



Hometown Press Release Instructions

Why should you send out a press release regarding The Overnight?

Sharing your story will help end the silence and stigma associated with suicide and mental illness, literally bringing the topic **Out of the Darkness**. And should the media run a story about your participation in The Overnight, it could also help with your fundraising efforts as well as the recruitment of more participants.

Step 1: Fill-in the press release

- Review the hometown press release below. There are bracketed spaces for you to fill in with your personal information.
- Fill-in the information and then delete the brackets. In the space labeled “**Why you are walking,**” write a two to three sentence explanation of your participation.
- If family members or friends are joining you, include information such as team name as well.
- Since the media will often not take the time to read a long press release, we suggest you **keep this description short.** (2-3 sentences)

Step 2: Make a list of where you plan to send your press release

- We recommend that you send the press release to your weekly and daily community newspapers, local radio and TV stations, as well as corporate, community, religious and sorority/ fraternity newsletters and magazines.
- If you are a college or high school student, don't forget your campus newspapers, magazines, radio stations, etc.
- Graduates can send the press release to their Alumni publications.

PLEASE NOTE: AFSP has a media relations team that will be contacting the major media outlets in the New York Tri-State area. Therefore, please **do not** send your release to: **New York Times, Daily News, NY Post, Star-Ledger, Newsday, NY1, or affiliate television news stations in New York City (ABC, NBC, FOX, CW, CBS).** If you have any personal contacts at any of these media outlets please contact AFSP's public relations manager Wylie Tene at 212-363-3500 ext. 24.

| *Helpful sites for finding local outlets:

- Newspapers: <http://www.refdesk.com/paper.html>
- TV Stations: <http://www.mondotimes.com/world/usa/tv.html>
- Radio Stations: <http://www.radio-locator.com/cgi-bin/page?page=states>

When building your list it is important to send it to the right person at each media organization (in some cases there might be more than one). Here is a quick breakdown of suggested contacts:

Newspapers:

- **Metro/City Editor:** Metro Editors assign reporters to cover local stories and events. The metro editor will be your first choice.
- **Community/Local News Editor:** Many smaller papers do not have a metro/city editor, so try the news editor or a local news/ community news editor. Contact the newspaper to learn if there are certain reporters that cover your specific neighborhood.
- **Feature Reporters:** Feature reporters cover everything from entertainment and fashion to health and technology. The best strategy is to contact the specific “beat” reporters directly. Look or ask for a *Health Reporter, Women’s Interest Reporter, Parenting & Family Reporter* (if applicable).

Radio:

- **News Assignment Editor:** Most news/talk radio stations have a News Assignment Editor. This is typically the primary person to contact for news stories and interviews.
- **Public Affairs:** Many radio stations have a public affairs show that typically air on the weekends. The public affairs director is usually the contact/producer for this show.

Television/Cable:

- **Planning Editor:** Planning editors enter upcoming news stories/events into the station’s calendar and plan upcoming stories. Contact the planning editors if you are planning a local fundraiser or training walk. Most planning editors prefer to receive information via fax. **Note:** Most cable stations do not have news programs, but many have public affair shows. See below:
- **Public Affairs:** Many TV and Cable stations have a public affairs show. The public affairs director is usually the contact/producer for this show.

Tips:

- **Use the Internet:** Websites for many media outlets often list contact information for their staff.

- **Call the Media Outlets:** Another option is to simply call each media outlet directly. Use the Internet to look up the main number for each media outlet. When you call, simply ask for the name and contact information the media contacts described above.
- **Utilize Personal Contacts:** If you have friends or family, or even friends of friends at a newspaper, radio or TV station, it is always a good idea to reach out to them for help and advice. If they are not the right person, they may be able to recommend someone.

Step 3: Send the release

- Email or fax your press release to the contacts on your list
- For best results send out your press release in early April and May. Keep in mind that some media outlets will want to wait until closer to the walk before telling your story.

Step 4: Following up with the media

- The best tactic is to call two or three days after you send out the press release.
- If you get someone's voicemail, leave a brief message.
- If the editor or a reporter answers, tell them that you sent them a press release about your participation in the Out of the Darkness Overnight walk and would like to see if they would be interested in doing a story about why suicide prevention is important.

You are now ready to get the word out to the media about this extraordinary event through the media. We wish you luck and are here to help you along the way.

Please contact me if you learn that a media outlet is planning a story or if you have any questions at all.

Sincerely,

Wylie Tene
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Public Relations Manager
888-333-AFSP ext. 24
wtene@afsp.org



Contact Information:

{ Your Name }:
{ Your Phone Number }:
{ Your e-mail Address }:

For Immediate Release:

**{YOUR TOWN} Resident to Walk 18 Miles in the Out of the Darkness Overnight To
Raise Awareness for Suicide Prevention**

{Your City, Your State} – On June 4th through 5th {Your Name} will participate in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention’s Out of the Darkness Overnight, an 18-mile walk from sunset to sunrise, to raise funds and awareness for suicide prevention.

{Insert 2-3 sentences describing **Why You Are Walking** here: }

Suicide is a serious national health problem that cuts across all ages and demographics. Each year, close to one million people make a suicide attempt and more than 34,000 die by suicide in the U.S. alone. It is the fourth leading cause of death among adults 18 to 65 and the third leading cause of death among teens and young adults. Military personnel and veterans are also at increased risk. A recent U.S. Army report confirmed a total of 343 suicides among active-duty, Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers in 2010, nearly one suicide per day.

“Participants in The Overnight agree to raise at least \$1,000, but my personal goal is to raise {Your Fundraising Goal}. I am walking to make a difference, to save a life,” said {Your Last Name}. To donate or to get more information about The Overnight, call 888-The-Overnight or visit www.TheOvernight.org.

Proceeds from the Out of the Darkness Overnight support a variety of prevention, education and advocacy programs including distribution of the Foundation’s new *More Than Sad* educational program on teen depression and suicide prevention (www.MoreThanSad.org).

About the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is the leading national not-for-profit organization exclusively dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research, education and advocacy as well as to reaching out to people with mental disorders and those impacted by suicide. For more information, visit www.afsp.org.

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