

**Groundbreaking Coalition of Media Companies and Mental Health Experts  
Unite to Tackle Growing Mental Health Crisis**

*Coalition to harness the power of media and storytelling, kicking off at a Mental Health Storytelling Summit which will take place the first week of May annually*

*Industry partners include MTV Entertainment Group, ViacomCBS, The Walt Disney Company, Amazon Studios, NBCUniversal, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Endeavor Content and other leading media companies*

*Expert partners include USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, The JED Foundation, the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and top mental health leaders and organizations coming together to transform mental health representation in entertainment*

(New York) - April 6, 2021 - In recognition of the powerful role storytelling can play in addressing our nation's mental health challenges, a coalition of leading media companies and experts is joining forces to change the narrative on mental health.

National suicide rates have increased substantially over the past two decades, with a recent spike amongst young people. Since the start of COVID-19, depression, anxiety, and mental health challenges have been on the rise, leading some experts to call mental health the "second pandemic". This data reinforces that changing the conversation about mental wellness and suicide prevention has never been more important—and the entertainment sector has a key role to play.

Created in partnership with the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative at the University of Southern California and a newly formed Expert Advisory Council featuring over a dozen leading mental health experts and organizations, the Mental Health Storytelling Coalition includes the leading forces in entertainment.

Industry leaders, creators, and celebrities will kick off this collaboration at the Mental Health Storytelling Summit the first week of May which will include inspiring conversations, case studies, workshops and more.

The coalition will also unveil a first-of-its-kind comprehensive Mental Health Media Guide which provides best practices and evidence-based recommendations to support storytellers at any phase in the production process, across topics and genres.

**The Industry Advisory Council includes:** Amazon Studios, Anonymous Content, AwesomenessTV, BET, CAA Foundation, CBS, CMT, Comedy Central, Endeavor Content, MTV, NBCUniversal, Nickelodeon, Paramount Pictures, SHOWTIME®, Spotify, Sony Pictures Entertainment, STARZ, The Ad Council, The Walt Disney Company, UTA Foundation, ViacomCBS, and VH1.

**The Expert Advisory Council includes:** Active Minds, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, Born This Way Foundation, Entertainment Industries Council, National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Council for Behavioral Health, SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education), The Boris L. Henson Foundation, The Jed Foundation, The Trevor Project, Vibrant Emotional Health (administers of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline), Dr. Jessi Gold, Dr. Joy Harden Bradford, and Dr. Michael Lindsey.

“The mental health crisis is the silent pandemic that has been on an alarming rise for the last decade and we are so thankful to our partners for joining us in this coalition to unleash the power of storytelling to help shatter the stigma around mental health,” said Chris McCarthy, President of MTV Entertainment Group. “As storytellers, we have the opportunity to represent the continuum of mental health and empower people to help themselves and each other, because mental health is health.”

“In a ground-breaking collaborative effort, art and science are joining forces to help advance the way we communicate about mental health, substance use and suicide prevention,” said Dr. Dan Reidenberg, Executive Director of SAVE.org. “The new Mental Health Media Guide will help shape future generations’ understanding, acceptance of and need for care of our mental health and wellness. It will save lives.”

“It is a privilege and responsibility to help shine a light on the importance of mental health through stories and shows including ‘Grey’s Anatomy,’ ‘black-ish,’ ‘Love, Victor’ and ‘A Million Little Things’ that run on our broadcast networks and streaming platforms,” said Craig Erwich, President, ABC Entertainment and Hulu Originals. “Feeling seen and understood is a powerful step toward seeking solutions, and we will continue to lean into the power of our storytelling and platforms to show support, raise awareness and change the narrative around mental health.”