



The Weekly Spark – December 16, 2009

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

[Winners Announced!
Rethinking Mental
Health: Improving
Community Wellbeing](#)

Ashoka's Changemakers, in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has announced the three winners. [More info](#)

[National](#)

Spark Extra! [Read the
APPC press release](#)

[State and Tribal](#)

Spark Extra! [Read
more about ASIST](#)

[International](#)

Spark Extra! [Read
New Horizons report](#)

RESEARCH SUMMARIES:

[Study highlights inadequate suicide risk assessment in psychiatric ED](#)

(Improving the quality of suicide risk assessments in the psychiatric emergency setting: Physician documentation of process indicators.) [Journal of the American Osteopathic Association] Researchers in CA found that physicians frequently failed to assess some of the most critical indicators for hospitalization when evaluating patients who were involuntarily admitted to psychiatric emergency services because they were thought to present a danger to themselves. Such patients have higher rates of suicide than those who voluntarily seek care. The fact that physicians frequently failed to document important risk indicators such as prior suicide attempts, suicide plans, and hopelessness points to the need for clear and consistent guidelines for making these decisions, as well as training for emergency department staff on conducting and documenting suicide risk assessments. [[Read more](#)]

NEWS HEADLINES:

[Why the holiday suicide myth persists](#) USA Today

Nearly four in ten news stories that mention suicide and the holiday season support the myth that suicides increase around the holidays, according to the most recent statistics from the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC). The myth may persist because people associate the shorter, darker days around the holiday season, as well as holiday stress (such as feeling the loss of a loved one who has passed away) with increased suicide risk. According to APPC, "Perpetuating the myth not only misinforms readers but it also misses an opportunity to educate the public about the most likely sources of suicide risk, including major depression and substance abuse."

Arizona: [Magellan Health Services alters approach to suicide prevention](#)

The Arizona Republic - In Maricopa County, Arizona, a health services organization hired by the state to improve mental health care is changing the county's approach to suicide prevention and treatment. This article illustrates the new approach with the story of a patient who has received treatment for suicide attempts both before and after the changes were instituted. Magellan Health Services plans to train up to 2,400 clinical staff members to work with people at risk for suicide. So far about ten percent of those working in the county mental health care system have taken a two-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training course.

United Kingdom: [Government launches 10-year mental health strategy](#)

CommunityCare.co.UK - New Horizons, the UK government's new 10-year mental health strategy, calls for cooperation among a wide range of gov't agencies with the goal of preventing depression and improving the mental health and well-being of the population. The government will also implement strategies to help people with mental health issues get and keep jobs.

The SPRC is supported by a grant (1 U79 SM57392-05) from SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). No official endorsement by SAMHSA or DHHS for the content of this email is intended or should be inferred.

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