

## PREVENTING SUICIDE: WHAT WE ALL CAN DO

by Stephanie Simon, LCSW, NCPsyA, CCS, DRCC, Director, Crisis Intervention Services



The recent suicides of Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain have led to an important nationwide conversation about suicide. The symptoms that may be an indicator of suicide include:

- Too much or too little sleep
- Increased or decreased appetite
- Erratic mood swings, increased irritability
- Increased substance use and abuse
- Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- Feelings of loneliness and despair
- Giving away items of importance
- Acquiring the means to commit suicide including pills and guns
- Social isolation and withdrawing from friends and family
- Increase in self-destructive or self-injurious behaviors

**If you are interested in hosting a Mental Health First Aid class at your job or school, please email: [feedback@bridgewayrehab.org](mailto:feedback@bridgewayrehab.org)**

We also know that a history of prior suicide attempts or a family history of suicide puts someone at greater risk. We need to be able to answer this question: "If I notice these symptoms in a friend or a family member, what should I do?"

***You do NOT have to be a trained mental health professional to help. Here are some basic things we all can do if we are worried that someone may be at risk of suicide:***

**-Tell the individual directly and clearly that you are concerned about them.** This may sound simple, but it is remarkable how many of us don't do this because we are afraid of "upsetting" someone.

**-Ask the individual directly and clearly if they are thinking about hurting themselves.** Do not ask it in a roundabout manner- ask it directly and clearly, and don't mince words. You can ask if they are thinking about killing themselves. Use the word "suicide." Do not be concerned if you are asking about suicide that you are "putting the idea in someone's head." This is not possible. What you are doing is giving someone permission to say what they really feel, and this is usually a tremendous relief, as they don't need to hide anymore.

**-If they say yes, ask them if they have made a plan to do this.** Ask about means and opportunity. Ask if anyone else besides you knows about this plan. Ask if there is anything that would STOP them from killing themselves. If the individual comes up with things like hurting family members or religious beliefs that would stop them from killing themselves that is good, although they still need help, and is known as a protective factor. If the individual cannot come up with anything, that is a big concern and their safety is at risk.

**-Do not just tell the individual that they should get help. Offer to find help, or better yet, just do it.** Find that therapist or doctor or clinic, make that appointment, and go with the person to the appointment. If they need to go to the hospital, go with them to the hospital. People who are very depressed do not have the energy or desire to find help for themselves- so make yourself part of the solution.

**-Do not leave an actively suicidal person alone.** If you think they are at risk of hurting themselves, get help from EMS or another health professional, and do not leave the person until help arrives.

**-Do not keep someone's secret about feeling suicidal.** There is a saying "we are only as sick as our secrets." This is true, and keeping secrets is part of remaining isolated and feeling ashamed.

**-Go for Mental Health First Aid training.** This 8 hour course, taught by a certified Mental Health First Aid trainer, is meant for the general public and gives essential information and interventions that all of us can use, and through active scenarios and role playing teaches everyone how to assess and respond to someone who may be suicidal. Just like CPR teaches basic life saving interventions and First Aid to the general public without needing to be a doctor, Mental Health First Aid teaches how to intervene in a mental health crisis and provide life saving interventions without needing to be a Mental Health professional.

## A FAMILIAR FACE

### AMY SPAGNOLO, PhD, BECOMES BRIDGEWAY'S NEXT CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



If Amy looks familiar it is because she has had a long relationship with Bridgeway, beginning with her days as a college intern pursuing a degree at Rutgers School of Health Professions, Department of Psychiatric Rehabilitation. Amy went on to become staff at Bridgeway's Partial Care program. These days, Amy holds a doctorate degree and has been on staff at Rutgers since 2000. She currently serves as the Program Director for the Master of Science in Psychiatric Rehabilitation Leadership Track. This program is the only one of its kind in the nation and is offered completely online to meet the need for a qualified workforce skilled in mental health management and leadership, nationally and internationally.

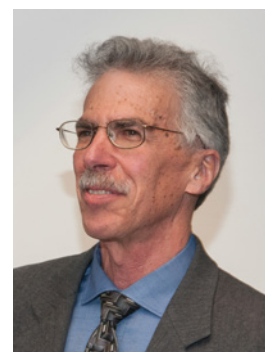
"It is such an honor to begin my service as the Bridgeway Chairperson. I deeply respect the work of our previous Chair, Mark Williams, as he navigated us through the complexities the Bridgeway family has experienced. I recognize the challenges ahead as we strive to advance the Bridgeway mission and at the same time ensure we meet the many demands required during the transitions expected."

- Amy Spagnolo

## BRIDGEWAY'S CEO TO RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

### COMMUNITY HEALTH LAW PROJECT TO HONOR CORY STORCH WITH THE ANN KLEIN ADVOCATE AWARD

On October 25, 2018, Cory Storch will join an exclusive group of giants in the field of psychiatric rehabilitation and human services who have been honored with the Ann Klein Advocate Awards. The Awards ceremony has been held each year since 1988 to honor Ann Klein, former Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Human Services, who was instrumental in establishing a community-based system of care for people with mental and physical disabilities. Previous honorees include Gary S. Horan, President & CEO, Trinitas Regional Medical Center, and Joe Young, Executive Director, Disability Rights New Jersey.



Cory Storch is distinctly deserving of the Ann Klein Advocate Award, as evidenced by his own words: "Bridgeway quickly became more than a job for me. It became a mission – to bring hope to the people I was assigned to work with. Getting beyond learned hopelessness is the first step in recovery from a mental illness. You need hope in order to want help. That is especially true at Bridgeway where we serve people facing co-occurring challenges: poverty, substance abuse, chronic medication conditions and of course stigma and discrimination."

## JOIN OUR MAILING LIST!

Be sure to stay on top of Bridgeway news and information by providing us your email address and your postal mailing address.

Write to [feedback@bridgewayrehab.org](mailto:feedback@bridgewayrehab.org)



# A SPECIAL EVENT 50 YEARS IN THE MAKING

On May 2, 2018, Bridgeway celebrated a remarkable milestone. Founded in 1968 in Elizabeth, 2018 marks 50 years of Bridgeway delivering critical mental health and recovery services to New Jerseyans. Please visit [www.bridgewayrehab.org](http://www.bridgewayrehab.org) and click on the youtube icon to view CEO Cory Storch's speech at the 50th Anniversary Chairman's Dinner.



Cory Storch and Lois Mattson,  
Honorary 50th Anniversary  
Chairperson

## 50th Anniversary Chairman's Dinner The Atrium KEAN University STEM Building



Honorees Mark Williams, Diane Riley  
accepting on behalf of Ed Murphy,  
and Kevin Cummings, CEO of  
Investors Bank



Kevin Cummings with Elizabeth  
Mayor Chris Bollwage

## Special Thanks to Major Sponsor



Cory Storch, Chris Hudak , Union Cty  
Freeholder, and Mark Williams



## SUMMER IS HERE!

Bridgeway would like to remind everyone to be aware of the summer heat and sun risks that this season can present. Risk factors such as antipsychotic medication usage, chronic medical conditions, obesity, diabetes, alcohol use, and age can place the individuals we care about at higher risk of heat-related illness. During the summer season family members may want to review safety precautions, such as staying hydrated, keeping plenty of cool drinking water available, monitoring the outside temperature and planning activities accordingly, and staying in air-conditioned facilities when possible. Individuals should reassess and reconsider any activities that would expose them to prolonged periods of high heat and humidity, as this can lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke, requiring immediate medical attention. Symptoms of heat stroke that may require emergency medical attention include:

- A body temperature of 104 F (40 C) or higher is the main sign of heatstroke
- Altered mental state or behavior
- Alteration in sweating
- Nausea and vomiting
- Flushed skin
- Rapid breathing
- Racing heart rate
- Headache

# 2018 ANNUAL AWARDS

4:00pm, Thursday, September 20, 2018

KEAN University STEM Bldg, 1000 Morris Ave., Union, NJ



Please join us as we acknowledge the outstanding accomplishments of 25 of our family and friends who are achieving their recovery goals.

\*Reservations are required. Please email: [feedback@bridgewayrehab.org](mailto:feedback@bridgewayrehab.org)



Bridgeway Rehabilitation Services  
615 N. Broad Street  
Elizabeth, NJ 07208  
908-355-7886



Join our online community!