

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Sally Spencer-Thomas, Psy.D.
CEO & Co-Founder, Carson J Spencer Foundation
720-244-6535
Sally@CarsonJSpencer.org

April 22, 2013

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT PRODUCES MANAGER'S GUIDE TO HELP WORKPLACES WITH THE AFTERMATH OF SUICIDE

See guide at: <http://carsonjspencer.org/ManagersGuidebook.pdf>

Denver, CO – In the U.S., the majority of people who take their lives are working-aged people, and yet workplaces are often unprepared to deal with this crisis. Today the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) and the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance) announce the launch of a collaborative publication, in partnership with Crisis Care Network (CCN), and the Carson J Spencer Foundation entitled *A Manager's Guide to Suicide Postvention in the Workplace: 10 Action Steps for Dealing with the Aftermath of Suicide*.

For every suicide death, an estimated minimum of six people are affected, resulting in approximately six million American “survivors of suicide” in the last 25 years. The creation of the guide came as a logical step for the collaborators. “The demographics of suicide inform us that the working-age individual, in particular working-age male, is most at risk for suicide,” explained Dr. Alan Berman, Executive Director for the AAS. “A sizeable proportion of these deaths by suicide occur on the worksite, or otherwise affect the worksite, pointing to an increased need for postvention in the working population. These guidelines are most important for systems of employment, in the worst case possibility that such a tragedy occurs.”

The guide provides clear steps for postvention, giving leadership a sense of how to immediately respond to the traumatic event, have a plan in the short-term for recovery, and consider long-term strategies for helping employees cope down the line. Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas, CEO & Co-Founder of the Carson J Spencer Foundation, explained: “We collaborated to create succinct procedures with checklists and flow charts to be a go-to guide for people dealing with the crisis of suicide. Our goal is to help to reduce the impact of the suicide event by offering a blueprint to handling these challenging situations. The guidebook allows for immediate access to clear steps to take for moving forward, and helps workplaces plan to move from a solely reactive position on these issues into policy development and trainings.”

“In many postvention responses we saw business leaders forced to operate well outside of their training and expertise, grappling with unanswered and unanswerable questions,” said Bob VandePol, President of CCN. “When there is a death by suicide, all eyes turn to leadership and people take their cues based upon how leadership responds. It’s also true that people under the influence of traumatic stress look to leadership and make assumptions about their own personal

worth within the company, so there is tremendous power in a calm, compassionate presence by management during this time.”

The collaborators worked to create a set of guidelines that are useful across varied types of workplaces, and they expect a range of individuals within these organizations and companies to find the information immediately helpful. “This guide can be useful to managers at all levels—from the CEO of a large business to a front-line supervisor of a small organization,” asserted Action Alliance Executive Secretary, Dr. David Litts. The Action Alliance played a key role in bringing these groups together to develop this resource.

To download your own copy of these guidelines and to review others, please go to <http://carsonjspencer.org/ManagersGuidebook.pdf>.

American Association of Suicidology

Founded in 1968, **AAS** is a membership organization for all those involved in suicide prevention and intervention, or touched by suicide. AAS leads the advancement of scientific and programmatic efforts in suicide prevention through research, education and training, the development of standards and resources, and survivor support services.

Contact: Alan L. Berman, PhD, ABPP, Executive Director, 202-237-2280, berman@suicidology.org

National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, a public-private coalition, works to advance the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* by championing suicide prevention as a national priority, catalyzing efforts to implement high priority objectives of the *National Strategy*, and cultivating the resources needed to sustain progress. Launched in 2010 by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and former Defense Secretary Robert Gates, the Action Alliance envisions a nation free from the tragic event of suicide. For more information, see www.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org.

Contact: Katie Deal, Deputy Secretary, 202-572-3722, kdeal@edc.org

The Carson J Spencer Foundation (www.CarsonJSpencer.org) is a Colorado nonprofit, established in 2005. We envision a world where leaders and communities are committed to sustaining a passion for living. We sustain a passion for living by

- Delivering innovative and effective suicide prevention programs for working-aged people.
- Coaching young leaders to develop social enterprises for mental health promotion and suicide prevention.
- Supporting people bereaved by suicide.

Contact: Sally Spencer-Thomas, PsyD, CEO & Co-Founder, 720-244-6535, sally@carsonjspencer.org

Crisis Care Network

Founded in 1997, Crisis Care Network (CCN) is the EAP industry’s premier provider of Critical Incident Response for the workplace. CCN helps individuals and organizations return to work, life, and productivity following critical incidents. We mitigate the human and financial costs of workplace tragedy such as workers' compensation claims, low morale, employee attrition, and

litigation. CCN has established the nation's largest network of master's- and doctoral-level clinicians trained as Critical Incident Response Specialists, responding more than 1,000 times per month to workplace incidents for EAP's, insurers, and employers in communities throughout the United States and Canada.

Contact: Judy Beahan, MSW, Clinical Manager, 888-736-0911, Judy.Beahan@crisiscare.com

—END—