



IC
INTERVENE CHALLENGE

A Community Initiative
Guiding Others to Safe Harbor

A RALLY CRY



Since the first Intervene Challenge in 2012, I have struggled with a gnawing reality. Georgia should be stronger than we are. In the past 10 years Georgia's suicide rate has increased 24%. In 2022 thirty states had lower suicide rates than the Peach State. 30 to 39 year olds have the highest suicide rate, an age group that has the most young teens in the home. Teens that lose a parent to suicide are 300% more likely to die from suicide than peers that have never experienced suicide.

Changing the trend will take the effort of many working together as one in a concerted effort to address the growing epidemic of hopelessness. For this reason the

Intervene Challenge is proud to partner with the SAM Foundation in 2024 in growing the outreach of world-class suicide intervention training. Since 2012 more than 27,000 individuals from all walks of life have participated in the Intervene Challenge. Now through this vital partnership with the SAM Foundation thousands more will be trained who are ready, willing, and able to help those at risk.

2022 saw the most suicides Georgia has ever experienced and from conversations with various first responder agencies 2023 will be even higher. The need has never been greater. But of one thing I am certain —INTERVENTION SAVES LIVES. In more than 2,000 high risk interventions I have personally conducted, 100% of those helped are still alive. This is not an anomaly, but the expected outcome when care is given to serve those at risk. "Over a 40 year period, 94% of individuals that were stopped from jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge were still alive or died of natural causes." [source: Richard Sieden, PhD at UC Berkeley]. Again, intervention saves lives, but training is the key.

Ordinary individuals can do extraordinary things by knowing how to engage with others to provide an installation of hope. Suicide is not the result of wanting to die. Suicide is the result of loss that leads to hopelessness. This reality is our first of five core values in the Intervene Challenge. The five core values serve as the foundation for the three-tier **Listen Learn Lead**® Model of Suicide Intervention which is the core curriculum in the Intervene Challenge.

I often hear the words "Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem." Personally, I never say those words. My concern is that some problems are permanent, the loss of a child, a marriage, or as I often see with veterans, a limb—all are permanent. I prefer to accept that loss is real, but even in loss we can find the will to live. Hopelessness does not have to be permanent.

Through partnership with the SAM Foundation my own hope is renewed that we can have an impact and the dream I have had is stronger than ever. I dream of the day when a boy will ask his father, "Dad what was suicide?" Do I have all the answers? No. Can we eradicate suicide in our lifetime? Probably not. However, I am reminded of the ancient proverb, "Save a life and it is as if you have saved the world." I invite you to join us for the Intervene Challenge and together we can save someone's world.

For a Stronger Georgia,
Kenneth "Lou" Koon, D.Min.
Founder Intervene Challenge

The Intervene Challenge

Suicide – it's a word that we don't talk about, most often wrapped in mystery, stigma, shame, and misunderstanding. This is the first challenge— having a healthy and beneficial discussion about a crisis that every year takes nearly 50,000 lives in the US. The second challenge, raising public awareness that suicide is now an epidemic. The faith community is not exempt from this epidemic challenge. The third challenge, understanding that the professionals alone cannot solve the crisis. Building a culture of health requires the entire community to work as one. The “professionals” are the last line of defense in the moments leading up to a crisis. It is the ordinary citizen, the mom, the coach, the neighbor who will have an awareness of the risk before the professionals are called. When the church catches hold of its first response role in building a culture of hope, the overflow is a stronger culture of hope for all people within the community.

The Intervene Challenge is powered by the Listen Learn Lead® Model of Suicide Intervention developed by Lou while serving as a US Army Reserve Chaplain. In 2024, in an effort to reach a wider audience, AFM is rebranding to our new name - STOP SUICIDE USA with a particular focus on serving the faith community using the same world class training we have used in training military units, universities, and more than 500 first responder agencies. With a new mission focused name and through our partnership with the **SAM Foundation** the network of care continues to grow.

We are Stronger Together!



- ◆ 98% of participants rated the Listen Learn Lead model as EXCELLENT
- ◆ 100% would recommend the training to others.
- ◆ 94% are now more likely to intervene when needed.
- ◆ 6% were mental health professionals who regularly intervene.
- ◆ 53% have conducted an intervention since taking the training.

Source: Google survey March 2022

Overview of Listen Learn Lead

Every training begins with one simple reality, THIS IS NOT A DRILL! With more than 1,000 trainings conducted, after virtually every training at least one participant will share that within days of the training they were engaged in a suicide intervention, some within hours. Eric Furey an EMT with Peachtree City Fire shared, “Within two hours of the training we were assisting a 23 year old. It was as if you were there whispering in our ear. The very words we learned in the simulations, we were able to use to help the woman and we did not have to transport her to the hospital.”

This is not a drill—lives will be saved!

PRIMARY ENABLING OBJECTIVE

*Participants will gain the skills and confidence to render aid to individuals at risk of suicide through **five core values** that are field tested in more than 2,000 successful suicide interventions by the curriculum developer.*

Additional participant learning objectives are as follows:

- Increase personal awareness of the community impact of suicide
- Understand the importance of developing a culture of community health
- Gain insight into the questions asked in each phase of the L³ model
- Recognize the steps to transitioning through the L³ model
- Understand the importance of building rapport that enables a successful intervention
- Identify the steps in transitioning to safety
- Discuss fears that impede willingness to intervene
- Evaluate the myths that impact societal and helper responses to suicide
- Examine cultural differences that challenge ability to intervene
- Demonstrate skills to intervene through roleplay and simulation exercise
- Apply learning to better understand potential risk
- Learn how the brain responds to Post Traumatic Stress increasing risk of suicide
- Summarize the various community resources for further assistance as needed

“As a licensed therapist I appreciated the straightforward, realistic, “no psychobabble” approach in the L3 Model, and the focus on how as a community we can do something NOW to reduce suicides.” Jill Hastings Storer, PhD

“L3 and the Intervene Challenge is the most impactful professional learning I have encountered in my 20-year career. I left the training a different person, equipped with the skills to save a life.”

Dr. Michael Duncan School Superintendent

“Lou’s L3 model works and now hundreds of Police Chiefs and thousands of officers have honed the skills that are essential to helping Veterans and all people in crisis.”

Police Chief Janet Moon, Past President Georgia Chiefs Association

LISTEN LEARN LEAD®

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO SAVE LIVES

Kenneth “Lou” Koon

Lou Koon’s mission is a rally cry to all to be a beacon of hope for those that thought all hope was gone. His expertise and experience in suicide intervention is delivered through a transformative message empowering individuals, families, and organizations with not only awareness but the skill to address the growing epidemic of suicide.

Whether as a brief keynote speaker or in all-day seminars, Lou explores the core values that have guided him in conducting over 2,000 successful suicide interventions. He delves into the significance of asking the critical question, “Are you thinking of suicide?” and the instillation of hope that comes from having the courage to engage in a caring conversation. Drawing from personal stories and real-life examples, Lou showcases the power of compassionate communication in helping individuals at risk of suicide.

With the unique perspective of overcoming his own struggles and his dedication to helping others, Lou inspires the audience to recognize the signs, stressors, and circumstances that may lead someone to contemplate suicide. He provides practical tools and strategies for creating a culture of resilience that restores hope within individuals and the community as a whole.



The adversary of our mind is defeated only by the warrior skilled in the art of war and equipped with the weaponry to win.

Message to the 101st Airborne Ft Campbell 2016

WHAT OTHERS SAY



As a result of Chaplain Koon's L3 Training I had the 101st Airborne to do the same. Those that want to make a difference in reducing suicide would be well served by taking the Intervene Challenge and learning the L3 model.

Lt General Hubert Smith (Former Commander 101st Airborne)



The Air Forces tells us to do something about suicide. Lou Koon's Listen Learn Lead shows us how. Brigadier General Akshai Gandhi, SC Air National Guard



I had the honor of filming a simulation for the Intervene Challenge. Because of what I learned from my script and Lou's coaching, I was able to help a friend that was suicidal. It is not hyperbole when I say that this 10 minute film is the most impactful work I have ever done. John Dixon, Actor



Powerful and informative! Our Hillenglade Team is now better prepared to identify the needs of those who come to us for hope and healing.

Jennifer O'Neill, Actress and founder Hope & Healing at Hillenglade in Nashville



Thousands of caring individuals have gained the skills to courageously intervene for those at risk. I invite you to do the same. Take the Intervene Challenge! Kevin Sorbo, Actor



The Intervene Challenge is the movement and Listen Learn Lead is the model that is raising an army of caregivers to be the bridge of hope for thousands that thought all hope was gone. Kevin Briggs Author of Guardian of the Golden Gate



Transformational! I was able to use the tools that I received in Lou's class to be a resource to a person I met the next day in a workshop that I was conducting, on a totally different topic. Take the Challenge!

Carl Sharperson, Jr, Author of Sharp Leadership

About Lou



Lou Koon is an acclaimed author, speaker, and community advocate in suicide prevention with a background as an Army Chaplain and extensive experience in conducting suicide interventions. Lou has dedicated his life to empowering individuals and organizations with the skills to save lives. His third book, *Listen Learn Lead* has been hailed as transformational and serves as the foundational curriculum in his Intervene Challenge training which has reached over 27,000 participants, including military units, law enforcement agencies, universities, and faith-based organizations.

Lou's personal journey of rising from the depths of hopelessness in developing his own suicide plan gives him a unique perspective and authenticity in his work. He has been recognized as the First Responder to First Responders and was inducted into the University of North Georgia Alumni Hall of Fame for his exceptional work in suicide prevention and intervention. Lou's impact extends beyond speaking and training engagements, as he has actively served on strategic committees and consulted with various government agencies in the development of suicide prevention plans.

As a highly sought-after speaker, Lou has addressed international conferences, and various mental health forums. His expertise and passion for reducing suicide risk have made him a trusted resource for law enforcement agencies, corporate CEOs, Hollywood personalities, schools and faith communities. Lou's commitment to building a culture of resilience and restoring hope continues to make a profound impact on individuals and communities alike.

To schedule the Intervene Challenge for your organization contact Julie Smith—Executive Director, SAM FOUNDATION—678-249-7860

The logo for the Intervene Challenge, featuring the letters 'I' and 'C' in a stylized, overlapping font. The 'I' is on the left and the 'C' is on the right, with the 'I' partially overlapping the 'C'.

INTERVENE CHALLENGE

Learn More at

samfound.org

In partnership with

STOP Suicide USA

Formerly Armed Forces Mission

