



The *Out of the Darkness* Campus Walk – AFSP’s Signature Fundraising Event for Young Adults

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is the nation’s leading not-for-profit organization exclusively dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research, education and advocacy, and to reaching out to people with mental disorders and those impacted by suicide.

In the spring of 2010, AFSP launched the inaugural *Out of the Darkness* Campus Walk campaign with the goal of better engaging young adults in our mission and activities. That first year saw 15 walks, 1475 walkers, and \$75,000 raised. By 2019, the numbers grew to 156 walks, over 35,000 walkers, and more than \$1.6 Million raised!

The Campus Walk, patterned after AFSP’s highly successful Community Walk, takes place every **spring** at Colleges and High Schools around the country. Our goal is to continue this momentum by expanding our number of walk sites to 180, increasing our dollars raised to \$2M, and recruiting more than 45,000 to walk and raise the funds and awareness that will help AFSP reduce the suicide rate 20% by 2025.

As a signature event, all *Out of the Darkness* Campus Walk events have the same name, are held during a specific time frame (**March-June**), have the same general appearance, are conducted in the same way and **focus on walker recruitment and fundraising**.

While we do not wish to stifle innovation, our experience tells us there is a specific way to conduct these events to maximize their success. We want to help you by eliminating the guesswork and have you focus on the strategies that will ensure that your event will be a success.

The purpose of this signature event is to raise funds to support AFSP’s research, education, advocacy and survivor programs; raise awareness about this major health issue, reduce stigma and to involve college and high school students in AFSP’s efforts to prevent suicide and help those impacted by suicide.

How Do the *Out of the Darkness* Campus Walks Work?

1. All events have the same name: *Out of the Darkness* Campus Walk.
2. All events are held on a **Saturday** or **Sunday** in the spring of 2020 from **March 1st - June 6th**, excluding *April 10 - April 12, 2020 (Passover & Easter Sunday)* and *May 23-24, 2020 (Memorial Day weekend)*, and your school’s Spring Break. When selecting a walk date, please be mindful of any major secular and/or religious holidays that may affect participation in your event.
3. The Walk route should be approximately 2-5 miles in length.
4. The event is a non-competitive walk: We are **not** targeting runners. Experience shows that walks raise more money than run events and create a sense of community among participants.
5. The primary purpose of AFSP’s walk is to **raise money to support our mission**. While raising awareness is important, the focus of our event is on **walker recruitment** and **promoting fundraising by walkers**, the two

key elements to maximizing our fundraising potential. Secondary benefits of the walk are raising awareness of suicide prevention, reducing the stigma surrounding this issue, identifying survivors in your community, and identifying families who may have a loved one at risk.

6. Walkers are encouraged to set a minimum fundraising goal of \$100. **Walkers who raise \$100 will receive a walk T-shirt.** We will not turn away walkers raising less than \$100, but we will aggressively promote the \$100 fundraising goal. We provide fundraising tips to the walkers to make it easy to meet and exceed that goal. Walkers who raise significantly higher amounts are eligible for incentive prizes based on the amount they raise.
7. The National Office provides intensive assistance to local walk sites including:
 - Producing a detailed, step-by-step Walk Manual
 - Establishing and maintaining the *Out of the Darkness* Campus Walk web site
 - Sharing of ideas and technical assistance
 - Production of standard walk marketing materials
 - Providing incentive t-shirts for walkers who raise \$100 or more and volunteers
 - Providing standard signs and banners for each walk site
 - Providing registration materials for each walk site

The national office pays the up-front costs of these items, which are then deducted from the net proceeds.

8. Walk funds are **centralized**. All monies will be deposited into a centralized bank account and the national office will pay all invoices for walk expenses. After all expenses have been paid, up to 50% of the net proceeds will be available **for AFSP approved** programs in the local market area, jointly agreed to by AFSP (*National and Chapter, when applicable*) and the walk organizers. The remaining 50% will be used to fund **national** research, advocacy, and development of new education and survivor programs.

Some examples of these programs are AFSP's [Interactive Screening program](#) for use at Colleges, AFSP's College Film, [It's Real: College Students and Mental Health](#), and [More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention and Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel](#).

How Do I Get Started?

1. **Notify your assigned [AFSP Field Staff](#)** or the AFSP National's office – (Toll Free 888-333-AFSP x 2029, or Email: walks@afsp.org) of your intention to have a walk event at your college or school.
2. Recruit a few people to serve on a **committee** to help you with the event; 3-5 people are a great start toward a walk committee.
3. Identify a potential **location** for your walk, on or near campus. If on campus, speak with the necessary school administrators/advisors for approval.
4. Based on the availability of your site and other community activities, select a **weekend date between March and May** for your event.
5. Begin recruiting walkers and fundraising.

If at any time you have questions or comments, please direct them to your assigned [AFSP Field Staff](#) or the AFSP National office - (Toll Free: 888-333-AFSP x2029 Email: walks@afsp.org)

We look forward to working with you to conduct a successful
Out of the Darkness Campus Walk at your college or school!