The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) was founded by the late Professor Erwin Ringel in Austria in 1960. Since that time, professionals and volunteers from more than fifty different countries have joined. IASP is a Non-Governmental Organisation in official relationship with the World Health Organisation concerned with suicide prevention.

Additional Co-Chairs Named to Postvention Taskforce

Michelle Linn-Gust and Sean McCarthy have been named additional Co-Chairs of the Postvention Taskforce to aid Karl Andriessen as the profile of Postvention continues to grow.

Linn-Gust and McCarthy have been designated as being in charge of the organization of Postvention activities sponsored by IASP in the European Symposium as well as future IASP Congresses and Conferences.

Michelle Linn-Gust, M.S., of the United States, is a speaker and author of the book "Do they have bad days in Heaven? Surviving the Suicide Loss of a Sibling" about her younger sister Denise’s suicide.

She is the current Survivor Division Chair for the American Association of Suicidology and is the Associate Editor of the Association for Death Education and Counseling’s journalette, The Forum. She is a doctoral candidate in Family Studies at the University of New Mexico.

She can be emailed via michelle@chellehead.com

Sean McCarthy has worked in the field of Suicidology for 10 years. He was the first full time appointed Suicide Resource Officer in Ireland and had responsibility for the strategic implementation of the recommendations contained in the Irish National Strategy at regional level. This responsibility crossed over the areas of Prevention, Intervention and Postvention.

He was the founder member of a suicide bereavement support group in his home area of Waterford and has been bereaved by suicide himself.

He was a member of the steering group that developed the Irish National Strategy “Reach Out” and was a member of the organising committee for the recent IASP 2007 Conference in Killarney, Ireland.

He is shortly to take up a new position as Chief Executive Officer for Console, which is a National Suicide Bereavement Support Organisation in Ireland (www.console.ie)

Sean can be contacted by e-mail at sean.mccarthy@hse.ie
One year ago, in September 2006, the 1st International Suicide Postvention Seminar concluded that the Postvention field should grow further, and should integrate research, practice and communication.

As such, the current 2nd International Suicide Postvention Seminar specifically aimed to facilitate communication between various stakeholders in suicide Postvention. The seminar offered a floor for survivors, caregivers, researchers and policymakers to meet people with similar interests, and to exchange expertise. Realities and aspirations of various aspects germane to Postvention were discussed in two plenary presentations (morning session) and four parallel workshops (afternoon session).

Questions raised included:
Where are we now?
What are the challenges and the pitfalls?
What are the aspirations, and how to achieve them?
What are the success factors?
The Convenor, K. Andriessen welcomed the approx 80 participants and speakers and opened the Seminar, followed by two plenary speakers.

J. Reed from SPANUSA presented an impressive example of community action in the USA on how to put Postvention on the policy agenda—and how to keep it there—

In the second presentation, M. Griffin, E. Monaghan and U. Bates, from Petrus Consulting, presented the availability of suicide bereavement support in Ireland and how they assessed the range and the quality of the available support, and the subsequent conclusions for future developments.

Each workshop focused on a specific aspect: research questions and methodology (A. Beauchais), clinicians after suicide in the family or in the clinic (O. Grad and A. Zavasnik), supporting suicide bereaved children and adolescents (M. Linn-Gust), and Postvention actions in rural and remote areas by the Salvation Army (W. Gallet, P. Moulds and A. Staines).

The participants had the opportunity to fully engage in the discussions after the plenary presentations, during the workshops, and at the final line up of the speakers.

The evaluation forms filled out by the participants clearly showed that the content, the speakers, and the discussions with the floor were highly appreciated.

As the Seminar aims to increase the awareness for Postvention, it was however a question how the content of the seminar could flow over to the wider Suicidology community, e.g. the participants of the regular IASP congresses.

It was subsequently decided not to organize a third separate seminar, but to opt for a Postvention stream in the regular congress programs. As such, the visibility and dissemination of the Postvention field should increase.

Karl Andriessen
Glasgow / European 2008 Conference Update

In an effort to build on the Postvention momentum that continues to build after each conference, two symposia have been dedicated to Postvention at the European conference in 2008. At this time, these symposia are in the planning stages. One will revolve around how several international organizations built their Postvention programs and the second symposia will discuss how organizations can collect data on who is using their services/support groups. Postvention workshops are highly encouraged for submission!

Please see the conference website for more details:

The conference will take place August 27-30, 2008 in Glasgow. There is a survivor rate available of £185 for survivors and those who work for survivor organizations.

World Suicide Survivor Group Directory

In an effort to pull together as many support group listings as possible from around the world, the Taskforce is looking to link as many country support group listings to the IASP Postvention Taskforce Page as possible.

If you have a link to a country’s listing, please email it to:
sean.mccarthy@hse.ie

3rd Asia Pacific Regional Conference of International Association for Suicide Prevention

Suicide Research and Prevention in Times of Rapid Change in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges

Hong Kong, 1-4 November 2008 (Thursday—Sunday)

Organizers:
International Association of Suicide Prevention (IASP)
HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention, University of Hong Kong

Conference Aim:
To contribute to the modification and improvement of existing suicide prevention strategies, particularly by identifying promising prevention interventions, and to encourage the development of effective and evidence based preventive measures in Asian countries.

Please visit our official website at: http://csrp.hku.hk/iasp2008 for recent updates or enquiries.
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