

# **COLLABORATIVE LAUNCHES NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN FOR TEENS**

Press Release (4/2/2010)

Rockville, MD — The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), working in collaboration with the Ad Council and the Inspire USA Foundation, announced today the launch of a national public service announcement campaign designed to reduce the incidence of suicide and suicide attempts among teens in the United States.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among 15-24 year-olds, following unintended injuries and homicide. While suicides account for approximately 1.4 percent of all deaths in the United States annually, they comprise 12 percent of deaths among this age group. In 2006, 4,189 people between ages 15 and 24 died by suicide. Furthermore, for every youth who died by suicide, it is estimated that 100-200 attempts are made.

"Suicide is a preventable tragedy," said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde, JD. "That's why we have made it an explicit part of our top priority at SAMHSA—prevention of substance abuse and mental illness. We are aligning and bringing to bear the full force of our resources to reduce the risk and increase the protective factors that are linked with suicide. This new public service announcement campaign is a critical step in raising awareness among young people that there are places where they can turn for help."

"Our new campaign with SAMHSA and Inspire USA connects with teens by identifying with the various challenges they are facing, while empowering them to cope by showing them how their peers have made it through," said Peggy Conlon, president and CEO of the Ad Council. "These ads and our online resources will give teens hope and this campaign has the potential to save many lives."

In an effort to provide support for teens who may be contemplating suicide, SAMHSA and Ad Council launched the Teen Suicide Prevention campaign. Created by DDB New York through the Ad Council, the We Can Help Us effort includes television, radio, print and interactive PSAs, as well as in-school and mall posters, directed at 13-17 year-olds. The ads were based on the understanding that teens face a myriad of problems and many are seeking effective ways to cope with them.

The PSAs tell teens that they are not alone in their struggles with emotional and mental health problems, and that other teens have successfully worked through the same issues. Young people seeking help are urged to visit [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com), where they can hear success stories and strategies from teens.

The [reachout.com](http://reachout.com) Web site was developed by the Inspire USA Foundation, an organization that seeks to promote the mental health and wellbeing of young people. Reach Out integrates youth generated, expert-reviewed information and real-life stories with opportunities to connect with others in a supportive, safe environment.

Issues covered include warning signs for suicide, depression, eating disorders, as well as advice on relationships and coping strategies. The site includes videos, audio stories and other interactive features. Visitors can also view a series of animations that bring to life stories submitted by teens. Teens' stories

were shared with animation studios around the world who each added their unique artistic sensibilities to the animations, which also can be shared as viral videos.

Each page on reachout.com includes a prominent call-out to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), a resource for individuals who are in crisis and need immediate help and support.

"Walk into any American high school classroom and the odds are that two of the young people before you will have attempted suicide over the past 12 months," said Jack Heath, president of the Inspire USA Foundation. "Through our collaboration with SAMHSA and the Ad Council, the We Can Help Us campaign can bring a message of hope to literally millions of young Americans having a tough time."

"At DDB, we were motivated to do our part to further awareness of the critically important issue of teen suicide," said Peter Hempel, president, DDB New York. "The campaign creative is very positive in tone, to give those affected a sense of hope at a very dark time in their lives," he added.

To extend the reach of the PSA campaign to teens nationwide, the Ad Council and SAMHSA will be collaborating with Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) and a number of other youth and mental health organizations. The campaign will also be promoted on social media channels including Facebook ([www.facebook.com/Samhsa](http://www.facebook.com/Samhsa), [www.facebook.com/ReachOutUSA](http://www.facebook.com/ReachOutUSA), [www.facebook.com/AdCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/AdCouncil)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/samhsagov](http://www.twitter.com/samhsagov), [www.twitter.com/AdCouncil](http://www.twitter.com/AdCouncil)), as well as the Ad Council's new social media site, [MyAdCouncil.org](http://MyAdCouncil.org).