

**YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION & INTERVENTION
SYMPOSIUM Lowry Conference Center
November 14, 2024**

AGENDA

8:15 AM Welcome & Introductions

***Lena Heilman, Ph.D., M.N.M., Director – Office of Suicide Prevention,
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Christine R. Harms, MS, Director – Office of School Safety,
Colorado Department of Public Safety***

8:30 AM to 10:00 AM Plenary - Murder/Suicide

Thomas Joiner, Ph.D.

**The Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of Psychology
Florida State University**

Understandably, murder-suicide is viewed by many as senseless and incomprehensible. But is there any way to make at least some sense of it? In his books "The Perversion of Virtue" and "The Varieties of Suicidal Experience," Thomas Joiner answers this question in the affirmative. He contends that most or all murder-suicide tragedies begin initially as purely suicidal crises but then transform from there, through the psychological perversion of certain virtues-- justice, duty, glory, and mercy--into murder-suicides. To be clear these virtues themselves do not attach to murder-suicides, except in the mind of the perpetrator who has twisted them to rationalize violence towards others as a prelude to lethal violence against the self.

10:00 AM to 10:15 AM Break

**10:15 AM to 11:45 AM Plenary - Building Systems to Prevent Suicide in Schools: Insights from the
Colorado Social Worlds & Youth Well-Being Study**

Anna Mueller, Ph.D.

**Luther Dana Waterman Associate Professor,
Department of Sociology, Indiana University Bloomington**

Schools are widely recognized as a critical place for suicide prevention, and yet, despite years of research many of our school-based suicide prevention strategies are hard for schools to sustain, particularly when resources (time, money, staff) are limited. Drawing on data from the Colorado Social Worlds & Youth Well-Being Study, this study offers insights into how to improve school suicide prevention strategies by leveraging existing strengths and systems that are already in place in schools. By the end of this presentation, audience members will have increased information about (1) youth suicide, (2) how to build systems in schools that help prevent suicide, and (3) will have actionable strategies to take back to their communities to begin conversations for change.

11:45 AM to 12:15 PM Lunch



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12:15 PM to 1:45 PM Plenary - Sudden Onset Acute Suicidal Disturbance

Thomas Joiner, Ph.D.

**The Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of Psychology
Florida State University**

The connection of suicidal crises to mental disorders is a fraught topic. There are those who believe that such crises may arise on their own and moreover, do not necessarily signal mental disorder. There are others who contend that all suicidality occurs in the context of some form of mental disorder. There is a third possibility: Namely, that suicidal crises arise on their own and represent a mental disorder in and of themselves. However, no diagnostic label in nomenclatures like the DSM-5 for suicidal crises per se exist (other than Suicidal Behavior Disorder, which is in the section on Conditions for Future Study). Thomas Joiner will describe the criteria for and make the case that freestanding acute suicidal crises exist and constitute serious mental disorders that should be added to standard nomenclatures.

1:45 PM to 2:00 PM Break

2:00 PM to 3:30 PM Plenary - Supporting Suicide Survivors

Susie Reece

**Director of Lived Experience
Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)**

This presentation explores youth suicide prevention through the combined lens of lived experience and effective prevention frameworks. Drawing from personal insights, the presenter examines how assumptions about others can obscure an understanding of the unique struggles of youth who have been impacted by suicide. Emphasizing the power of open, informed dialogue, the presentation encourages approaches that empower youth as champions of their own mental health. Additionally, it covers brief intervention models tailored to address youth suicide risk within relevant cultural and social contexts.

3:40 PM Adjournment

Please note: Certificates of attendance will be sent out virtually after you complete the online evaluation. Thank you!



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Speakers

Thomas Joiner, Ph.D.

Thomas Joiner went to college at Princeton and received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin. He is The Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Florida State University. Dr. Joiner's work is on the psychology, neurobiology, and treatment of suicidal behavior and related conditions. He was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship, as well as the 2023 Stengel Award from the International Association for Suicide Prevention, their lifetime achievement award, bestowed on one researcher worldwide once every two years. A consultant to NASA's Human Research Program, he was the Director of the DoD-funded Military Suicide Research Consortium, a ten-year, \$70 million dollar project. Dr. Joiner runs a clinical and consulting practice specializing in suicidal behavior, including legal consultation on suits involving death by suicide.

Anna S. Muller, Ph.D.

Dr. Mueller is the Luther Dana Waterman Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and the Irsay Institute at Indiana University Bloomington. She is a leading expert in youth suicide and suicide prevention/postvention in schools and is co-author of the book *Life under Pressure: The Social Roots of Youth Suicide and What to Do About Them* (2024); a book described as "a devastating work of scholarship" by Malcolm Gladwell. Her research has received numerous awards for its contribution to knowledge, including the Edwin S. Shneidman Early Career Award. Her research is supported by grant funding from the National Institutes of Health, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and the Western Colorado Community Foundation, among others. Mueller is passionate about translating suicide prevention science into policy that works for teens, families, and schools.

Susie [수지] Reynolds Reece

Susie [수지] Reynolds Reece is the director of lived experience initiatives for the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC). In that capacity, Reece leads the development of multi-organizational inclusion practices, acts as a liaison and authority for national lived experience experts, and builds international guidance to center lived experience across any field. Reece

also bolsters lived experience engagement by elevating experts from diverse experiential backgrounds and perspectives.

Reece began her prevention career as a grassroots organizer in Arkansas. She worked in substance use prevention for several years before becoming the first and only violence prevention specialist for CHI St. Vincent-Arkansas. Reece has championed and led multiple county- and state-level activism efforts throughout the United States revolving around suicide prevention, mental health, social justice, and systemic improvement.

Reece was an inaugural member of SPRC's first-ever Lived Experience Advisory Committee. Reece has been a recognized leader and suicide prevention strategist for nearly a decade. She leads from her lived experience which includes all three direct forms of suicide-centered lived experience. Reece's lived experience ensures she continually centers the needs of those most affected by suicide.