



For immediate release:
September 21, 2022

South Carolina ETV program discusses mental health and suicide prevention strategies with live broadcast of “Safe Space”

Conversational style program brings together teens and professionals to discuss issues facing South Carolina’s youth

COLUMBIA, S.C. – South Carolina ETV and Public Radio (SCETV) recently aired a new program called *Safe Space* to highlight mental health and suicide prevention strategies. The conversational style program brought together teens and professionals to discuss issues facing South Carolina’s youth during a September 15 live broadcast on ETV.

Earlier this year, SCETV kicked off the *Safe Space* initiative to address concerns around rising suicide rates of adolescents in South Carolina. In April, the state’s public media agency held a virtual community listening session in partnership with the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Mid-Carolina](#) and then held two regional town halls this summer—one in Hardeeville and one in Rock Hill. Each event was live streamed on SCETV’s social media platforms and included open discussions around stigmas about mental health, rising suicide rates among youth and the additional resources needed to bring awareness to support programs.

The *Safe Space* initiative is funded by a grant from [Twin Cities PBS \(TBT\)](#) to support a multi-platform production and community engagement initiative to inform, illuminate and activate suicide prevention strategies for vulnerable populations.

In February 2022, TPT [awarded a total of \\$165,000 in Corporation for Public Broadcasting \(CPB\) grants](#) to 10 PBS stations to create suicide prevention initiatives in their communities. The grants will empower stations to work with local and national partners to share evidence-based suicide prevention approaches and resources with their communities and amplify the messages of the *Facing Suicide* documentary, which premiered nationally on PBS on September 13.

The September 15 *Safe Space* live broadcast was filmed at SCETV studios in Columbia. Guest host Whitney Sullivan of WLTX News 19 facilitated a conversation with teens and professionals, including a representative from NAMI Mid-Carolina, NAMI Piedmont, the South Carolina Department of Mental Health and a local school psychologist. Prior to the live broadcast, participants also viewed clips from the *Facing Suicide* documentary.

A *Safe Space* multi-platform campaign around suicide prevention featuring prominent South Carolinians will be shared digitally and on-air in the coming months.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in South Carolina. Nationally, the state ranks 24th in the nation for deaths by suicide. Additional data from the Centers for Disease Control indicate that suicide is highest among the most rural communities in the state and was the third leading cause of death among those aged 10-24.

Viewers can watch a recording of the live broadcast on the [SCETV website](#), [YouTube channel](#) or [social media](#). Additionally, *Safe Space* will re-air on ETV World on September 25 at 10 p.m.



If you or someone you know are in crisis, or experiencing thoughts of suicide, text the [Crisis Text Line](#) (text HELLO to 741741), or call [the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) by dialing 9-8-8. Both services are free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For more information on the Safe Space initiative, visit the [Safe Space page of the SCETV website](#).

QUOTES:

"Sadly, suicide is too prevalent in South Carolina, especially in our rural communities. SCETV is proud to serve as a platform to promote awareness about this issue and provide resources for friends and family to take appropriate action." **–SCETV President and CEO Anthony Padgett**

"This funding from TPT and the CPB has helped SCETV collaborate with partners on essential suicide prevention initiatives in our South Carolina communities. We hope to continue this engagement and dialogue with our youth and their support network around this important topic." **–SCETV Assistant General Manager Dr. Stephanie Cook**

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About South Carolina ETV and Public Radio

South Carolina ETV (SCETV) is the state's public educational broadcasting network. Using television, radio and diverse digital properties, SCETV's mission is to enrich lives by educating children, informing and connecting citizens, celebrating our culture and environment and instilling the joy of learning. In addition to airing local programs, such as *Carolina Classrooms*, *Making It Grow*, *Palmetto Scene* and *This Week in South Carolina*, SCETV also presents multiple programs to regional and national audiences, including *By The River*, *Expeditions*, *Reconnecting Roots*, *Reel South*, *Somewhere South*, *Yoga in Practice* and *Live from Charleston Music Hall*. In addition, SC Public Radio produces the national radio production, *Chamber Music from Spoleto Festival USA*.

Media Contact:

Landon Masters
media@scetv.org
803-737-3337

