



# Impact SPOTLIGHT

May 2025, Issue 4

## Normalizing the Conversation – The Impact of *L.E.T.S. Save Lives: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention for Black and African American Communities*

### The Challenge

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the U.S., and Black and African American communities often face disproportionate inequities in care, support, or services for mental health. Launched in 2024, **L.E.T.S. (Listening, Empathy, Trust, Support) Save Lives: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention for Black and African American Communities (LSL)** is a 90-minute presentation designed to reduce cultural stigma, foster conversations about mental health, and raise awareness of suicide prevention for individuals who identify as Black or African American.

**Connect with your local chapter** to learn more about how you can bring a *L.E.T.S. Save Lives* presentation to your community or organization.

Measuring impact – by collecting and leveraging data in strategic and thoughtful ways – plays a critical role in ensuring that we achieve real results with the actions we take, programs we produce, and partnerships and initiatives we embark on in our quest to prevent suicide and provide support to those affected.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's *Impact Spotlight* series takes a look at some of the ways we're making a true difference in communities everywhere.

### Key Takeaways

1. *LSL* has reached 1,900 people since its launch in February 2024.
2. *LSL* participants' confidence and willingness to engage in suicide preventative behaviors increased after the program.
3. After attending the program, *LSL* participants are more likely to reach out for help if they are concerned about someone else or are struggling themselves.

## Taking Action

*LSL* and the evaluation were co-developed with an Advisory Committee of experts in Black and African American mental health and suicide prevention, researchers, clinicians, survivors of suicide loss, as well as those with lived experience. The evaluation was conducted to assess the reach and impact of *LSL*. A full year of data (February 2024 through February 2025) has helped us to:

- Ensure we are reaching new audiences with culturally relevant content, and
- Assess the effectiveness of *LSL* in helping participants recognize the issue and misconceptions of suicide in Black and African Americans communities, feel confident recognizing warning signs, and feel willing to engage in supportive conversations

By implementing a comprehensive evaluation strategy, we can ensure our programs are meeting community needs and reaching intended audiences.

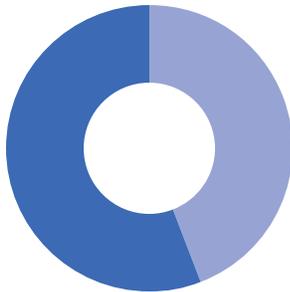
## Who Was Involved

1,900 people participated in 89 *LSL* presentations delivered across 25 states. Nearly two thirds of *LSL* presentations (65%) were delivered virtually.

### Most participants were new to AFSP, suggesting we are reaching a new audience (N=407)

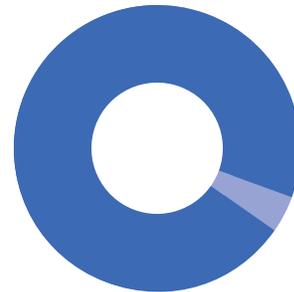
**56%**

had not heard of AFSP prior to learning about *LSL*



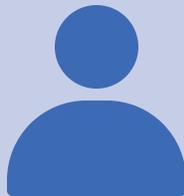
**96%**

now see AFSP as a relevant resource for the Black community



**66%**

of participants were African, Afro-Caribbean, and/or Black (N=357)



**82%**

of respondents were women

**58%**

were 35 to 64 years old

**76%**

had a bachelor's degree or higher

### Nearly all participants had a positive perception of the program and would recommend it to others (N=404)

Rated the program as "excellent" or "good"  98%

Would "definitely" or "probably" recommend the program  99%

Note: 'N' refers to the total number of people who responded to that question.

## What We Found

In our evaluation, *LSL* was found to be effective in achieving its outcomes of building recognition for the issue of suicide, increasing comfort talking about suicide, and increasing participants' confidence and willingness to engage in suicide preventative behaviors.

### After participating in the program, most participants feel comfortable talking to or being there for a friend or loved one who is struggling.

Talking to a friend or loved one if you have or are struggling with thoughts of suicide (N=429)



Being there for or helping a loved one who might be struggling or having thoughts of suicide (N=432)



### Most participants reported increases in their likelihood to engage in suicide preventative behaviors, including reaching out and having a conversation.



**Confidence increased** with more participants feeling confident **recognizing the warning signs for suicide** (12% increase; N=452) and **knowing how to connect someone to resources** (19% increase; N=449).



Two months after attending the program, **61%** of participants **reached out at least once** to talk to someone they were concerned about (N=49).



**9 out of 10** participants recognize that **having mental health problems is not a sign of weakness** (96%), and that **talking about suicide does not make someone suicidal** (89%; N=436).

## What Comes Next

**Building on these findings, *L.E.T.S. Save Lives* will continue to be delivered to more communities across the country and focus on:**

1. Continuing to build an engaged community of trained presenters,
2. Reaching more college students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) through our continued partnership with Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and
3. Refining the program based on community and presenter feedback