Nation’s Top Suicide Prevention and Veterinary Medical Organizations Partner to Release New Resource for Veterinary Workplaces

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the American Veterinary Medical Association, in partnership with the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America, the Veterinary Hospital Managers Association, and the Veterinary Medical Association Executives Release After a Suicide: A Guide for Veterinary Workplaces

NEW YORK (September 29, 2020) – During National Suicide Prevention Month the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) in partnership with the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA), the Veterinary Hospital Managers Association (VHMA), and the Veterinary Medical Association Executives (VMAE), are releasing a new resource, After a Suicide: A Guide for Veterinary Workplaces. This new free guide will help support veterinary workplaces in the aftermath of an employee’s death by suicide.

“Supporting veterinary medical professionals in the aftermath of a colleague’s suicide is vital. Because suicide loss survivors can develop significant grief and even physical and mental health issues if not appropriately supported, postvention is a critical step and is actually part of suicide prevention. The appropriate handling of the aftermath of a suicide in a veterinary office can pave the way for a workplace culture that is smart about mental health,” said Dr. Christine Moutier, AFSP chief medical officer.

“At a time when people across our society, including veterinarians and their staffs, are experiencing great stress, I am very grateful to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention for their expertise and collaboration in developing this essential mental health resource for our members,” said Dr. Douglas Kratt, AVMA president. “The guide will ensure that our members and their teams get the critical support they need in the event of a colleague’s suicide death, and help to prevent future deaths by suicide.”

“An employee’s suicide has a deep and disturbing impact on survivors, including coworkers. Managers who have had to support and comfort employees in the wake of
such a tragedy understand the importance of offering grief counseling and other actions to support employees, mitigate the impact of the trauma, and prevent further loss. After A Suicide: A Guide for Veterinary Workplaces is a valuable management resource and much-needed guide because it provides comprehensive, empathetic, and step-by-step responses to these devastating and heartbreaking events,” said Michelle Gonzales-Bryant, CVPM, VHMA President.

Developed by experts in veterinary medicine, suicide prevention, and survivors of suicide loss in the veterinary medical community, the guide includes:

- best practices for how workplace leaders and staff should respond in the immediate aftermath of a suicide;
- guidance on helping the workplace community grieve and cope in the short- and long-term;
- tips on working with the media and community partners;
- important information on how to safely memorialize employees and to identify and support members of the community who may be vulnerable and reduce the risk of suicide contagion.

To view the guide: https://afsp.org/veterinarians

About the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. AFSP creates a culture that’s smart about mental health through education and community programs, develops suicide prevention through research and advocacy, and provides support for those affected by suicide. Led by CEO Robert Gebbia and headquartered in New York, AFSP has local chapters in all 50 states with programs and events nationwide. Learn more about AFSP in its latest Annual Report, and join the conversation on suicide prevention by following AFSP on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

About the American Veterinary Medical Association
Since 1863, the American Veterinary Medical Association has served as the nation’s leading advocate for the veterinary profession. We are a diverse and passionate group of professionals, representing more than 95,000 members, all striving to improve the health and wellbeing of animals, humans and the environment we share.
About the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America
For nearly 40 years, the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) has served as the advocate for veterinary technicians, advancing veterinary nursing and veterinary technology in the United States. NAVTA is a dynamic community of more than 7,000 credentialed veterinary technicians dedicated to advancing the profession of veterinary nursing through advocacy, awareness, and professional development. NAVTA is a mission- and member-driven association encouraging diversity in ideas, perspectives, and people, committed to leading and elevating the profession. Learn more about NAVTA at navta.net.

About the Veterinary Hospital Managers Association
The Veterinary Hospital Managers Association (VHMA) is a nationally recognized thought-leader and innovator in providing training, education, and resources to more than 4,000 members and a trusted resource that the veterinary sector relies on for industry insights, research, and advocacy to assure performance at the highest levels. VHMA’s core purpose is to advance and support veterinary practice management professionals by developing professional competence, supporting and encouraging standards through the industry’s highest-level certification program, the Certified Veterinary Practice Manager (CVPM), and providing individuals with a network for professional connection and support. Learn more at www.vhma.org.

About the Veterinary Medical Association Executives
The Veterinary Medical Association Executives (VMAE) exists to help veterinary medical association executives create thriving organizations and provide effective leadership within the veterinary profession. VMAE supports its members in lifelong learning, connects them as a community, and fosters the sharing of best practices and great ideas. VMAE supports the wellbeing of veterinary professionals through active and meaningful collaboration with veterinary medical associations and strategic partners. Learn more about VMAE at www.vmae.org.

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