
Step-by-step guide to your fundraising event

PLANNING YOUR EVENT

Form your planning committee. Talk up your fundraising ideas with friends and ask them to join you in meaningful, rewarding, and fun work. Make new friends: recruit others you don't know as well, but who are reliable and interested in your project. Keep the committee small; you don't need more than five people.

Get initial approval. If your fundraising project is part of a community service club or senior project, talk to your faculty advisor. For fraternities and sororities, talk to your philanthropy chair. For tips on talking to school administrators and personnel, go to [INSERT URL](#).

Let us know if you have questions about or are planning on running an event; email ajkulp@suicidology.org

Brainstorm ideas with your fundraising committee. These lists of ideas for fundraising events include everything from bake sales for dogs to celebrity auctions. You might not want to consider all of them, but the list will certainly get you brainstorming!

<http://www.fundraiserinsight.org/ideas/>

<http://www.fundraiserhelp.com/school-fundraisers.htm>

<http://www.fundraisingip.com/fundraising/college-fundraising/>

Set a goal. Find out what events raised money in the past by talking to other students and adults in your community or at your school. You don't have to do the same event, but the information can help guide your decisions. Based on what you learn by talking to people, set a fundraising goal. You can make it a stretch, but make it realistic.

Get competitive. If you can build a competitive aspect into your fundraising, you'll raise more money. Get someone to donate a prize for your top fundraiser — it doesn't have to be big, but make the award a big deal.

Plan multiple moneymaking strategies. If you can include an auction or raffle, they can raise a lot and let non-attendees help your cause. If you have a team event, in addition to the entry fee, sell votes so people can support their teams.

Keep your planning costs low by seeking support. For your fundraising event, avoid buying material and renting equipment. Find sponsors, such as local businesses, who will donate material or subsidize your costs. You will make more profit if you keep your costs low.

Keep it short and sweet. Simplicity is key. Planning events means keeping track of lots of details, and a smooth running event will contribute to your success. Also, people's interest may lessen if the event goes on too long.

Don't do it all yourself. Having more volunteers means more people contributing time, talent, and treasure. Everyone on the planning committee can invite people to help.

Consider your location and time of year. For example, if it's spring, consider a daffodil sale. Plan for an alternate location if the event is outdoors and you can't count on good weather.

Set the date, but first check a few calendars to avoid conflicts with other events and holidays. To set the location, talk to several people. Consider the weather, traffic, and potential conflicts such as construction. Talk to school or campus administrators both to get permission and to find more avenues to promote the event. Talk to campus security or local law enforcement. Be sure that the date is far enough in the future so that there is enough time to plan the event. If the event has to be outdoors, set an alternate date just in case the weather is not ideal.

ONCE THE YOU'VE GOT YOUR PLAN

Let NCPYS Know About it. Complete and submit the Fundraising Agreement and Contact Sheet posted at INSERT URL.

Promote the event. Test your who-what-where-when-how messages on a couple of people before you release them to the public. Consider using email, text messages, Facebook, and Twitter as well as fliers, your school newspaper, and bulletin boards. Be sure to say a "Youth Suicide Prevention Fundraising Event" or something like that: don't forget the word "prevention". Google "press release" for the form to use with media or follow the advice from fundraisingIP.com at <http://www.fundraisingip.com/fundraising/the-power-of-a-press-release/>

Let people know other ways to donate. If someone has to miss your event, make sure your promotion includes the alternative of donating for the National Center online at <http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/donate> or buying raffle tickets.

Plan to raise awareness about suicide prevention while you raise money. How you talk about suicide is important, and we can help you with that. You can say that suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for youth, or the 2nd leading cause of death for college students BUT you also want to emphasize prevention and provide helping resources. People are coming to your event to help the cause, not just bogged down with statistics.

- Emphasize that suicide is usually related to mental illness — up to 90% of youth and young adults who die by suicide have some form of mental illness or substance abuse — and there are treatments that work.
- Promote the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) 1-800-273-8255 for individuals who are in crisis or need someone to talk with. The NSPL has free promotional material at <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Materials/Default.aspx> but be sure to order it ahead of time as it can take up to four weeks to arrive.
- Also promote local mental health, health, and social service agencies. Your campus, school, or community mental health center may already have a list or a service agency may sign on as a cosponsor.
- Although a fair number of young people attempt suicide, do not present attempts as common events. Most youth do not attempt suicide.
- Feel free to use language or resource sheets from our web pages at <http://prevenyouthsuicide.org>

A special word about memorial events. If your event follows the suicide of a young person, there are some guidelines to help prevent other young people from considering suicide:

- Don't romanticize or glorify his or her death, or hold him or her up as a role model.
- Don't say that the individual's suicide was an inexplicable happening, or the result of stress or a single cause such as bullying. Oversimplifying the death can make it seem like an acceptable response.
- Don't go into details about how the person died by suicide: this can lead to imitation.

RUNNING THE EVENT ON THE DAY

Taking care of set-up and clean-up. Be sure to have a detailed schedule of when tasks need to be done to ensure that everything is set up in time for the event. Allow more time than you need and assign a couple of runners who can take care of problems that may come up. Make a list of volunteers and who is doing what. To keep everything running smoothly, make sure people know who to talk to if they have any questions. For example, volunteers can wear hats or t-shirts, and the event coordinators can wear a different color.

Coordinators need to be accessible. Before the event you can give out cell phone numbers and be on call.

Enjoy event day! Don't put too much responsibility on one person. Be sure to delegate jobs throughout the day. Be flexible, and don't stress if everything doesn't go exactly as planned. Even though you may notice that something is not going according to the plan, you'd be surprised how few others will actually notice it. So relax and have fun!

AFTER THE EVENT

Thank all the volunteers and donors; emphasize how their help or funds helped support the NCPYS and youth suicide prevention.

Congratulate yourself and take a break.

Debrief — process your experience and results. Make some notes about what worked and what didn't. Even if you don't plan on another event, newcomer fundraisers and others will likely ask you for information.

Send your proceeds in a single check made payable to the NCPYS/AAS to the following address: Amy Kulp, Director, NCPYS, 5221 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20015. Please include names and addresses of any donors who wish to receive a letter for tax purposes.

Share photos, videos, and highlights of your event with others by emailing the NCPYS webmaster at webmaster@suicidology.org.