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# Speak Up, Reach Out: A Suicide Education and Prevention Plan

Jessica Parker  
jessica\_parker1@my.uri.edu

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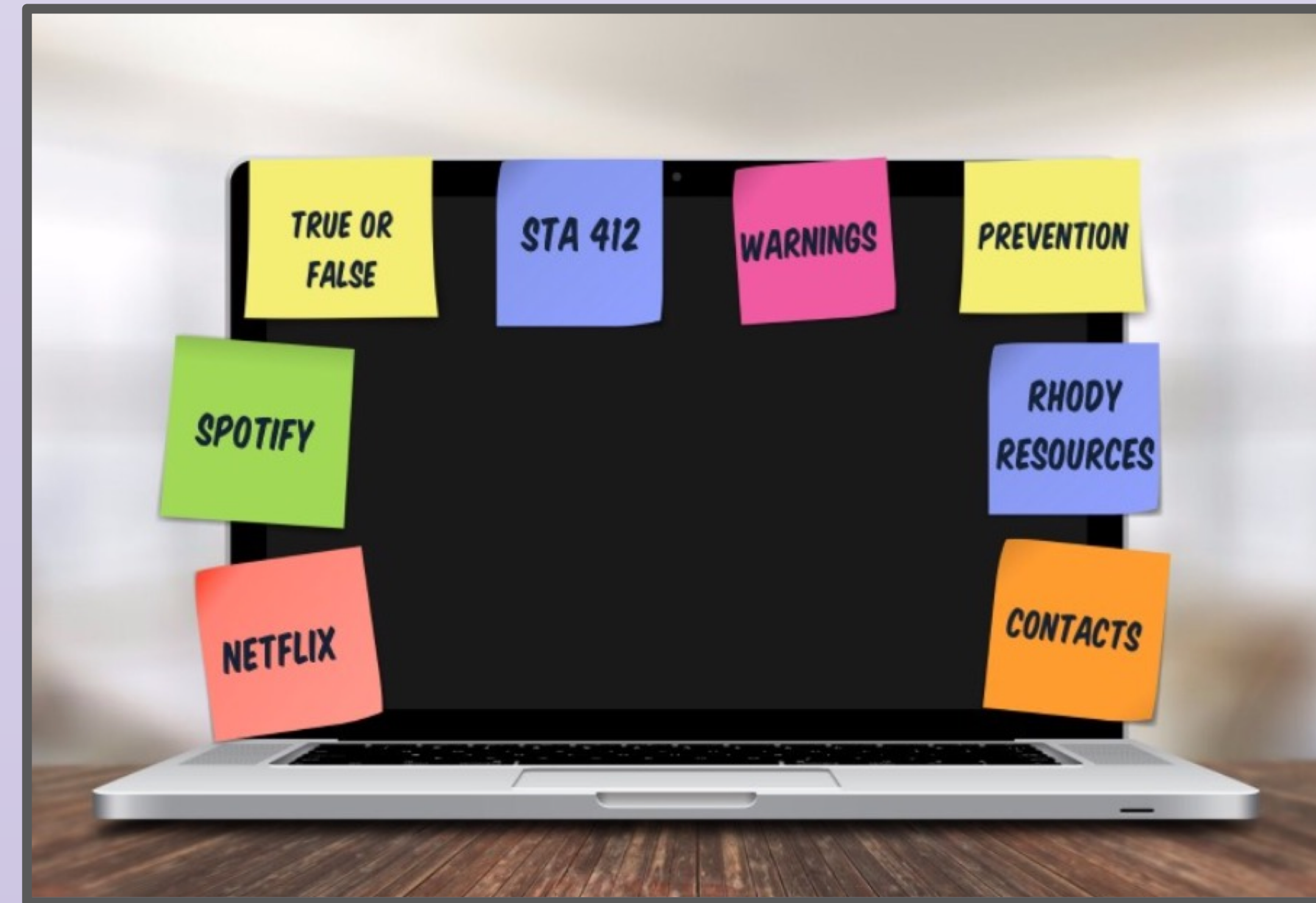


## Introduction

- Following the release of the Netflix original series *13 Reasons Why* on March 31, 2017, there was a spike in suicide related searches online
  - This is the result of how much students read books, watch shows and listen to songs discussing suicide with little to no formal education on the subject from their teachers or parents
- Through an interactive powerpoint presentation, I plan to address the differences between the facts and fantasies of suicide that are portrayed in the media outlets accessed primarily by both high school and college students
  - In addition, this project aims to help students, parents and faculty members identify the warning signs of suicidal ideations, as well as assist in establishing an individualized suicide prevention plan by providing them with contact information for mental health resources in their area
- Over the course of the 2017-2018 academic year, a combination of media analysis, crisis intervention curriculum findings, and a consolidation of mental health articles from experts on suicidology were used to construct a powerpoint presentation for the URI 101 website to be available for generations of students and faculty to come

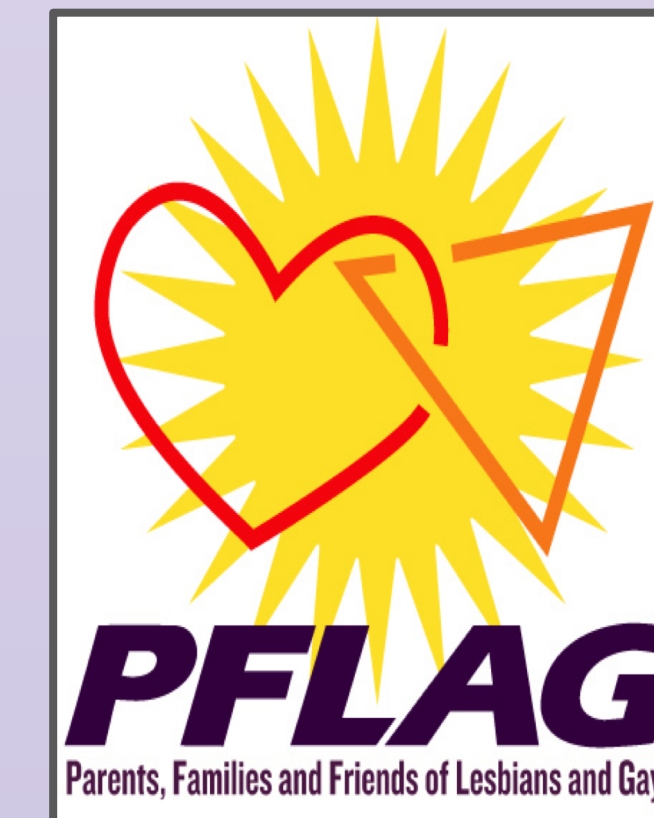
# Speak up, reach out: A suicide education & prevention plan

Jessica L. Parker - Psychology



## Resources

- Help for all:
  - *National Suicide Prevention Hotline*
    - 1-800-273-8255
  - *Samaritan Hotline*
    - 1-877-870-HOPE (4673)
    - Call or text 24/7
  - *The Trevor Project Hotline*
    - 1-866-488-7386
    - LGBTQ crisis intervention
- Help at URI:
  - *University of Rhode Island Counseling Center*
    - 401-874-2288
  - *University of Rhode Island Consultation Center*
    - 401-874-4263
    - To speak with an Intake Clinician call 401-874-4264
- *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention*
  - AFSP.ORG -> Find Support ->
  - I'm having thoughts, I've lost someone, I'm worried about someone, I've made an attempt, someone I love has made an attempt



## 13 reasons why suicide education is key to prevention

1. Most teens who attempt or die by suicide have expressed their stress to at least one other person either directly or indirectly
2. Minor problems to adults can have major implications on the mental health of a teen
3. An individual's perception of a crisis is just as concerning and predictive of suicidal behavior as the actual crisis
4. 19 out of 20 suicidal individuals have a part of them that still want to live
5. All suicide attempts translate into a desperate plea for assistance
6. 1 in 5 children will develop a mental health disorder in their lifetime
7. Prior attempts increase the risk of a suicidal completion in the future
8. Roughly 1 in 5 people suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD)
9. Women are more likely to attempt suicide while men are more likely to complete suicide
10. Members of the LGBTQ community are more likely to attempt suicide than their peers
11. Asking someone about their suicidal ideations does not encourage them to act on them
12. Having the chance to discuss thoughts of suicide has the ability to alleviate stress and reduce the risk of completion
13. Following up after a crisis decreases the rate of future suicidal completions



## The Media and Suicide

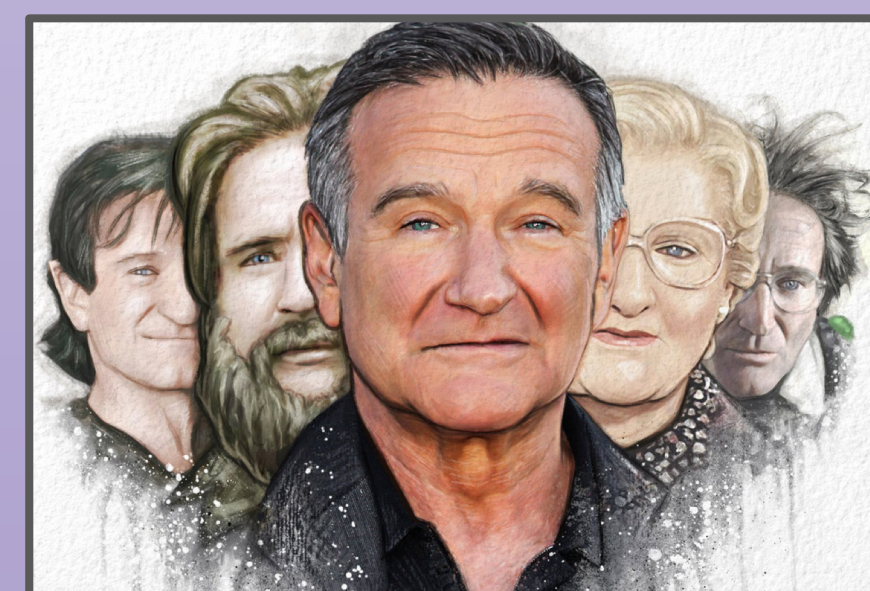
Guidance for journalists from journalists

### REPORTING SUICIDE: BEWARE OF IMITATIONS

**T**HERE is a direct link between media coverage and a short-term increase in suicide rates, according to evidence from around the world. People are most likely to imitate suicide methods when the media reveal explicit details, or when there is high-profile coverage of particular cases. Following a review of 90 studies from 20 countries about the impact of media coverage, Professor Keith Hawton of Oxford University says: "The weight of evidence indicates that media portrayals can and do lead to imitative suicidal behaviour, or 'copycat' suicides." Young and elderly people are among those most likely to be influenced.

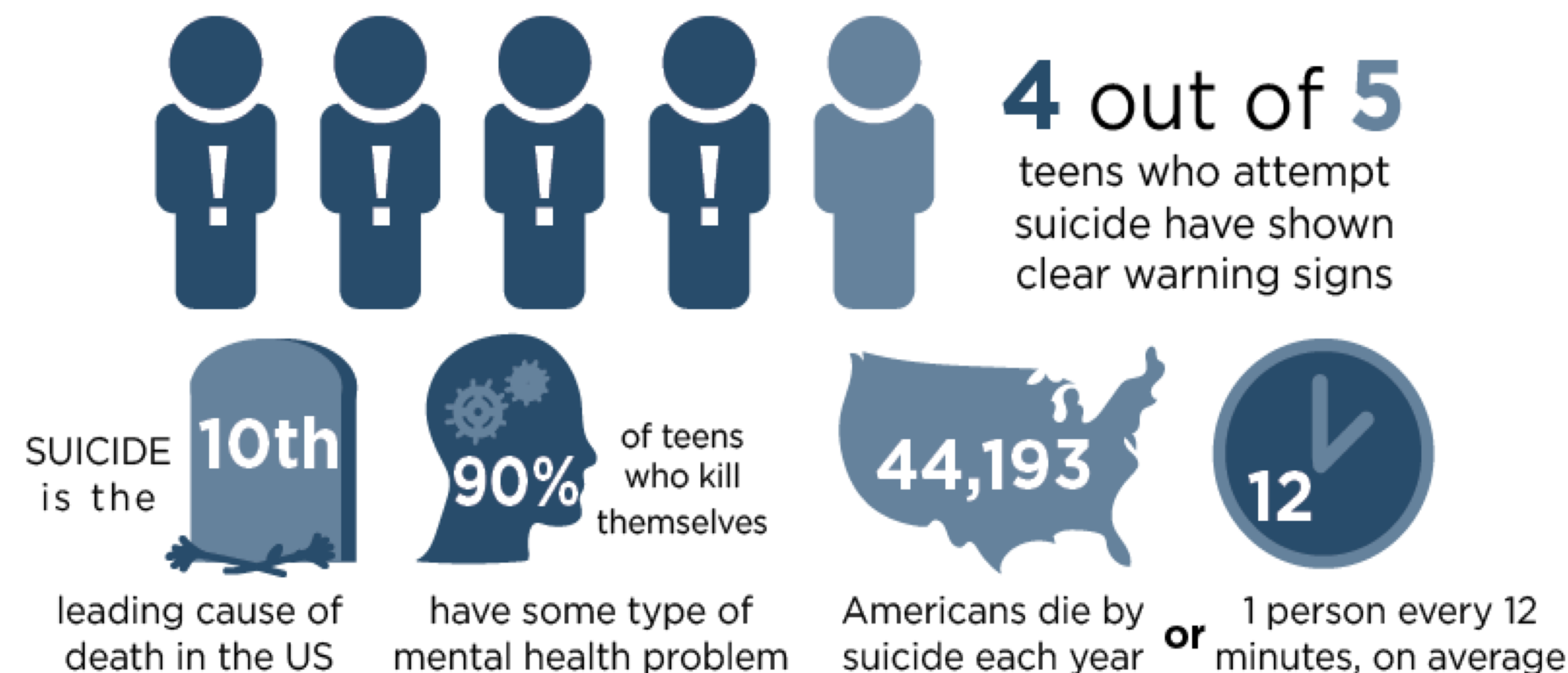
### Sensitive reporting 'can save lives'

**S**ENSITIVE REPORTING of suicides can save lives, according to Keith Hawton and Kathryn Williams from Oxford University's Dept. of Psychiatry. This is a key conclusion of their global review of research about the impact of media coverage on suicidal behaviour. They reject suggestions that mention of suicide should be avoided, and insist: "Responsible approaches to the portrayal of suicide can save lives." Vulnerable people are more likely to seek help, if the media provide contact details for suicide prevention agencies.



## Media

- With a wide variety of ways to reach any target audience, the media plays a crucial role in shaping the public's perception of the world we live in
- Potential to:
  - Raise awareness of mental health issues
  - Serve as a conversation starter
- Fails to:
  - Mention the variety of available evidence-based health care options
  - Make distinctions between revenge fantasy and reality of suicide



Statistics sourced from the Jason Foundation, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and Suicide Prevention Action Network of Idaho. | Graphics by Cjenna Roget, Design Editor

## Discussion

- Objectives:
  - Emphasize the importance of facing the topic of life threatening mental health issues head-on
  - Synthesize research into a relatable and comprehensible presentation
  - Encourage individuals to play an active role in combating suicidal ideations, not only for themselves but those around them in need of support and guidance
- Implications:
  - "Responsible portrayals of suicide can save lives" (Oxford University)
    - Suicide is not a glamorous act of revenge but a breaking point of desperation and suffering experienced by real people
  - Initiating a discussion of suicide provides an opportunity to express suppressed feelings and begin the stages of healing
- Limitation:
  - One limitation of this project was that limited findings have been published since the release of *13 Reasons Why* just one year ago
  - I would recommend that anyone trying to replicate this study examine the longitudinal implications of the series years down the line

## Acknowledgements

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