

Harnessing Social Media to Prevent Suicide

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Overview

- What is social media?
- Adults' use of social media
- Why use social media for suicide prevention?
- Opportunities

What is Social Media?

- Digital media with user-generated content that promotes social interaction, connectedness, and belonging
 - Social networking sites
 - Video sharing sites
 - Online games
 - Wikis
 - Interactive sites & blogs

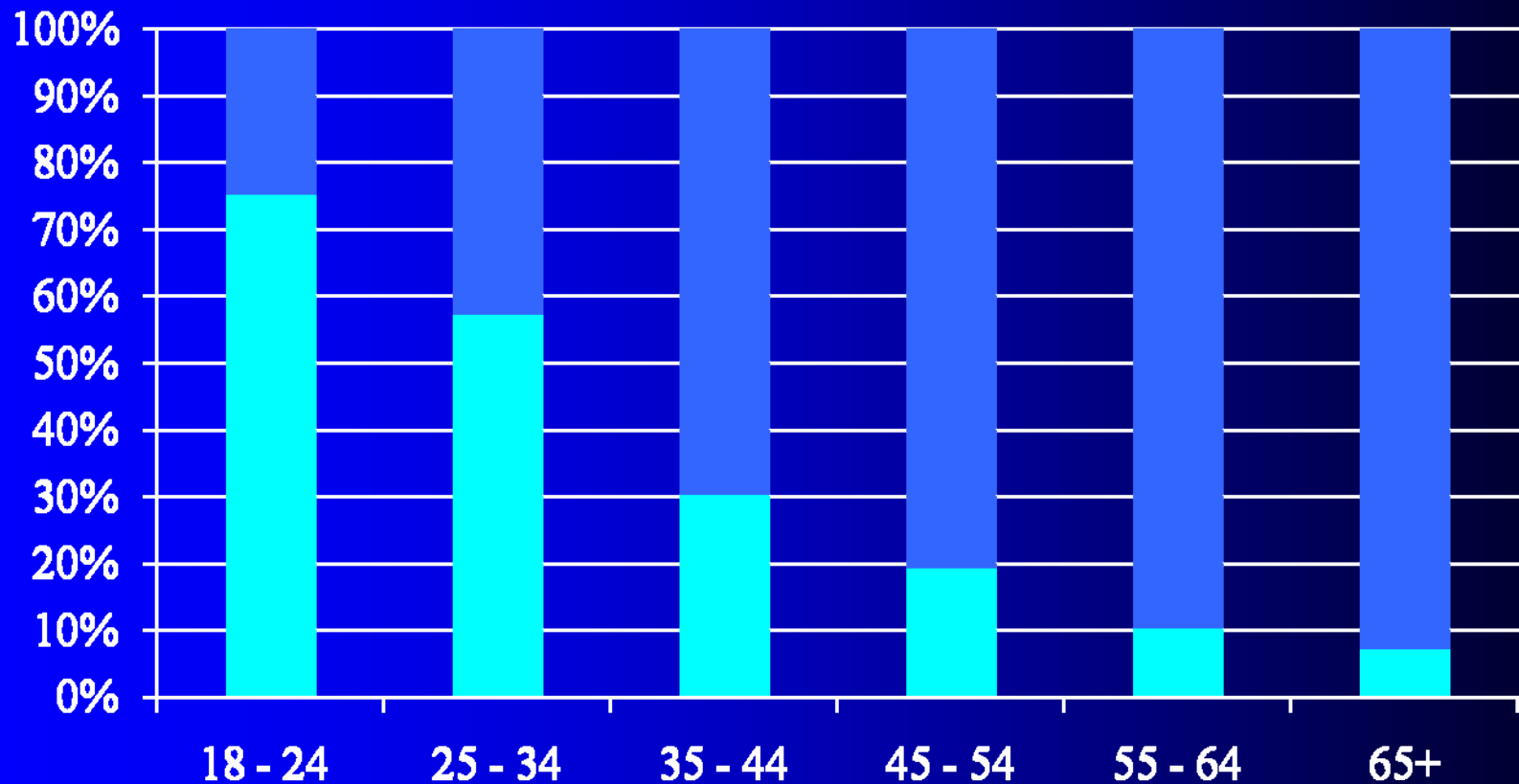
Social Media Networks Create Communities



Adult Use of Social Media

35% of Online Adults have Social Networking Profiles

Pew Internet Life Project (2009)



Why Social Networking Sites?

- To connect with friends¹
- To meet people with similar experiences
- Adolescents and young adults “hang out”
 - Internet + Social Networking Sites + IM + Texting + Cell phone = “Always on” communication with peers²

¹Pew Internet and American Life Project

²Susan Keys, PhD, Inspire USA Foundation

They Also Seek Health Information & Support

- Eight in 10 Internet users go online for health information; 23% for mental health issues
- 8M seek health information online on a typical day, almost half of whom are searching on behalf of someone else (2006)
- At least 36M people belong to online support groups (2005)

Pew Internet and American Life Project

Why Use New Media for Suicide Prevention?

- An entire generation of Americans have grown up with the Internet and prefer to communicate electronically.
- It is not a fad; it is a tool.
- The online conversations about suicide are already happening everyday, with or without us.

In the News

[Home](#) > [Health](#) > [Mind & Mood News](#)

Florida Teen Live-Streams His Suicide Online

Abraham Biggs, 19, Was Egged On by Fellow Bloggers, Cops Say

By EMILY FRIEDMAN
Nov. 21, 2008

abc NEWS

189 comments

A Florida teenager who used a webcam to live-stream his suicide Wednesday was reportedly encouraged by other people on the Web site, authorities told ABCNews.com.

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Facebook status update becomes suicide note for aspiring Brooklyn model, actor Paul Zolezzi

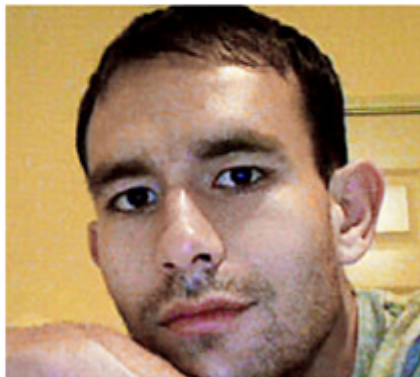
BY ALISON GENDAR AND TRACY CONNOR
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Updated Saturday, February 21st 2009, 3:14 AM

An aspiring model tormented by heroin addiction hanged himself in a [Brooklyn](#) playground early Friday after foretelling his suicide on [Facebook](#).

A jogger discovered the body of [Paul Zolezzi](#), 30, dangling from the monkey bars in Mount Prospect Park playground near the [Brooklyn Museum](#) about 7 a.m., police said.

Hours earlier, Zolezzi had updated his Facebook page with an apparent suicide note, saying he



Did Demi Moore's Twitter Feed Stop a Suicide?

Moore's Followers Called Police After Fan Tweeted Actress About Suicide Plot

By EMILY FRIEDMAN and SHEILA MARIKAR
April 3, 2009

abc NEWS

26 comments

Don't discount the power of people who follow stars on Twitter.



Actress-director Demi Moore arrives at the 2009 Miami International Film Festival for the screening...
(Jemal Countess/WireImage/Getty Images)

A woman who used the micro-blogging network to announce her plans to commit suicide by tweeting actress Demi Moore was later found by authorities and taken in for evaluation after followers of the actress reported the incident to police, who said this is an unprecedented use of the network.

Known only by her Twitter username, "Sandieguy," the Silicon Valley, Calif., resident wrote a message to Moore early Friday morning detailing the way in which she was planning to take her life.

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RSS

DIGG

SHARE

UK teenager 'saved by Facebook'

A British teenager who took a drugs overdose has been saved after the American girl he was chatting to online raised the alarm.

The 16-year-old boy from Oxfordshire had sent her a message suggesting he intended to commit suicide.

Although she did not know where he lived, calls via the White House and the British Embassy enabled Abingdon police to save the boy's life.

The boy, who has not been named, made a full recovery after hospital treatment.



The boy is understood to have sent a message via the site on Wednesday

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- White paper
 - New media changes exponentially
 - Can't do it alone
- Summit
- Opportunities

Opportunities: Prevention

- Identify, strengthen and support existing user communities. Partner with others!
- Expand the visibility and accessibility of credible resources.



Opportunities: Intervention

- Provide crisis support.

Veterans Chat
Operating Hours: 24 hours 7 days a week

Are you a veteran in emotional Distress?

If so, chat live with a crisis counselor and get help.



Opportunities: Postvention

- Use social media to reach out to engage attempt survivors, survivors, and communities.
- Prevent contagion, including ensuring appropriateness of memorial sites.
- Use social media for online grief support after a suicide.

