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Media Coverage of Celebrity Deaths by Suicide

La Salle Suicide Prevention Grant Staff

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Explorer Café Media Coverage of Celebrity Deaths by Suicide



September 19, 2018

Agenda

1. Introduction of the Topic and Facilitators (KWG)
2. Contagion Effect (Emily Brooks, Psychology Dept)
3. Ethical Considerations for Media (Mark Lashley, Communication Dept)
4. Q & A
5. Concluding Remarks (Serita Reels, SAMHSA GLS Grant Manager)

The Insatiable and Unknowable Anthony Bourdain

Anthony Bourdain participated in 'death ritual' months before suicide

By [Tamar Lapin](#) | June 25, 2018 | 11:09am

BIG CITY

The High Price of Being Kate Spade

Kate Spade's best friend speaks out on her suicide

By [Jessica Sager](#)

September 6, 2018 | 1:56pm

Avicii, Electronic Dance Music Producer and D.J., Is Dead at 28

Avicii reportedly committed suicide with broken glass bottle

By [Morgan M. Evans](#), Fox News

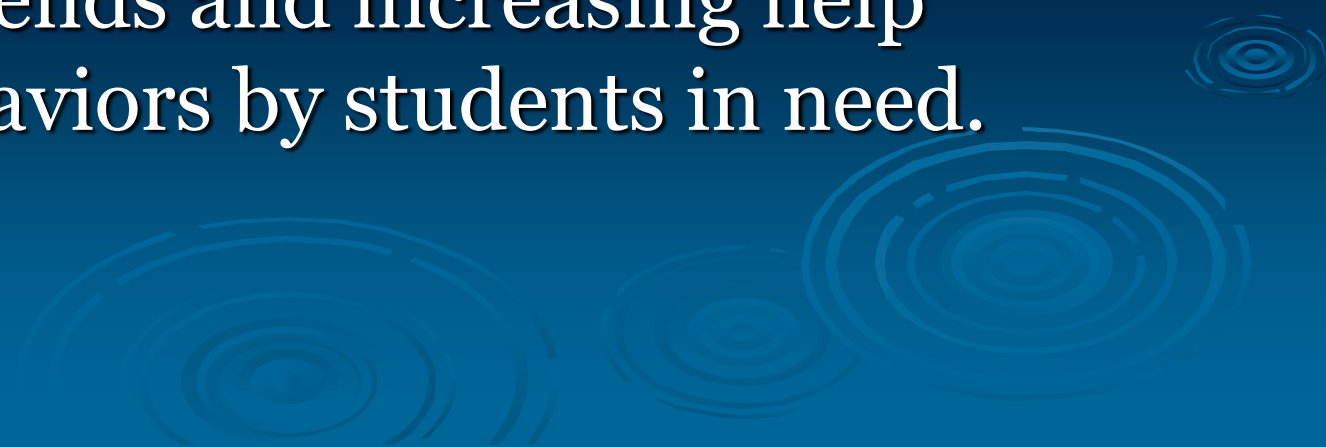
May 1, 2018 | 10:59am

SAMHSA Garrett Lee Smith Grant

<https://www.lasalle.edu/blog/2018/09/18/1-a-salle-university-receives-garrett-lee-smith-suicide-prevention-grant/>

Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Grant Goal

Reduce the potential for deaths of students due to suicide or alcohol/drug overdose by increasing outreach to our most vulnerable students; increasing by-stander interventions by faculty, staff and students/friends and increasing help seeking behaviors by students in need.



Specific Objectives/Activities

- Increase the number of faculty and staff who are able to identify/recognize at risk and high risk symptoms; intervene with proven strategies; train others (QPR, Red Folders, Mirror Clings)
- Develop effective mechanisms for tracking at risk students (Students of Concern)
- Expand current scope of crisis related services (ProtoCall)
- Engage students into suicide prevention (Kognito, Mirror Clings)

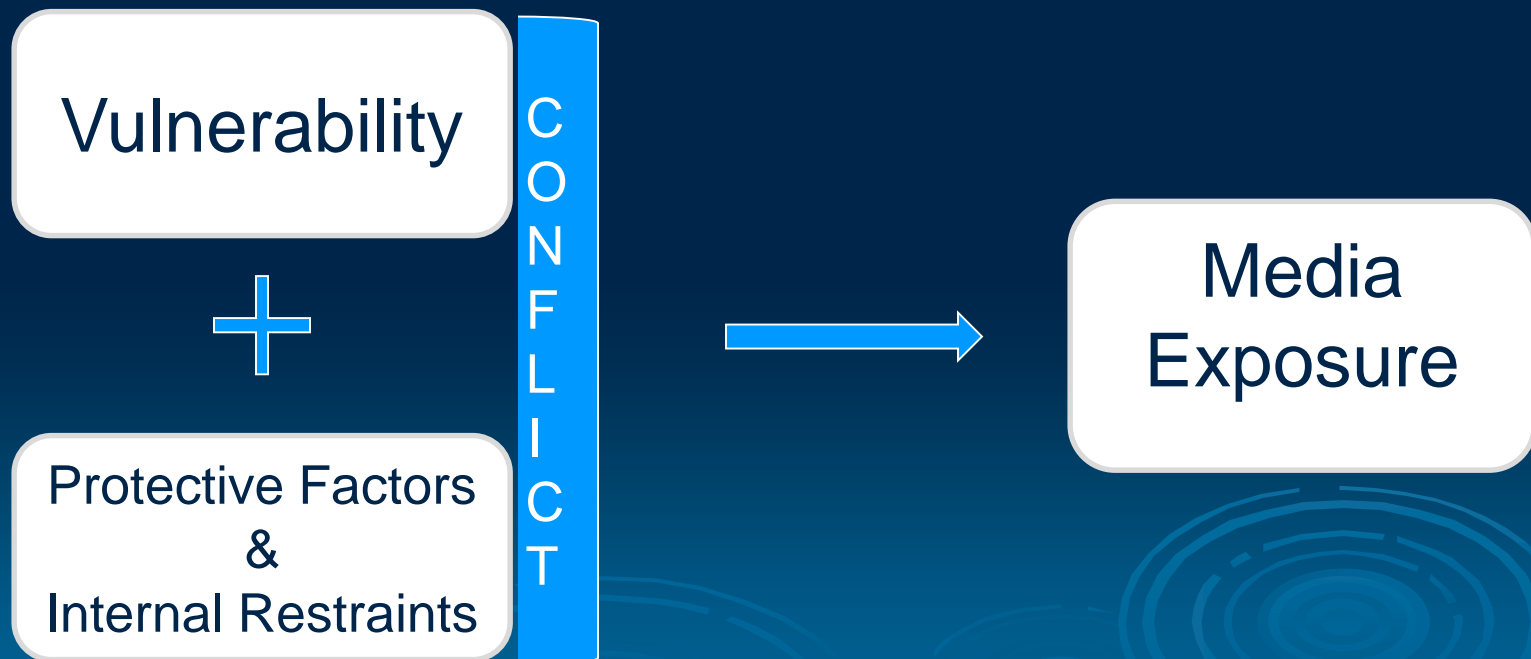
Engage students into suicide prevention

- Kognito beginning in April/May
 - Peer Educators
 - Exploriantation Leaders
 - RL/CD staff
 - Student Org leaders
 - Student Athlete Advisory Committee/Team Captains

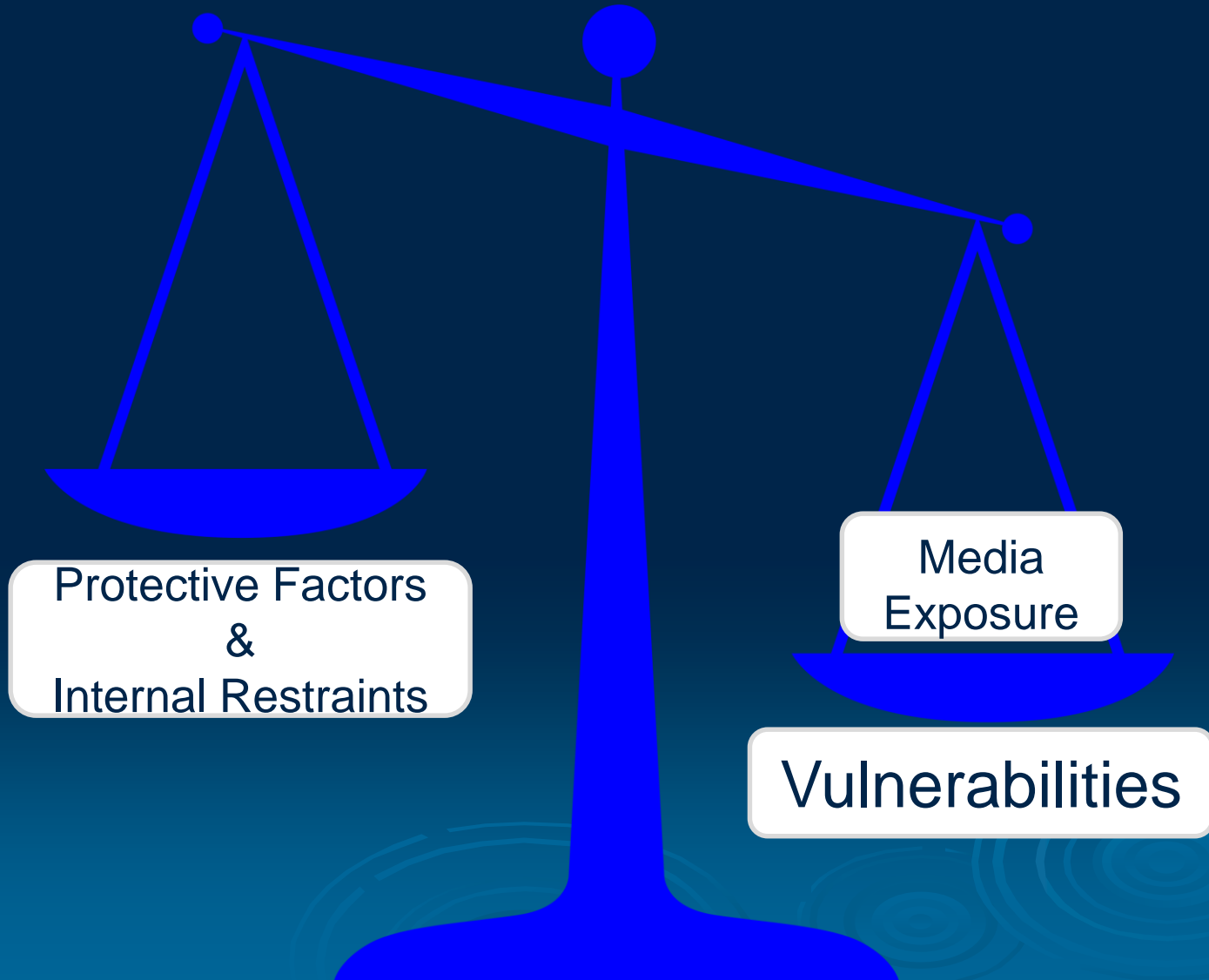
<https://kognito.com/products/at-risk-for-college-students>

Contagion Effect

When one suicide becomes a compelling model for successive suicides.



Contagion Effect



INSTEAD OF THIS:



- Big or sensationalistic headlines, or prominent placement (e.g., "Kurt Cobain Used Shotgun to Commit Suicide").
- Including photos/videos of the location or method of death, grieving family, friends, memorials or funerals.
- Describing recent suicides as an "epidemic," "skyrocketing," or other strong terms.
- Describing a suicide as inexplicable or "without warning."
- "John Doe left a suicide note saying..."
- Investigating and reporting on suicide similar to reporting on crimes.
- Quoting/interviewing police or first responders about the causes of suicide.
- Referring to suicide as "successful," "unsuccessful" or a "failed attempt."

DO THIS:



- Inform the audience without sensationalizing the suicide and minimize prominence (e.g., "Kurt Cobain Dead at 27").
- Use school/work or family photo; include hotline logo or local crisis phone numbers.
- Carefully investigate the most recent CDC data and use non-sensational words like "rise" or "higher."
- Most, but not all, people who die by suicide exhibit warning signs. Include the "Warning Signs" and "What to Do" sidebar (from p. 2) in your article if possible.
- "A note from the deceased was found and is being reviewed by the medical examiner."
- Report on suicide as a public health issue.
- Seek advice from suicide prevention experts.
- Describe as "died by suicide" or "completed" or "killed him/herself."

Recommendations For Journalists Covering Suicide

News Clip

- CBS News Report on Kate Spade
- ABC News Report on Anthony Bourdain

Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ)

- “Be cautious about reporting suicides that do not involve a public person or a public place.”

Q & A



Available Resources

- ProtoCall After Hours Counseling
 - 215-951-1355 (press 2)
- JED Foundation/Campus
 - <https://www.jedcampus.org/>
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 - <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
 - 1-800-273-8255, 1-800-273-TALK
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)
 - <https://www.sprc.org/>