CPA's Division of Psychologists in Public Service (Division IV) presents:

The Space Between Silence and Disclosure: Understanding Denial of Suicidal Thinking

Presented by: Joseph H. Obegi, PsyD

Description:

Asking people about suicidal thoughts is a common-sense way to assess suicidal thinking. Yet it is sometimes stated that most people who die by suicide deny suicidal thoughts before their deaths. This session presents the empirical basis for this assertion. Specifically, it examines the prevalence of denial of suicidal thoughts among ideators in general, denial before suicide, and denial before and immediately after a suicide attempt. The session also explores why some adults who have suicidal thoughts deny them but engage in suicidal behavior within days or weeks, and offers some thoughts about how clinicians might facilitate disclosure of suicidal thinking.

After attending this event, participants will be able to:

1. List the prevalence of denial of suicidal thoughts for at least two of the following: ideators in general, denial before suicide, denial immediately after a suicide attempt.
2. List at least two reasons why people may deny having suicidal thoughts.
3. List at least two clinical techniques that may facilitate disclosure of suicidal thoughts.

Joseph H. Obegi, PsyD, is a clinical psychologist who has worked in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for the past 16 years. Currently, he prepares the department's annual suicide reports, conducts research on suicide within the department, and provides consultation on clinical cases and policy matters. In his private practice, he provides consultation to providers and organizations on suicide-related issues and occasionally serves as an expert witness in cases of correctional suicide. Additionally, Dr. Obegi has published papers in peer-reviewed journals and delivered presentations on the care of suicidal people and suicide prevention in correctional settings. He completed his education at the California School of Professional Psychology and his postdoctoral training in the Department of Psychiatry, UC San Diego.