

Summary of Regional Youth Suicide Prevention Workshop County Task Forces/Community Members

November 22, 2010
Pittsburgh PaTTAN Location

Attendees heard presentations on the Student Assistance Program, Child Death Review Team, and Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention in Primary Care project.

Before lunch attendees were asked to vote on the top two topics they would like to discuss during the roundtable discussions. “Establishing and Maintaining Task Forces” and “Supporting Survivors” and “Collaborating with Schools” were tied and the topic of “Screening Tools” was an addition and was fourth in the votes. Participants chose to participate in one of the four groups/round table topics.

When reporting back, participants were asked to identify their top three strategies and top three concerns/challenges for each topic. Participants were reminded to include any feedback for the state monitoring committee. Following is a summary of the roundtable discussions according to topic:

Topic 1: Establishing and Maintaining Task Forces

Strategies/Suggestions:

- Contacting stakeholders to become active participants – Mental health providers, hospitals, district magistrates, police officers, behavioral health directors, crisis supervisors, and school guidance counselors
- Establish a meeting time, bylaws, board of directors, and mission statement
- Establish Community Programs- address the school superintendents – taskforce may help fund projects; offer training to police officers and first responders. Raise awareness in community through suicide prevention walk and prevention education

Challenges/Concerns:

- Money and funding
- Getting people involved and maintaining involvement
- Stigma

Discussion:

- Certain people do all of the work
- One group acknowledges survivors by giving them a piece of jewelry or something to identify them/show support

Topic 2: Supporting Survivors

Strategies/Suggestions:

- Contact established support groups (SAP, MH, churches, EAP, etc.)
- School District should establish policies regarding procedures, and memorials
- Community awareness/education

Challenges/Concerns:

- A lot of supports aren't suicide specific – families feel alienated
- Where do you draw the line with stigma?
- Resistance to help due to stigma

Discussion:

- Family members have started their own support group specific to suicide
- There are more on-line resources available for survivors
- National webinar from AFSP (?) for survivors and professionals
- We need to recognize anniversary and other important dates and check in with survivors during these tough times
- Victor Frankels book on Making Meaning Out of Suffering
- “Out of Darkness Walk” to acknowledge survivor’s loss
- Some Counties have done a walk and secondary outcome was that the survivors have been able to meet and support one another. A dialog was facilitated by a therapist.

Topic 3: Collaborating with Schools**Strategies/Suggestions:**

- Removing the “stigma” and talking about the problem
- Increasing the awareness of the problem by attaching suicide prevention to anti bullying efforts
- Networking among professionals including institutions of higher learning

Challenges/Concerns:

- Policies and procedures
- Lack of funding
- Lack of family and teacher buy-in

Discussion:

- Individual efforts by all school staff may be helpful-they are all a part of prevention.
- Give local funeral directors and ministers a packet of information about school supports including the Student Assistance Program.
- Contact PSBA to present a workshop on Suicide at their state conference.
- Some Suicide Task Forces have met with superintendents and have offered mini-grants for suicide prevention programs to be offered in the schools

Topic 4: Screening Tools**Strategies/Suggestions:**

- Consider identifying a best practice assessment (tool) for suicide assessment
- Increasing acceptance just like nurses screen for issues in schools. Nurses could ask a few questions as a part of the health of mental health is a part of health screening.
- Accessing resources as needed and increasing collaboration

Challenges/Concerns:

- Mental Health follow thru. Resources too few, not collaborating, or confusing for families to access
- Parental acceptance
- Strengthen relationships with schools and agencies

Discussion:

- Look at Facebook as it has monitored the users’ use of words that might indicate a concern-connecting on-line SPRC? A message to the person who wrote the concerning words. Signs of Suicide program could be helpful
- Bullying Prevention on-line-Facebook can investigate and revoke privileges of those found to be bullying.
- Some District Attorney’s office have been targeting cyber bullying and texting