

Rays of Hope

Invited lecture · Dan Reidenberg

Dr. Dan Reidenberg is a distinguished expert in the field of suicidology and is known worldwide for his contributions as an international speaker and creator of an evidence-based suicide prevention program. He is Director of the US National Council for Suicide Prevention and Special Advisor to the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP). Dr. Reidenberg's special interest and expertise are in media, messaging and technology, focusing on how these areas can influence and be used in suicide prevention.

Abstract. We live in a world filled with predictions. We predict the weather, what we think the stock markets will do and the outcome of sporting events. Companies try and predict what consumers will want, grocers predict how much food to order and statisticians try and predict who will win elections. But how good are we at predictions and do they really help us? Prediction – what we think of as risk assessment – is a challenging issue in the field of suicide prevention and with suicide rates changing constantly how are we to make sense of this? Our field has debates, silos and complexity, but too many lives are lost each day and even more are filled with despair for us to rest. We need to challenge old beliefs and practices, be laser-focused, and implement scalable, innovative approaches to save more lives. I believe that one ray of hope comes from technology and social media. In this presentation I will share some of my thoughts on these issues as well as discuss my reasons for believing that technology offers us our best hope at saving more lives.