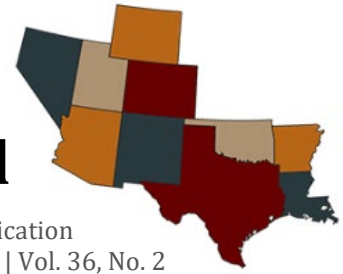


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Framing Messages for Suicide Gatekeepers through Theory of Planned Behavior

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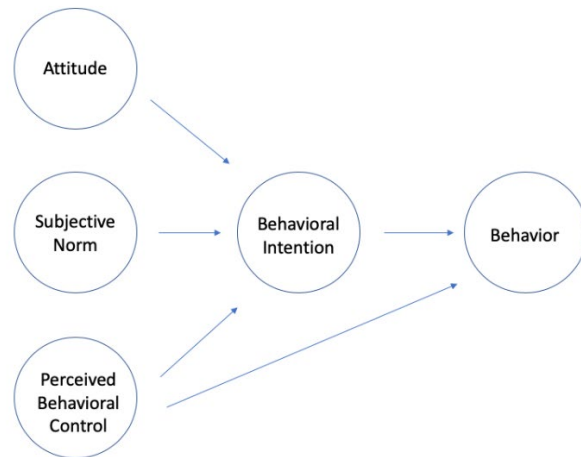
The rate of suicide among people in the United States is high among those ages 15 through 34. People in this age range are active online, and therefore, social media platforms give health communicators a method for reaching them with messages intended for suicide intervention. This paper proposes a framework for the construction of social media messages designed to influence behavioral intention and motivate action by suicide gatekeepers (those aware of a peer's suicide ideation). The framework is conceptualized through the lens of the theory of planned behavior and its determinants of behavioral intention—attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Three concepts are provided that may influence each of the determinants: framing with interdependence, emphasizing reciprocal relationships, and using empowering language.

Keywords: social media, message framing, suicide intervention, theory of planned behavior, suicide gatekeeper

The role of a health communicator when reaching the public with persuasive messages entails both diverse challenges and opportunities, not the least of which develop from the convergence of traditional communication channels with new forms of media for the public's use (Flanagin, 2017). A health communicator is a professional who uses communication and outreach methods to promote healthy behaviors and influence decisions about health (National Institutes of Health, 2002). More specifically, health communicators currently have numerous social media platforms at their disposal by which to reach various publics, and these platforms can prove to be cost-effective methods for communicating with an engaged audience; however, the method of creating effective health-related posts to persuade a specific audience to take a certain action is not always well-defined (Jane et al., 2018).

One area of specific interest in health communication includes suicide prevention. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and claims a high percentage of lives from the teen and young adult population ages 15 through 34 (Heron, 2019). With this in mind, social media platforms may be an effective means for relaying messages to this younger population, particularly because individuals in this age range consistently rank as using social media the most and have embraced a variety of platforms (Pew Research Center, 2019). However, stigma exists in discussing suicide ideation, even online, and many young adults do not feel comfortable sharing these thoughts with others (Gibson et al., 2019). Therefore, peers can function as a valuable conduit for reaching those who need help (Curtis, 2010). More specifically, peers can act as unofficial gatekeepers, defined as those who understand the signs of suicide and are prepared to encourage those at risk to seek help (Terpstra et al., 2018).

But how does a health communicator begin the process of creating messages that will motivate peers to intervene on behalf of those considering suicide? One possible approach for constructing a framework is the theory of planned behavior (TPB), which was proposed as a way to predict and explain human behavior in specific contexts (Ajzen, 1991) (Figure 1). In TPB, the strength or weakness of the intention to perform a behavior plays a critical role in whether a behavior is performed; behavioral intention is an antecedent of performing the behavior itself (Ajzen, 1991).



*Figure 1. Determinants in the Theory of Planned Behavior. Based on “A Comparison of the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Theory of Reasoned Action,” T. J. Madden, P. S. Ellen, & I. Ajzen, 1992, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18(1), p. 4.*

TPB proposes three determinants that affect behavioral intention: an individual’s attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms (an individual’s perception of the behavior influenced by society), and perceived behavior control (how difficult it will be to perform the behavior), which may also directly influence the performance of the behavior itself (Ajzen, 2008). Most studies that have focused on TPB have successfully tested the three determinants of behavioral intention to examine whether these variables predict behavioral intention (Bohon et al., 2016; Cheung & To, 2016; Schomerus et al., 2009).

In regards to TPB, new research has explored how the theory can create a framework by which healthcare professionals can influence the three variables of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Burgess et al., 2017). Message framing can organize content for audiences and give context (Severin & Tankard, 2001), and framing has more recently been connected to persuasion research (de Vreese & Lecheler, 2012). Moreover, message framing that includes certain values may promote positive thinking toward a community health problem (Simon, 2011). In addition, emphasizing positive affective relationships, especially dyadic, may influence subjective norms and helping behaviors (Venkataramani & Dalal, 2007). Finally, empowerment may play an important role in helping suicide gatekeepers feel capable of making a difference (Dudgeon et al., 2017).

Therefore, this paper proposes three key concepts specifically for framing social media messages designed by health communicators who wish to motivate gatekeepers to engage in suicide intervention. This paper hopes to establish a foundation for future studies that may be able to test whether peers have a stronger behavioral intention toward suicide intervention when they are exposed to social media messages structured on this framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study reviews literature in the following categories: 1) message framing for health promotion, 2) the intersect of suicide help-seeking, social media, and gatekeepers, and 3) TPB in suicide prevention contexts. It then covers the three concepts that may influence suicide gatekeepers through social media, which include framing messages for productive thinking about health issues, the influence of positive affective relationships, and the role of empowerment.

Message Framing for Health Promotion

Framing messages in public health has often focused on the discrepancy between frames that emphasize individual freedom and collective responsibility, with researchers asserting that health education practitioners need to comprehend existing values and beliefs that motivate changes (Dorfman et al., 2005). Message framing in health promotion has become popular and has the opportunity, if empirically studied, to be tied to behavior (Shen & Dillard, 2007). Some recent examples include a study of messages promoting flu vaccinations, in which respondents were more likely to follow through with seeking more information if accruable benefits existed for others more than for themselves (Kelly & Hornik, 2016). Other recent examples of studies that have examined health promotion message framing include those that have examined temporal framing's effect on behavioral intention in smoking cessation (Kim & Kim, 2018) and whether message framing affected adolescents' behavioral intention to discuss a health issue, such as body image (Johnson-Young & Magee, 2014).

But before the discussion continues with message framing, literature concerning suicide help-seeking, social media, and suicide gatekeepers must be examined in closer detail.

Suicide Help-Seeking, Social Media, and Gatekeepers

Social media “has opened new perspectives to the promotion of access to care” (Notredame et al., 2018, p. 3). This access may include providing assistance for those with suicide ideation who are participating in help-seeking, which is defined as “seeking care or assistance for emotional distress, a mental health condition, or suicidal thoughts” (Suicide Prevention Resource Center, 2020). However, young people are more likely to look for help from friends and family than formal services; additionally, teenagers appear to be more willing to refer others with suicide ideation to services than to seek help themselves (Curtis, 2010).

In fact, a minority of young people with suicide ideation actually seek services; however, these young people do seek help from their social networks, especially peers (Michelmores & Hindley, 2012). Digital media offers alternative forums for young people to engage on the issue, and digital communication may be a way to connect with a broader youth community (Gibson et al., 2019).

Gatekeepers are those who are able to identify individuals who may be suicidal and help refer those with suicide ideation to help resources (Terpstra et al., 2018). Rallis et al. (2018) presented research on the effectiveness of gatekeeper training among college students; this training emphasized educating these gatekeepers on how to ask peers (who appear to have suicide risk) about their suicide ideation and how to respond, as well as how to help these peers seek assistance. This training was associated with significant increases in declarative and perceived knowledge of suicide prevention strategies. Another study that focused on peer intervention for those least likely to engage in suicide help-seeking found that the appropriate intervention could help increase confidence in help-seeking on behalf of a peer (Burket, 2017).

Subsequently, how does one influence peers to intervene on behalf of those who are seeking help for their suicide ideation? The next section discusses TPB and how it has been implemented in suicide prevention contexts.

Theory of Planned Behavior in Suicide Prevention Contexts

Researchers developed TPB as a way to predict and explain human behavior in specific contexts by expanding the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1991), and TPB has often been utilized and tested in the context of consumer behavior and advertising (Ajzen, 2008). However, research has also tested it for predicting health and social media behaviors (Bohon et al., 2016; Cheung & To, 2016). A seminal study linking TPB and seeking mental health services for depression examined college students' attitudes toward seeking mental health services (attitudes), perceptions of their peer groups' attitudes toward seeking mental health services (subjective norms), and perceptions of the barriers to seeking health services (perceived behavioral control) (Bohon et al., 2016). The researchers found the "strongest predictor of intention to seek mental health services was attitudes, with perceived behavioral control being weakly, but significantly, related" (p. 600).

However, in an earlier study with a larger sample and larger age distribution, subjective norms were found to make a significant difference in seeking mental health services in a study relating TPB to seeking help for depression (Schomerus et al., 2009). On this same note, research that examined the relationships between attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control and college students' intent to use campus mental health services found that all three variables predicted a statistically significant portion of the variance in intentions to use these services (Mills, 2011).

Although research has linked TPB to young people seeking help through mental health services, Mills (2011) also found that students cited not having enough time to seek these services; therefore, non-clinical helpers such as peers may be effective in motivating those with suicide ideation to seek help. Further, because the majority of suicide attempts are, in fact, impulsive suicide attempts (Rimkeviciene et al., 2015), and TPB has been criticized as being too rational (Ajzen, 2008), influencing the helping behavioral intentions of gatekeepers may be necessary to reach those with suicide ideation. In regards to gatekeeper behaviors, results supported that "attitudes, self-efficacy, and perceived knowledge explained intentions to engage in gatekeeper behavior" and explained the self-reported actual gatekeeper behaviors for those who encountered at-risk individuals (Kuhlman et al., 2017, p. 704). Osteen (2018) also found

that self-efficacy had a strong relationship with gatekeeper behaviors. Self-efficacy, which relates closely to the idea that individuals conceive that they can execute a behavior, is therefore a concept that has been closely related to gatekeepers' behavioral intention.

Although research has focused on the predictive value of behaviors based on TPB, research is still needed in what precisely might affect the three determinants influencing behavioral intention. The next section examines message framing that may promote productive thinking in a community.

Framing Messages for Productive Thinking

Klimes-Dougan et al. (2016) warned that universal suicide prevention messages have limitations and that messages (in this case, billboard messages) can change attitudes toward help-seeking; their findings suggest "brief messaging may be useful if the wording of the message is crafted to maximize benefits for the viewer" (p. 6). Messages that are succinct and inspire intervention are key. But what theme, or value, should be used in framing a message meant to influence a gatekeeper's attitude?

One study that examined attitudes of a mental health problem in the community researched how a community might feel more compelled to help with the problem (addiction, in this case); this research focused on the effectiveness of framing messages that indicated individual responsibility versus community responsibility (Simon, 2011). The study tested the effectiveness of four framing values: interdependence, prevention, ingenuity, and empathy (Simon, 2011). In the study, the values of prevention, interdependence, and ingenuity moved respondents' attitudes away from the notion that the health problem was the individual's responsibility, whereas empathy "proved ineffective and even counterproductive in changing understanding or increasing support" (Simon, 2011, p. 8). The wording associated with these values is recreated in Table 1. Ultimately, the study emphasized the positive effect on attitudes about a problem with values of shared responsibility, prevention, and creativity (Simon, 2011).

However, the question then is whether ingenuity, interdependence, and prevention are each effective when it comes to the issue of gatekeeper intervention for those with suicide ideation. Because the value of prevention is concerned with taking steps before an issue arises (Simon, 2011), the value may not be useful to those who are interacting with individuals already contemplating suicide. The key word in this case is addressing an issue before it arises. Further, the concept of ingenuity discusses how to address an issue through innovative solutions (Simon, 2011). In the area of research on gatekeeping, the steps needed to help an individual with suicide ideation have not only been clarified, but also established as a successful method of intervention (Heilbron et al., 2013).

Therefore, in the case of framing messages that may impact the determinant of attitude in TPB, the value of interdependence may be most useful (Simon, 2011). In the study, interdependence not only helped to collectivize the responsibility of a health problem, but it also produced strong movements in the willingness of others to see a health problem as caused by factors beyond the individual, thus making it a community—or collective—responsibility to address. Simon found that interdependence moved people's attitudes away from viewing those with mental health issues as individually responsible, and instead they moved toward the notion that everyone's fate is interlinked and that each person has an ability to contribute to society. Further, interdependence improved understanding of a health issue and helped a community "see the problem as societal in nature" (p. 14).

Consequently, framing suicide prevention messages with interdependence may have an opportunity to influence community and peer attitudes about a problem that includes a sense of

community responsibility. The next question, then, is how an individual can go beyond perceiving a macro problem in society as a micro problem of a friend or acquaintance. The next section discusses the concept of positive affective relationships and its possible influence on subjective norms.

Table 1

Examples of Operationalization of Message Values

Message value	Wording example
Prevention	We should prevent problems before they occur.
	If we ignore problems, they are harder to fix.
Interdependence	We are all connected and what affects one affects us all.
	We are better off if we work as one.
Ingenuity	We need innovative solutions to tackle problems.
	Ingenuity will move us forward.
Empathy	We need to treat everyone with care and compassion.
	Greater empathy helps us effectively deal with problems.

Note. Message values from *Can Redirecting Values Increase Support for Addiction Policies and Related Issues?* A. Simon, 2011, FrameWorks Institute.

Positive Affective Relationships

As young people mature, they develop an awareness about the responsibility to help others (Hay, 1994). A study examining helping behavior toward peers at younger ages found that children are more likely to help a peer when the need is higher and when friends are nearby to assist (Sierksma et al., 2014). Weinstein and Ryan (2010) discuss the relatedness of helping (prosocial) behavior and how it supports cohesiveness; that is, humans experience “relatedness” through helping others, especially when they are able to do it autonomously.

Positive affective relationships have been studied in the context of interpersonal helping and organizational citizenship behavior, and it exists between two persons “when they truly like each other, are concerned about one another, and have similar perspectives and outlooks on the importance of their relationship” (Venkataramani, & Dalal, 2007, p. 953). In this relationship, reciprocity comes into play,

with any cost of providing help to one person lowered because the individuals trust that the same help would be given to them, if roles were reversed.

But what is the value of identifying positive affective relationships and tying it to prosocial behavior? In the case of suicide prevention, friends may be the first line of defense for suicide, but they may also feel concerned about suggesting that a peer seek professional help and may be more likely to recommend informal support networks (Curtis, 2010). Also, a study concerning gatekeeping behaviors underscored the value of gatekeepers realizing that they had social support for assisting someone with suicide ideation (Moore et al., 2011). Messages that address these concerns, therefore, could help overcome what the literature has pointed out as the possible hurdles gatekeepers face when helping others with suicide ideation.

Support for helping behavior is important (Moore et al., 2011), but gatekeepers must also feel that they have the ability to help. Therefore, the final section of literature discusses empowerment.

Empowerment

According to Dudgeon et al. (2012), empowerment and community participation “are considered major strategies used worldwide to increase self-esteem, social cohesion, and interaction at the family and community levels” (p. 2). While the value of interdependence (Simon, 2011) encourages individuals to think toward productive solutions and take responsibility for their community, empowerment creates a sense that an action is feasible—that is, its definition involves the idea that people have the authority to gain control in their lives, or to act (Cowen, 2000).

The concept of empowerment has been implicated in contributing to civic engagement (Chan & Mak, 2020). An exploratory study that focused on social media-based suicide prevention messages found that social media has, for the most part, not encouraged young people to engage about suicide online; further, this study proposed that engaging young people in the suicide prevention process online and giving them confidence in being part of the process has a great deal of potential for reaching peers with suicide ideation (Robinson et al., 2017). In fact, in discussing empowerment theory, Zimmerman (2000) states that “participation, control, and critical awareness are essential aspects of empowerment” (p. 58). An empowerment approach does not limit helping to professionals, but instead encourages individuals to make decisions to improve their “lives, organizations, and communities” (p. 58). The language of empowerment has been discussed in organizational literature and in relation to those developing programs that promote care services (Osborne, 1994). More recently, empowering language has been discussed in the health industry and requires the following: person-first language, lack of judgmental or derogatory terms, and thoughtful word choices (Carroll, 2019).

Ultimately, with empowerment giving individuals the idea that they can make decisions and have control in helping their community, empowerment may have the opportunity to influence perceived behavioral control of potential suicide gatekeepers. Therefore, the next section discusses how empowerment, in conjunction with positive affective relationships and productive message values, can be used to frame social media messages aimed at motivating suicide gatekeepers to intervene.

THE FRAMEWORK

Consequently, based on the existing literature, the following variables for framing messages for suicide gatekeepers are proposed:

- Messages created to induce productive thinking > *Promoting interdependence* (Simon, 2011).

- Messages that remind others of positive affective relationships > *Emphasizing reciprocal relationships* (Venkataramani, & Dalal, 2007).
- Messages that leverage empowerment theory > Using empowering language (Carroll, 2019).

Next, these variables are added to the model of TPB (Ajzen, 2008). The possibility of these variables influencing all three of the determinants cannot be ruled out. However, in order to keep the framework parsimonious for testing purposes, the following connections are suggested:

- Promoting interdependence > Attitudes.
- Emphasizing reciprocal relationships > Subjective norms.
- Using empowering language > Perceived behavioral control.

A visual version is displayed in Figure 2.

These additions may be useful specifically to creating social media posts meant to motivate peer response to suicide ideation. Because informing gatekeepers has been found to be effective in influencing the behavioral intention of helping those with suicide ideation (Terpstra et al., 2018), the following discussion will focus on creating social media messages for gatekeepers based on the above additions to the TPB model. The following suggestions are based on the literature that supports the idea that variables in framing messages have been linked with variables in persuasion research (de Vreese & Lecheler, 2012) and that a frame’s power to influence how people think can be utilized in public health messages (Dorfman et al., 2005).

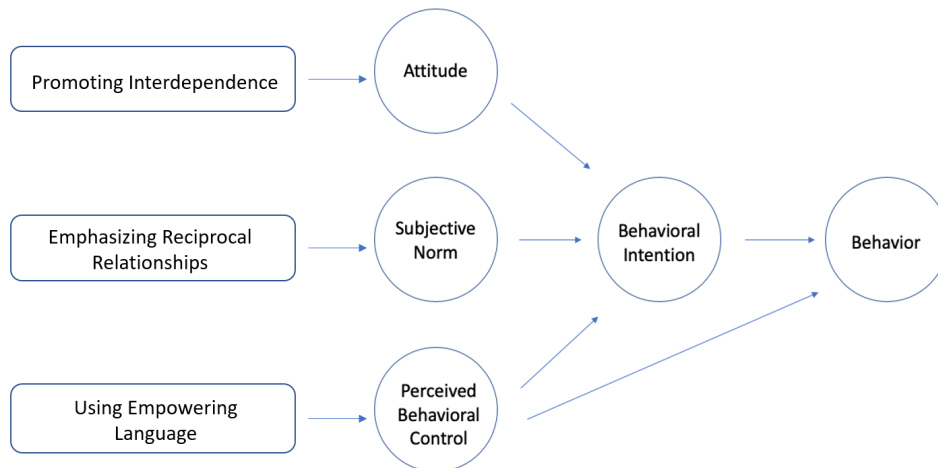


Figure 2. Theory of Planned Behavior with New Additions for Suicide Gatekeepers. New additions to the TPB model include promoting interdependence, emphasizing reciprocal relationships, and using empowering language.

Attitude Toward Behavior and Promoting Interdependence

An attitude toward a behavior “refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). When someone becomes aware that a peer has suicide ideation, messages may influence a favorable attitude toward

reaching out to the individual contemplating suicide. Therefore, how might a health communication professional change a gatekeeper’s unfavorable attitude toward helping into a favorable one?

Utilizing a framing value that has been tested in regards to a mental health issue may have the opportunity to affect attitudes toward that health issue, with attitudes as one of the three determinants of perceived behavioral control in TPB (Ajzen, 2008). In returning to the study from Simon (2011) on message framing that uses values that promote productive thinking, interdependence was highlighted as a value that enabled individuals to view a health issue as the responsibility of the community. For individuals, this sense of responsibility may have the opportunity to affect attitudes toward the health behavior (suicide ideation) and behavioral intention toward reaching out to at-risk peers.

Utilizing the study of message framing and productive thinking (Simon, 2011), Table 2 describes the values of interdependence in more detail.

Table 2
Messages with Values of Interdependence

Value	Message Example
Interdependence	We must recognize we are all connected.
	What affects one part affects us all.
	When we address everyone’s well-being, we all benefit.
	We must realize we are interdependent to move forward and work on problem.

Note. Message values from *Can Redirecting Values Increase Support for Addiction Policies and Related Issues?* A. Simon, 2011, FrameWorks Institute.

Therefore, the possible wording for suicide gatekeeper messages framed with the value of interdependence are proposed:

- “We must recognize that we are all connected, and that when one person is suffering from thoughts of suicide, we all suffer.”
- “When we help just one person thinking about suicide, we help everyone.”
- “We can work together to solve a problem. Help someone with suicide ideation before it’s too late.”

Messages must be designed that are most applicable to the population these messages are attempting to reach. However, wording that reflects the value of interdependence could be implemented in an effort to influence attitudes about helping those with suicide ideation. The message examples above (or iterations) could be used to test the possibility of their effect on attitudes in the TPB model.

Subjective Norms and Emphasizing Reciprocal Relationships

A subjective norm “refers to the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). Young people have concerns about referring friends to formal suicide help services (Curtis, 2010). Subsequently, when considering social norms, how can a health communicator create a message that tackles social pressure to *not* perform the behavior (i.e., ignoring signs of suicide ideation)?

Framing with an emphasis on reciprocal relationships may play a critical role. Not only can dyadic positive affective relationships entail concern between two people, but also reciprocity comes into play, in which one person helps another because that person would expect the same help in return; more specifically, emphasis on a strong positive affective relationship entails the idea of reciprocity and also “facilitates the acceptance of the short-term inequity necessary in social exchange relationships” (Venkataramani, & Dalal, 2007, p. 953). Therefore, wording that reflects reciprocity will not only focus on the idea that “your friend would do the same for you,” but also on the trust, liking, and the value of the friendship, which constitute a positive affective relationship and its idea of reciprocity.

Using the wording based on the values above, the following message examples are provided:

- “Your friends are there for you—will you be there for your friends?”
- “This is the person you’d do just about anything for—will you save his/her life?”
- “Your friends trust you with their lives. Take steps to save them.”

By focusing on a strong and reciprocal relationship, a gatekeeper may be able to overcome the subjective norm of not offending a friend by recommending professional help through messages that focus on the strength of reciprocal relationships. Once again, iterations of the message examples above could be used to test the possibility of their effect on subjective norms in the TPB model.

Perceived Behavior Control and Using Empowering Language

Perceived behavioral control is an important addition from TPB to the theory of reasoned action and refers to “the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 183). In addition to understanding that the outcome is determined by a behavior, a person will also have beliefs about the likelihood of an outcome (Ajzen, 1999). In the case of suicide prevention, peers may not only be worried about the reaction of the person they are trying to help, but they may be concerned about whether they can effectively reach out to a person who needs suicide intervention. Therefore, health communicators must keep these points in mind when creating messages related to this determinant of behavior intention.

The variable of empowerment has the opportunity to create the sense within an individual that an action is feasible. Because empowerment encompasses the notions of control and viable action, using it in messages aimed at gatekeepers may influence perceived behavioral control, which not only affects behavioral intention in the TPB model, but also the behavior itself (Ajzen, 2008). Empowerment not only encourages others to improve their communities (Zimmerman, 2000), which connects it to Simon’s (2011) finding concerning interdependence, but it also involves the ideas of participation, control, and awareness of a situation. Language associated with empowerment includes person-first language, avoiding judgmental and derogatory terms, and thoughtful word choices (words that support and show respect) (Carroll, 2019). Based on this, these examples are given for messages intended for gatekeepers that use empowering language.

- “You can help your friend who has suicidal thoughts” (instead of “your suicidal friend”) (person-first language example).

- “Don’t let your friend die by suicide” (instead of “commit suicide”) (nonjudgmental language example).
- “We’re here for you. You have a whole team to help you help your friend” (language of support and respect example).

Iterations of the message examples above could be used to test the possibility of their effect on perceived behavioral control in the TPB model. Ultimately, a health communicator constructing messages targeted for suicide gatekeepers may not be able to include all the language that might influence the determinants in TPB. However, with the examples provided, these communicators may consider how using language based on this proposed framework could result in even more effective social media messages. The concepts and variables are presented for possible operationalization in studies that may test the effectiveness of the proposed framing.

CONCLUSION

This paper proposes literature and examples that support the framing of social media messages intended to motivate action by suicide gatekeepers, defined as those who may become aware of a peer’s suicide ideation. The framing of these messages is conceptualized through the lens of TPB, and it uses the three determinants of behavioral intention in TPB—attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—as influencing a gatekeeper’s behavioral intention to intervene. In addition to the original TPB model, three concepts are provided that should be tested to examine whether they influence each of the determinants; these include promoting interdependence, emphasizing reciprocal relationships, and using empowering language. The aim of the framework is to assist health communicators in creating social media messages that encourage and motivate action (behavioral intentions and behavior) on the part of gatekeepers. The research may provide a testable framework for constructing effective social media posts.

The purpose of this framework is for both professional and scholarly application. Future research is essential to test the effectiveness of the proposed message framing. Firstly, a content analysis of social media posts created by health organizations that address gatekeepers and a comparison of the content to the framework could be conducted. Subsequent studies would need to be conducted to test each of the three parts of the model, including surveys among young people concerning whether these framing values influence gatekeeping behavioral intention. That is, how do promoting interdependence, emphasizing reciprocal relationships, and using empowering language affect behavioral intention? The literature makes a case for their effect on attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, but the concepts require examination with empirical study. Finally, researchers could also survey health communication professionals to learn whether they already consider elements of this framework and how effective they believe their communication to be.

The limitations of this research include its theoretical nature. Further, in its goal to be parsimonious, the research may neglect a few or even many of the possible concepts that could influence the three determinants of behavioral intention in TPB in relation to suicide gatekeepers. However, the research provides a starting point to apply a broad theory to a narrow purpose, and researchers can therefore expand upon this framework’s modest and simple approach. Also, one should note that the message examples presented above do not discuss the use of images. The use of images and words in supporting the concepts above should be tested to further understand the influence of these messages.

Ultimately, those who are considering suicide may or may not seek help. They may reach out to friends or strangers online, or they may not, depending on whether they are worried about how they will be perceived (Gibson et al., 2019). Gatekeepers, either those trained in an official capacity or peers, have an opportunity to play a critical role in suicide prevention (Terpstra et al., 2018). Therefore, this research focuses specifically on messages meant for them, in hopes of combating a problem that does not appear to be improving.

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