide prevention

Preliminary data points to:

- An increase in mental health literacy and understanding
- Most believe suicide is a preventable cause of death (94%)
- Most would take action if someone close was thinking about suicide (96%)
- Need for more education to support oneself, others who are struggling
- Difficulty accessing and/or affording mental health care



Expanding Partnerships



PROJECT 2025

[AFSP.ORG/PROJECT2025](https://afsp.org/project2025)

A nationwide initiative to reduce the annual U.S.
suicide rate 20 percent by 2025.



The Four Critical Areas



Firearms



Healthcare
Systems

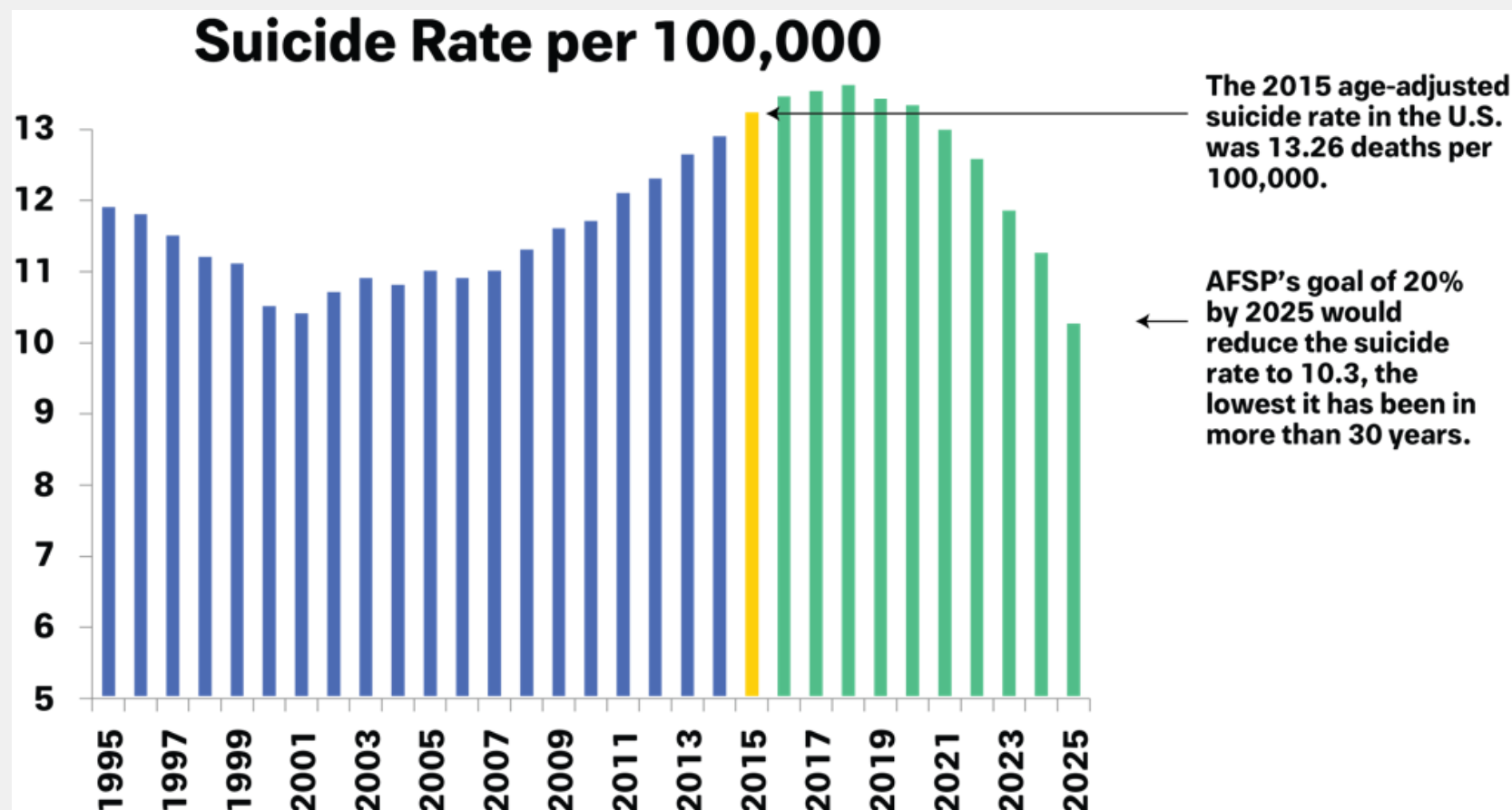


Emergency
Departments

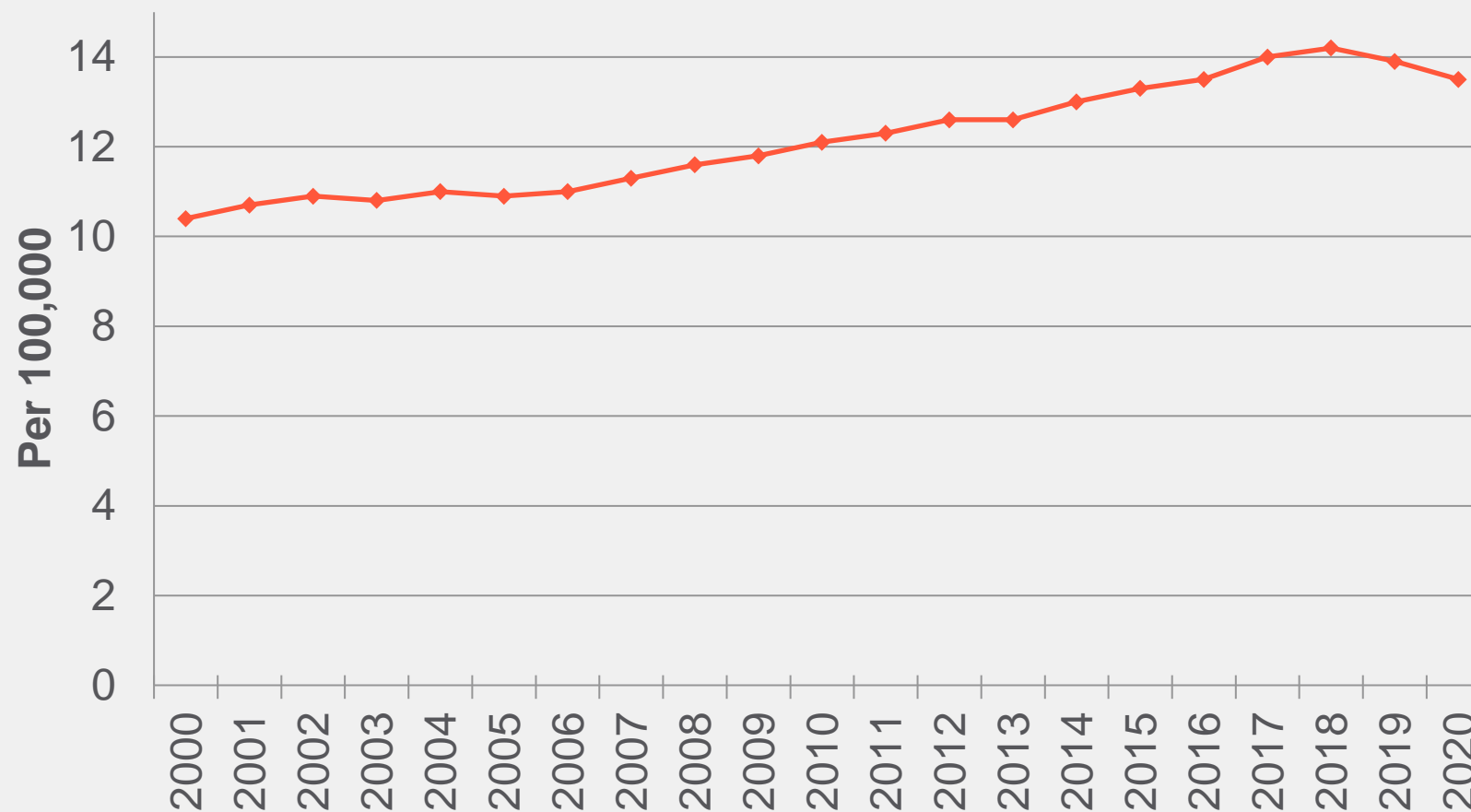


Corrections
Systems

What a 20%
rate decrease
looks like



The U.S. Suicide Rate Decreased in 2019 & 2020



It's an exciting, and promising
time for our organization and **our**
cause



Thank You!

afsp.org



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**