

# In the Age of a Pandemic: Reimagining Traditional Modes of Non-Profit Fundraising

## BACKGROUND

- Founded in 1987, the Madison County Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (BRiDGES) works to provide advocacy, leadership, and services to local individuals and families affected by addiction and substance abuse.
- To address Madison County's suicide rate of 14.1 per 100,000 deaths, BRiDGES's Suicide Prevention Coalition will host "STEPtember for Suicide Prevention" – a virtual walk supporting local reduction initiatives.

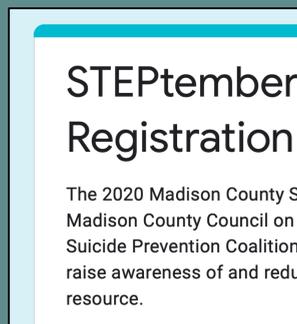
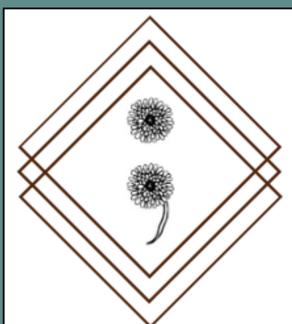


### Research Question:

- How can BRiDGES adapt a traditional mode of nonprofit fundraising and awareness-raising amidst the realities of a global pandemic and technological era?

## EVENT BRANDING

- Created a catchy, memorable title that accurately encompasses the event's purpose and cause
- Reconceptualized simple semicolon – the punctuation mark used when an author could have ended a sentence but chose otherwise – into an official logo and potent symbol of strength in one's choice to continue living amidst internal struggle
- Designed logo in neutral colors to prevent distraction from STEPtember's teal color scheme (widely-recognized color associated with suicide prevention)



### REFERENCES:

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BRiDGES (Madison County Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse)  
 Upstate Institute Summer Field School 2020

## TOOLS OF ENGAGEMENT

- Widened pool of potential participants through expansion of participation forms beyond walking



- Acknowledged prevalence of smartphones by promoting apps for personal mileage tracking
- Tiered participant prizes based on total funds raised
- Opened official Facebook page to local singers and bands for virtual livestreamed performances

## MEDIA PRESENCE

- Crafted professional website featuring these pages:

Home	• registration form, information about BRiDGES, donation button
Why We Walk	• suicide warning signs, ways to support those contemplating suicide, resources
Who We Walk For	• names of individuals being commemorated, video of names for virtual "Reading of the Names" Ceremony
Participant Hub	• walk details, links to Facebook and mileage form, tools, tips on how to participate given health climate
FAQs	• frequently asked questions, links to register, donate, track miles, and access Facebook group
Leaderboard	• top weekly fundraisers and walkers

- Generated Facebook page to broadcast updates, reminders, and announcements
- Started private Facebook group to recreate interaction and support system of a traditional walk virtually

## CONCLUSION

- COVID-19 has ravaged the world with new realities and ways of life. Just as many organizations and businesses have altered operations to accommodate the pandemic, so too has BRiDGES and its Suicide Prevention Coalition.
- Through a combination of rhetorical ingenuity, poignant branding and symbolism, technological elements, and functional innovation, "STEPtember for Suicide Prevention" presents an exciting reimagination of traditional nonprofit fundraising and programming.