

Violence and Injury Prevention Program

Monthly Digest

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Finding the Light Within: The Use of Storytelling in Communicating Messages at the Local Level

Suicide is a national health problem that victimizes all, regardless of class, gender, or race. In 2007, it was the third leading cause of death among young adults 15 to 24 and the 11th leading cause among adults. Suicide affects not only those in the suicidal crisis, but also loved ones. Fortunately, suicide is a preventable health problem.

“Finding the Light Within” suicide prevention program is a place where those who are suicidal and those that have lost loved ones may seek support and community. The program combats the common experience of isolation and loneliness that stems from suicide.

The storytelling website to “Finding the Light Within” complements the existing prevention program. The website is managed by the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. Providing a voice to survivors, the program sheds light on suicide and fosters a new community around the problem. They hope to enlighten the general public on general warning signs and how one can seek help for loved ones before a life is lost.

In sharing one’s story and reading the stories of others, the program hopes that these personal accounts “will shine transformative light into dark corners.” The exchange of experiences dissolves the isolation, shame and stigma surrounding suicide. It relies heavily on the idea of community and can serve to connect individuals at the relationship level who may feel conflicted or shamed by society’s perceptions. Following each story, the reader is provided links to prevention, intervention, and survivor support groups.

[Click here to visit the storytelling website.](#)

CDC Video Contest: Seeing the World through a Safer Lens

What Does Injury and Violence Prevention Look Like in My Community?

In recognition of the [CDC Injury Center's 20th Anniversary](#), the Injury Center is conducting a nationwide video contest to help raise awareness of injury and violence prevention.

You are invited to participate in the [Seeing My World through a Safer Lens](#) video contest by submitting a short, creative video that answers the question “*What does Injury and Violence Prevention Look Like in My Community?*” The video should highlight real-life stories and examples of how injuries and violence are being prevented in your community. Winners will be selected in the following three categories: General Public View, Injury and Violence Professional View, or Student View.

The winning video in each category will receive a \$500 cash prize and will be featured on the CDC's Injury Center Website for thousands to see!

The Contest runs now through **July 31, 2012**.

Contest guidelines, rules and submission information can be found at [SaferLens.challenge.gov](#).

For questions about the video contest, please send email to injurycenter@cdc.gov.

CDC Releases WISQARS Module Enhancements

The WISQARS™ module provides cost estimates for injury deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department visits where the patient was treated and released. The module allows users to create reports of: medical costs, work loss costs, and combined costs based on a number of variables including: intent and mechanism (cause) of injury, body region and diagnosis of injury, geographic location (for deaths only), sex, and age.

With the new enhancements, users are given two options:

1. Generate cost estimates using national fatal and nonfatal data or
2. Generate cost estimates using their own case counts.

The second option allows users to obtain total lifetime medical and work loss cost estimate for geographic areas (e.g., counties) or groups of interest (e.g., hospitalized patients with traumatic brain injuries) based on average costs from national data. Using the second option, cost estimates also can be adjusted for inflation and expressed in more current or previous year's prices.

In addition to cost of injury reports, users can use the WISQARS™ system, to sort, view and create customized fatal injury, nonfatal injury, and violent death data reports. Examples of reports include:

- Fatal injury reports
- Leading cause of death reports
- Years of potential life lost (YPLL) reports
- Color-coded fatal injury maps

- Violent death reports
- Nonfatal injury reports
- Leading cause of nonfatal injury reports

[Click here for more information or to access WISQARS™.](#)

Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide

Like the entire realm of injury issues, suicide is a public health concern. As such, the population must be informed with media and online coverage that uses only the most effective methods. While some deaths from suicide may be newsworthy, the media must be cautious and consider that their coverage can negatively alter behavior in creating a contagion (also known as “copycat suicide”). Conversely, the media can encourage pro-active and help-seeking behavior.

The influence of the media over vulnerable individuals is related to the duration, prominence, and frequency of coverage. Over 50 research studies confirm that certain types of media coverage can increase the possibility of suicide among those most vulnerable. Glamorizing death with explicit details of suicide method versus a careful, even brief, coverage of the event could mean the difference between encouraging copycat suicides and encouraging help-seeking behavior.

Similar to preventing any injury, there are measures which can be taken to prevent suicide. The statistics provided demonstrate that suicide is a complex problem but one with a solution. We can promote the use of these recommendations by making the information available to community organizations, loved ones, and the at-risk individual. In stressing the value of personal responsibility to address the problem while de-stigmatizing the issue, all parties involved can feel more empowered. Simple warning signs may be easily educated to the public and should be conveyed through media outlets in lieu of sensationalized stories. In altering the perception of suicide at the societal level through mass communication, the change can trickle down to become the norm at the community and individual levels.

[Click here to read the 2012 recommendations for reporting on suicide.](#)

Safe States Releases Report on Recommendations for National and State Poisoning Surveillance

In the past two decades, poisoning, particularly drug poisoning, has emerged as an area of significant public health concern in the US. Poisoning affects individuals across their lifespan and encompasses events that represent a wide array of causes, intents, and substances.

Poisoning surveillance faces challenges that can hamper poisoning prevention and evaluation efforts. These include a lack of formal standardized definitions for surveillance of poisonings due to specific agents or groups of agents, variable quality of toxicology information, and changes in the ICD classifications of poisonings over time.

Safe States is thrilled to announce the release of the Safe States Injury Surveillance Workgroup on Poisoning (ISW7) report, [Consensus Recommendations for National and State Poisoning Surveillance](#).

This report provides a new, broader conceptual definition of poisoning, an expanded framework for categorizing poisonings, and standardized operational definitions using ICD-9-CM and ICD-10 codes. The aim is to improve the available poisoning surveillance tools not only for injury prevention research and practice, but also for the control and prevention of substance use disorders.

Key Products of the ISW7 Include:

- Consensus conceptual definitions of poisonings and drug poisonings for public health surveillance purposes;
- A framework within which poisonings can be subcategorized by poisoning agents and by circumstances;
- Operational definitions for use with mortality and morbidity data sources based on the International Classification of Diseases 10th Revision (ICD-10), and the 9th Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM), respectively;
- An inventory of poison data sources; and
- Recommendations for improving poisoning surveillance at the state and local level, and at the national level.

It is hoped that the tools in this report will provide a standard but flexible approach to presenting poisoning surveillance data and improve the overall effectiveness of prevention efforts.

[Click here to read the full report.](#)

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