

What Am I Doing Talking About Suicide?

Bottom line...those of us who talk about suicide are trying to inspire others to believe that together we can make a difference. This inspiration may ultimately save the life of someone contemplating suicide. If we, as speakers, focus on just getting through the material we may not be able to inspire or convince others that they may be able to make a critical difference. Here are some simple concrete techniques to help you effectively deliver your suicide prevention message. They are adapted from a book by Tony Jeary entitled *Inspire Any Audience* © 1996, Trophy Publishing.

1. The single most important step is rehearsal. Be familiar with your material and practice! It will help you look relaxed, comfortable and in control, and you will feel these things as well. Don't forget to rehearse with the equipment you'll be using.
2. Be yourself. Your own style and personality will shine through even with such a serious topic.
3. Recognize that you have knowledge about the topic of suicide prevention. You don't need to be an "expert."
4. Show respect for your audience. Thank them for being there, be prepared, start and end on time, be a good listener when they speak.
5. Use a story or just a few startling statistics to grab the audience's attention and establish why it is important to learn about suicide.
6. Remember, research shows that only 7% of a presentation's outcome is based on words. The rest is based on what you are doing (55% on body language) and how you are doing it (38% on tonality.)
7. Speak with conviction. Say what you say as if you mean it and your audience will believe you!
8. Thank your audience at the end of your presentation(s) and acknowledge that each one has the ability to genuinely reach out to a suicidal person.

Good Luck!



John E. Baldacci, Governor

Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner