



The Center for
**Dignity, Recovery
& Empowerment**

Sound Out for Life! (SOL): Talking About Hope,
Suicide, and Suicide Stigma to Peers and
Communities

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What we stand for



Who We Are



Our experienced staff understands how California's diverse communities deal with stigma and discrimination and brings the field's best knowledge and practice together to help communities or individuals seeking to eradicate the stigma of mental health conditions.

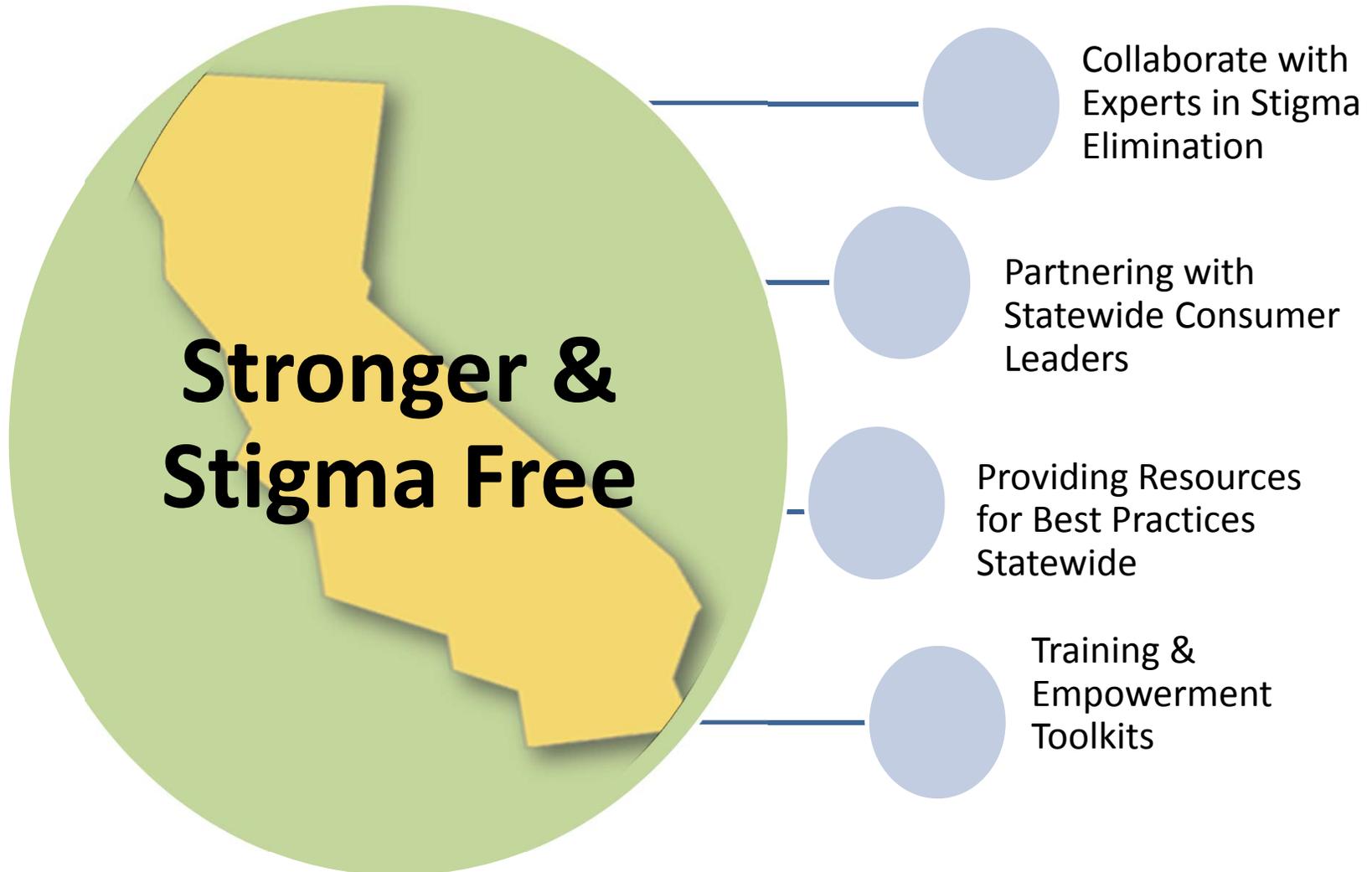


The Center works as a 'living laboratory' using our regional partners and community development partners, both regional and statewide, to test, develop, research and refine all its training and TA materials targeted to ethnic/cultural communities, children and youth, and a wide array of government and community agencies.

Eliminating Stigma: How we are doing this...



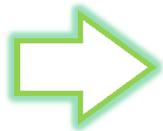
THE CENTER FOR DIGNITY,
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How we work



Fighting Stigma and Discrimination: Proven Methods



Contact = **Sustained Impact**

Education = **Limited Impact**

TLC3 Approach

- Targeted
- Local
- Credible
- Continuous
- Contact

*Best Practices: Strategic Stigma Change (SSC):
Five Principles for Social Marketing Campaigns to Reduce Stigma*
Patrick W. Corrigan, Psy.D.

What we're doing



Suicide Prevention Projects

HOPE

and

S O L

Sound Out for Life!

Why and Who?



- People who attempt are the most likely to die at some point by suicide-- 1 in 10
- Most people die within 6 months of discharge from “treatment”
- Most people who attempt do not die (90%)
- Unique need for supports including peer supports
- Unique set of voices to speak out/support and challenge stigma

Program components



Hope

- Suicide attempt survivor recovery and support
- Uses Mary Ellen Copeland's WRAP® (Wellness Recovery Action Plan™)

SOL

- Contact-based strategy for addressing stigma around suicide
- Speakers with lived experience of suicide attempts
- Challenge stigma and silence around suicidal thoughts, feelings & actions

Research and Training Supports

- Generate evidence-base for stigma and stigma reduction efforts (Batterham, 2013)
- Use evidence-base to promote consumer-designed, empowerment-based models for eliminating stigma in our communities

New projects coming in 2014...

Envisioning an End to Stigma



“I want to live in a world where we can talk openly about what happens to us, our feelings and our dreams, including the feelings we sometimes have of wanting to die.”

- Will Hall, suicide attempt survivor, mental health counselor, teacher, and advocate



Suicide Attempt Survivors: A Growing Voice



- Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention – SAS Task Force
- AAS Suicide Attempt Survivors' Blog
attemptsurvivors.com
- Live Through This – livethroughthis.org
- Increased media interest/coverage
- Suicide prevention field seeing value in attempt survivors' voice in SP policy, services, stigma reduction efforts – National Strategy for Suicide Prevention

Contact-based Approach



- Stigma researchers Corrigan, et al: “contact approach,” defined as first-person testimonies of recovery from mental health conditions, is the most effective intervention to reduce bias and stigma in the public
- Sharing Our Lives, Voices and Experiences (SOLVE): a speakers’ bureau training for people with lived experience of mental health conditions to share their stories – foundation for SOL training
- “Sound out for Life” (SOL) adapts SOLVE training for suicide attempt survivors and people living with suicidal feelings

Goals of the Training



- Create an effective recovery-driven model for stigma change in the domain of suicide
- Increase public awareness
- Increase dialogue and support around suicide
- Promote positive supports and services grounded in the values of the mental health consumer/peer advocacy movement

SOL Audiences



- Suicide attempt survivors; people with suicidal feelings/thoughts
- Mental health consumer/survivors
- Colleges and universities
- Clinicians/mental health providers
- Policymakers
- Advocates
- Families
- Youth
- Educators
- Community centers
- Suicide prevention coalitions
- First responders
- Law enforcement



Speaking about Suicide



- SOL uses principles for overcoming the stigma of suicide drawn from the experience of mental health stigma reduction efforts
- Distinctions exist when speaking about suicide
- Training teaches speakers to use suggested messaging guidelines to constructively inspire others
- Promote key messages of resilience, recovery, and hope, as well as inform about resources and supports
- Call to Action

SOL Key Messages



- Suicide attempt survivors and others have developed best practices for speaking publicly about suicide (AAS, AFSP)
- Language: avoid terms like “successful/failed attempt,” or “committed suicide,” use instead “died by suicide” or “killed themselves”
- Avoid/minimize the usage of diagnostic labels and clinical jargon
- **Don’t** provide detailed descriptions of methods of suicide unless necessary; if so, explain why
- **Don’t** focus on the pain suicide causes to others (guilt message)
- **Don’t** attribute suicide to one single cause; acknowledge complexity

SOL Key Messages



- **Personal empowerment: There is recovery and real life after a suicide attempt or struggling with suicidal feelings.**
- **You are not alone.**
- **Support is out there.**
 - SOL speakers share their experience with peer-run programs and recovery-oriented supports, including:
 - Warmlines or support lines, both national and local
 - Suicide attempt survivor support groups
 - Online resources
 - Trauma-informed programs and services
 - Peer-run supports and recovery communities

SOL Training components



- Informed consent
- Effective speaking/presentation skills
- Suggestions for shaping an 8-10 minute story
- Self care for public speakers
- Handling difficult questions
- Opportunities for practice, role-plays, and feedback

Informed Consent



- “Coming out” as a suicide attempt survivor = a big step
- SOL training includes time to consider benefits and risks of disclosure
- Some questions to consider:
 - Am I ready to go public with my story at this time?
 - If so, what is my motivation?
 - If I want to, but am not ready - why not?
 - What barriers, fears, or concerns am I facing?
 - What steps can I take to address these barriers, fears and concerns?
 - What kinds of support can I enlist to do so?

<http://attemptsurvivors.com/coming-out/>

Shaping Your Story



- Three part story structure
 - **What it was Like:** What was happening in your life leading up to your attempt? How were you treated following your attempt? How did you feel? Examples of stigma/discrimination?
 - **What Happened:** What did you learn? What changed? What support did you find on your journey? What supports do you wish had been available?
 - **What it's Like Now:** How do you cope with suicidal feelings today? What helps?

Affirming Goals Call to Action



- Affirming Goals: customized to the audience
 - Campus administrators: need for suicide attempt survivor-led support groups on campus
 - Hospital administrators/clinicians: include suicide attempt survivors for peer and family support in psychiatric emergency rooms
- Call to Action: encourage audience involvement
 - Help reduce stigma of suicide
 - Help create values-driven supports in the community

Resources



- Center for Dignity, Recovery, and Stigma Elimination:
dignityandrecoverycenter.org
- Mental Health Association of San Francisco:
www.mentalhealthsf.org
- Live Through This: livethroughthis.org
- Eight Stories Up: An adolescent chooses hope over suicide
Oxford University Press
- What Happens Now? attemptsurvivors.com
Exploring life after a suicide attempt or suicidal thinking. A project of the
American Association of Suicidology
- National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention Suicide
Attempt Survivors' Task Force
<http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/task-force/suicide-attempt-survivors>

