



# The Hero in Each of Us: Finding Your Role in Suicide Prevention

Stan Collins



# Care of the Soul

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*“The Greeks told the story of the minotaur, the bull-headed flesh-eating man who lived in the center of the labyrinth. He was a threatening beast, and yet his name was Asterion – Star. I often think of this paradox as I sit with someone with tears in her eyes, searching for some way to deal with a death, a divorce, or a depression. It is a beast, this thing that stirs in the core of her being, but it is also the star of her innermost nature. We have to care for this suffering with extreme reverence so that, in our fear and anger at the beast, **we do not overlook the star.**”*

– Care of the Soul, Thomas Moore

What “causes”  
suicide?



# Recommended language

## Use

- Died by suicide
- Attempted suicide

## Don't use

- Committed suicide
- "Successful" or "Unsuccessful" attempts

For more information on effective messaging for suicide prevention, visit: [suicidepreventionmessaging.org](https://suicidepreventionmessaging.org)

**NATIONAL Action Alliance**  
FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

## Action Alliance Framework for Successful Messaging

What is the Framework? Strategy Safety Positive Narrative Guidelines Examples



**Strategy**

Strategy involves planning and focusing messages, so they are as effective as possible.

[Read more>>](#)

Action Alliance National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention Framework for Successful Messaging

Messaging to the public about suicide? Strategy Safety Positive Narrative Guidelines

**YOUR Message Matters!**

It's not just a *Framework*,  
it's a *movement*!

→ Sign on and take action.

**We have signed on**

Sandra Kiume  
@un suicide

Elaine de Mello  
NAMI New Hampshire

How we communicate about suicide may influence a vulnerable person towards suicidal behavior.

[SuicidePreventionMessaging.org](https://SuicidePreventionMessaging.org)

# “Werther” vs. “Papageno” Effect

Positive messaging about suicide prevention such as coverage of positive coping in adverse circumstances, or information about resources may have **protective effects**.





# Framework for Successful Messaging

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Suggestions:

- Provide a resource
- Focus on prevention
- Focus on actions people can take
- Positive narrative
- Avoid 'normalizing' statements
- Avoid oversimplifying causes

[www.SuicidePreventionMessaging.org](http://www.SuicidePreventionMessaging.org)



# reporting on suicide.org

[Recommendations](#)[Online Media](#)[Examples](#)[Find an Expert](#)[Research](#)[About](#)[Other Languages](#)

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPORTING ON SUICIDE®

Developed in collaboration with American Association of Suicidology, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Irvingberg Public Policy Center, Associated Press Managing Editors, Canterbury Suicide Project - University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand, Columbia University Department of Psychiatry, Communicability, Edelman Technology, International Association for Suicide Prevention, Task Force on Media and Suicide, Medical University of Vienna, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Institute of Mental Health, National Press Photographers Association, New York State Psychiatric Institute, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Suicide Awareness Voices of Education, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and UCLA School of Public Health, Community Health Sciences.

### IMPORTANT POINTS FOR COVERING SUICIDE

- More than 50 research studies worldwide have found that certain types of news coverage can increase the likelihood of suicide in vulnerable individuals. The magnitude of the increase is related to the amount, duration and prominence of coverage.
- Risk of additional suicides increases when the story explicitly describes the suicide method, uses dramatic/

## Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide

Suicide is a public health issue. Media and online coverage of suicide should be informed by using best practices. Some suicide deaths may be newsworthy. However, the way media cover suicide can influence behavior negatively by contributing to contagion, or positively by encouraging help-seeking.

[www.ReportingOnSuicide.org](http://www.ReportingOnSuicide.org)

# What Can Be Done to Prevent Suicide?

Know the warning signs

Ask directly about suicide


Make a safety plan and reduce access to lethal means

Connect to mental health professional trained in suicide prevention treatments

Create systems to respond to suicide risk in least restrictive (least traumatizing) way

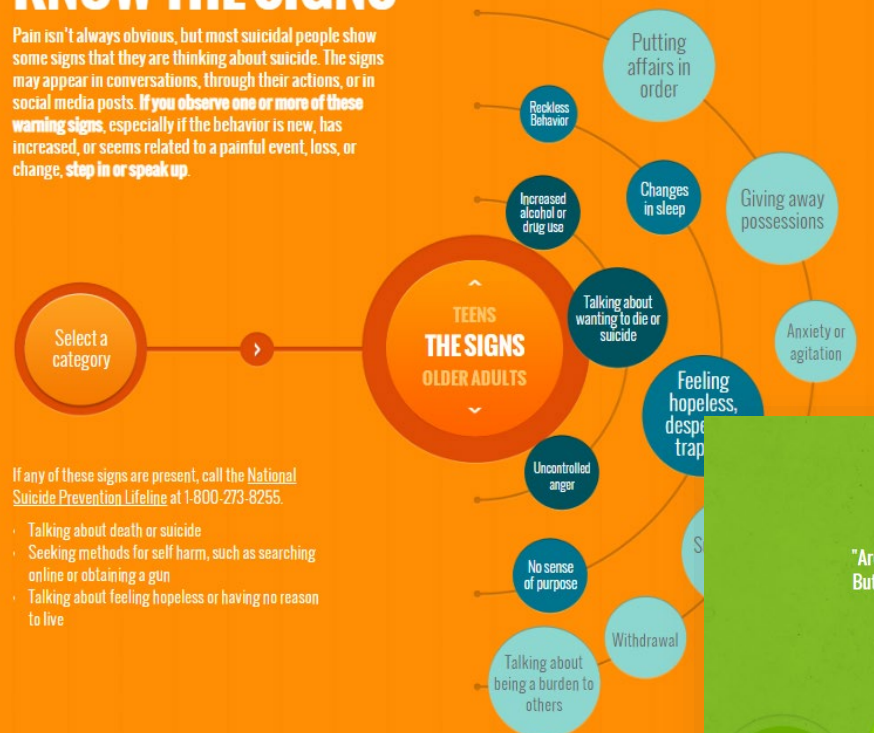


California  
Department  
of Education  
“Model Youth  
Suicide  
Prevention  
Policy”  
Recommends:

- Training for all staff
  - Specialized training in risk assessment
  - Review/update of referral processes
  - Vetting and referral of community resources
  - Utilization/sharing of crisis resources
  - Implement/update re-entry procedures
  - Focus on high-risk groups
  - Student engagement/education
  - Creation of a “postvention plan”
- 

## KNOW THE SIGNS

Pain isn't always obvious, but most suicidal people show some signs that they are thinking about suicide. The signs may appear in conversations, through their actions, or in social media posts. **If you observe one or more of these warning signs**, especially if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change, **step in or speak up**.



If any of these signs are present, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

- Talking about death or suicide
- Seeking methods for self harm, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

## FIND THE WORDS

"Are you thinking of ending your life?" Few phrases are as difficult to say to a loved one. But when it comes to suicide prevention, none are more important. Here are some ways to get the conversation started.



## RECONOZCA LAS SEÑALES

El sufrimiento no siempre se nota, pero la mayoría de las personas suicidas muestran algunas señales de lo que están pensando. Las señales se pueden manifestar por medio de conversaciones, en su manera de actuar o en sus comentarios en las redes sociales. **Si observa, aunque sea una de estas señales**, especialmente si nota que el comportamiento es algo nuevo, que ha incrementado o que parece ser a causa de una pérdida, un cambio o un evento trágico, **actúe o diga algo inmediatamente**.



SuicideIsPreventable.org

ElSuicidioEsPrevenible.org

# Asking Directly About Suicide

- Are you thinking about suicide?
- Do you have a plan? Have you done anything to begin to carry out this plan (for example, acquiring methods, giving away possessions, research)?
- When was the last time you thought about suicide?

## MY SAFETY PLAN

Fill out MY SAFETY PLAN and reference it when you are feeling suicidal.

### ▼ 1. MY WARNING SIGNS

EDIT

### ▼ 2. MY COPING STRATEGIES

EDIT

### ▼ 3. MY DISTRACTIONS

EDIT

### ▼ 4. MY NETWORK

EDIT

### ▼ 5. KEEPING MYSELF SAFE

EDIT

## MY3 Features: Safety Plan

- Adapted from Safety Plan by Barbara Stanley & Gregory Brown (2008)
- A tiered plan that provides activities for distraction, and people to call on depending on degree of suicidality
- A **tool** in your therapeutic relationship; a **plan to stay safe** for the individual
- Can be emailed to providers

# How Can We Restrict or Reduce Access to Lethal Means?

- Place the person in a safer environment
- Put a barrier between the person and the means
- Create time between the person and the means
- Make the means (and an attempt) less lethal



# Directing Change Program & Film Contest

Youth and young adults submit 60-second films in suicide prevention and mental health matters and explore these topics through the lens of diverse cultures.



❖ Submission Deadline: March 1

✓ Red Carpet Award Ceremony

✓ Open to youth ages 14-25  
and grades 7-12

✓ Cash prizes for winning  
teams and schools



# Learning Methodology

Directing Change integrates pedagogical principles into the filmmaking process so that participants are engaged via all methods of the “learning spectrum”: to see, experience, discuss, and apply. Once created, films are used in schools and communities to raise awareness and start conversations about these topics.



<https://vimeo.com/92756723>



<https://youtu.be/aR7Rgo6tPU0>

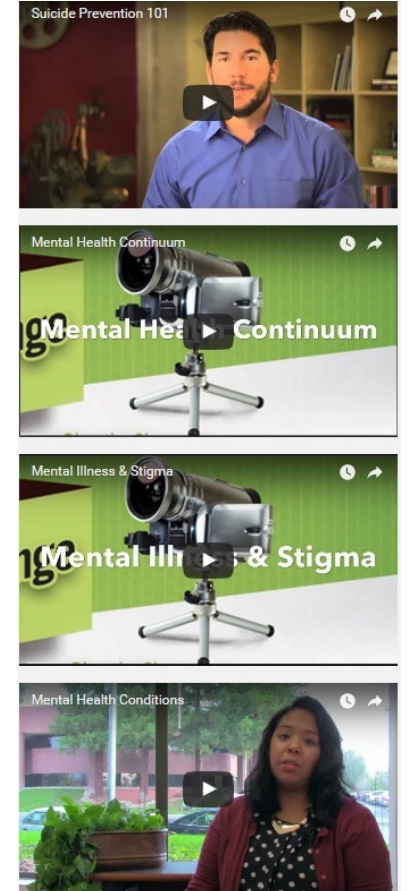
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFFICLJNbQ8>

# Educational Resources

**The Directing Change Program is an evaluated education program that can easily be integrated into classroom, club, or extracurricular activities.**

## **Examples of educational resources:**

- Lesson plans
- Short educational films and Prezis about mental health, suicide prevention, and how to help a friend
- Fact sheets
- PowerPoint presentation for schools with lesson plans
- “Getting Started” Prezi presentation and participation booklets
- Prevention programs, staff and parent trainings



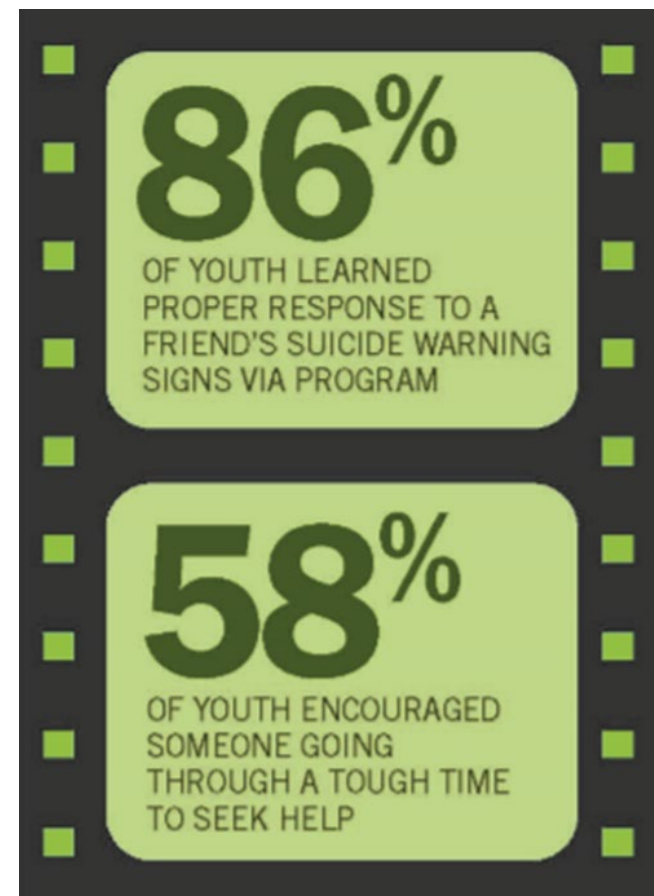
[\*\*http://www.directingchangeCA.org/schools/\*\*](http://www.directingchangeCA.org/schools/)

## Directing Change – Key Findings

Directing Change is effective at:

- Increasing knowledge and skills
- Changing attitudes and behaviors related to mental illness and suicide prevention

“It is remarkable that significant findings persisted even months after the program had ended—with fielding of the survey among participants in the program 3–6 months after completing their film submissions.”



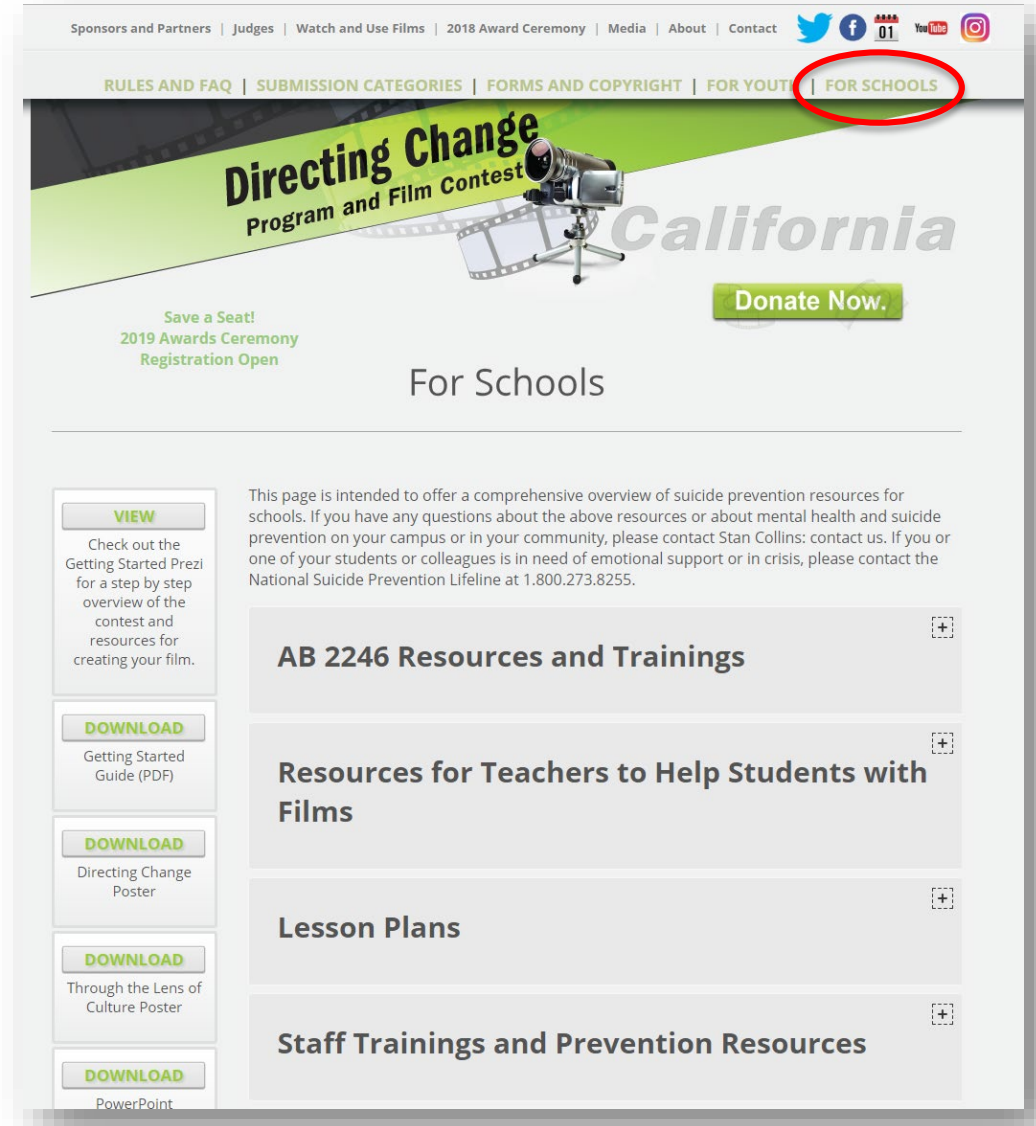


# Additional Resources

**www.DirectingChangeCA.org**

On the “For Schools” page you will find the following resources (and more):

- Resources to respond to AB2246
- Information on available trainings
- Lesson plans for engaging youth
- Postvention
- Intervention
- Youth engagement
- Parent engagement







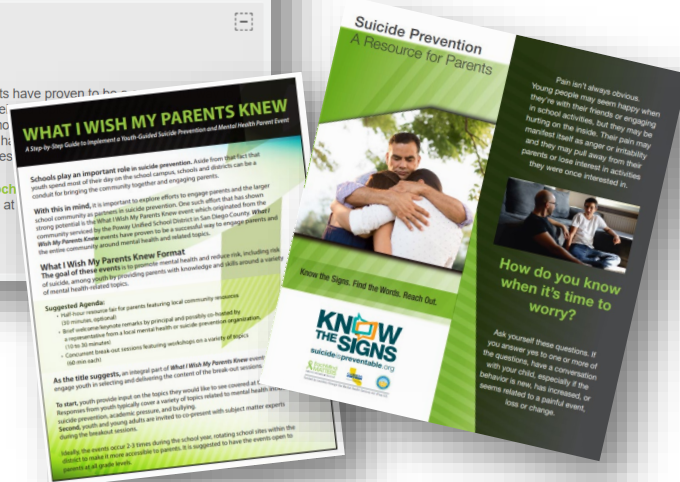
DirectingChangeCA.org

## Youth Engagement

## Parent Engagement

**What I Wish My Parents Knew:** What I Wish My Parents Knew events have proven to be effective in engaging parents and the entire community around mental health and risk, including risk of suicide, and knowledge and skills around a variety of mental health-related topics, h communities. This toolbox covers how to plan and implement this series

**Directing Change Suicide Prevention Information for Parents Broch** questions parents can ask themselves to assess if their teen might be at risk. Tips on raising resilient teens as well as resources are provided.



## Region 1

### San Diego, Orange, and Imperial County

\* **First Place:** "An Awkward Conversation" (Advancing to statewide round of judging)

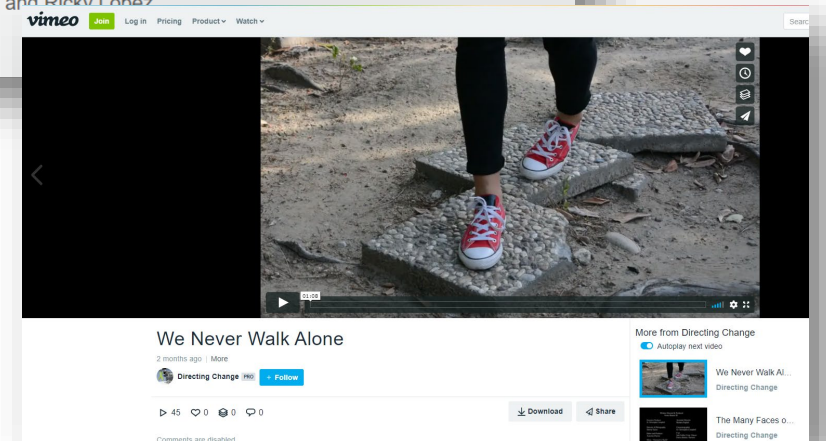
Orange County

Valencia High School

Filmmakers: Roman Tijerina and Ricky Lopez

Advisor: Rod Boaz

[View & Download](#)



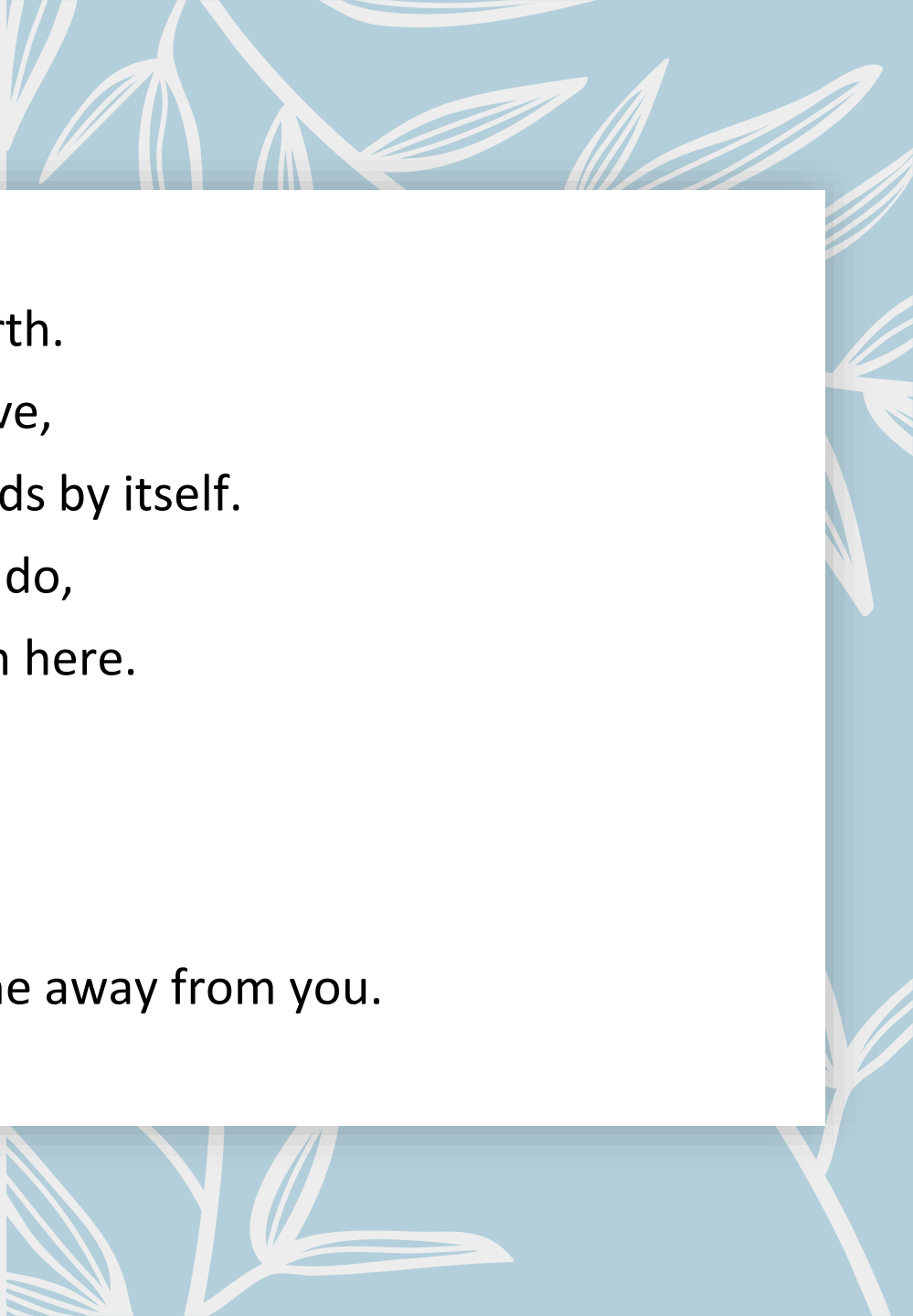


**CRISIS TEXT LINE |**

**Text HELLO to 741741**

**Free, 24/7, Confidential**

**National Crisis Resources**



Hold on to what is good,  
Even if it's a handful of earth.  
Hold on to what you believe,  
Even if it's a tree that stands by itself.  
Hold on to what you must do,  
Even if it's a long way from here.  
Hold on to your life,  
Even if it's easier to let go.  
Hold on to my hand,  
Even if someday I'll be gone away from you.

— *Pueblo Prayer*

# Resources

Brown, G., & Stanley, B. (2008). *Patient safety plan template*. Suicide Prevention Resource Center. <https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/patient-safety-plan-template>

Ghirardelli, A., & Bye, L. (2016). *California mental health services authority directing change film contest and program evaluation*. NORC at the University of Chicago. <http://www.directingchange.org/wp-content/uploads/CalMHSA%20DC%20Eval%20Report.pdf>

Guard, A. (2018). *Means restriction and means safety for prevention suicide*. Presented at Los Angeles Summit. [http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dmh/1046855\\_MeansRestrictionSPSummit2018.pdf](http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dmh/1046855_MeansRestrictionSPSummit2018.pdf)

# Resources

National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. (2021). *Framework for successful messaging*. <https://suicidepreventionmessaging.org/>

Reporting on Suicide. (2015). *Best practices and recommendations for reporting on suicide*. <https://reportingonsuicide.org/>