

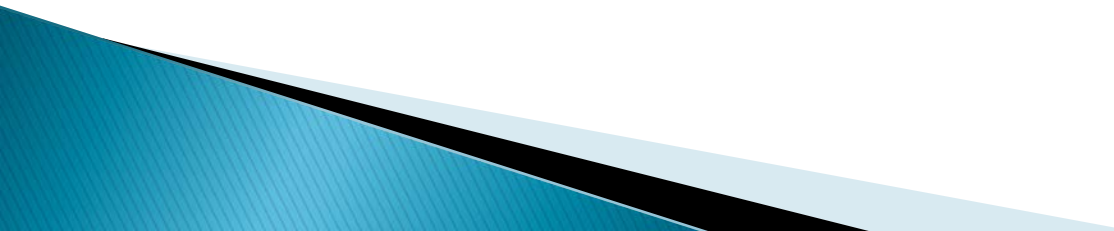
# Enhancing Campus Support for Students in Distress

Involving Faculty and Staff

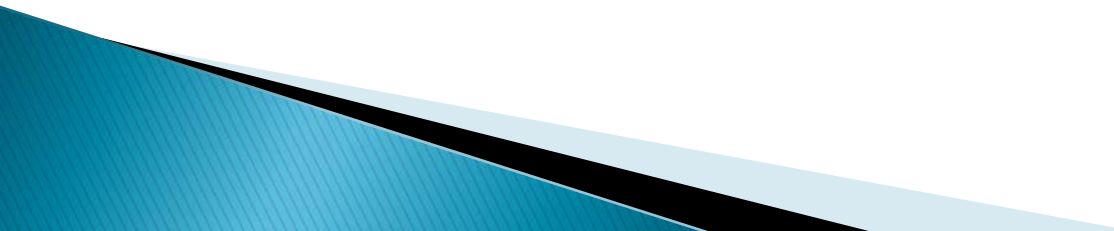
Pennsylvania Higher Education  
Suicide Prevention Coalition Conference  
March 7–8, 2016

Charles Morse, MA, LMHC  
Assistant Dean for Student Development  
Director of Counseling  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

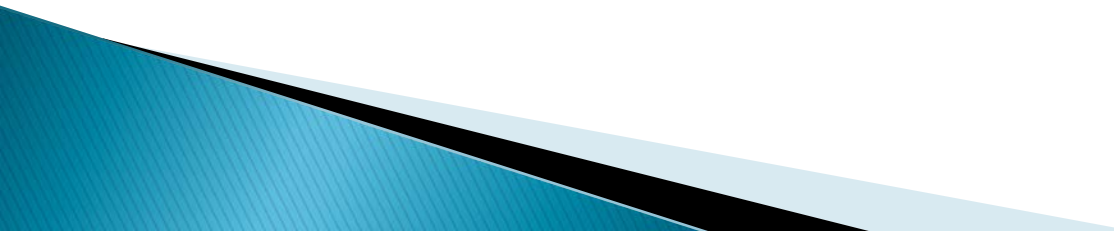
# Today's Program Will...

- ▶ Identify key members of the community (gatekeepers) for training
  - ▶ List and differentiate examples of evidence based gatekeeper training models
  - ▶ Review important data which helps community members understand student distress
  - ▶ Discuss key elements of WPI's Student Support Network (SSN) model
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# Who are Gatekeepers?

- ▶ Existing Networks of student support on campus
  - ▶ Individuals within a campus community who are willing and able to recognize and respond to student distress
  - ▶ Faculty, staff, students, local community
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# Key Elements of Gatekeeper Trainings

- ▶ Basic “take home” information
  - ▶ Discussion based
  - ▶ Experiential components
  - ▶ Foster connection between gatekeepers and resources
  - ▶ De-stigmatizing perspectives and language
  - ▶ Help participants understand resistance to offering support/resources
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# Data on College Student Mental Health

- ▶ Annual suicide rate on College campuses
  - 7.0 per 100,000 students (Schwartz, 2011)

## ACHA-NCHA Findings (%)

In the <u>last 12 months</u> , have you:	Fall 2008	Fall 2011	Fall 2014
Felt very sad	63.7	60.5	62
Felt so depressed it was difficult to function	30.6	30.3	32.6
Overwhelming anxiety	49.1	49.9	54
Self-harm	5.5	5.2	6.4
Seriously considered attempting suicide	6.4	6.6	8.1
Attempted Suicide	1.3	1.1	1.3

# Prevalence of Mental Health Issues

- ▶ Healthy Minds Data (122,000 students surveyed between 2007–2015)
  - 20% had positive screen for Depression
  - 20% had positive screen for Anxiety Disorder
  - 9% had positive screen for eating disorder
  - 17% non-suicidal self injury
  - 8% had suicidal ideation
  
  - 34% had a positive screen for at least one of the following:
    - Anxiety, depression, eating disorder

# Evidence Based Gatekeeper Training Programs

- ▶ Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
- ▶ Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- ▶ Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)
- ▶ At Risk (Kognito)
- ▶ Campus Connect (Syracuse)
- ▶ Student Support Network (WPI)

\* Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) Best Practices Registry

# A Continuum of Gatekeeper Training

- ▶ Short (15–30 min) “orientation” types of programs
  - Basic resource information
  - Emphasize community helping values
  - Encourage consultation
  - Basic guidelines about when to consult
    - Harm to self
    - Harm to others
    - Disruption to community



# Single Session Trainings

- ▶ Recognizing and Responding to Student Distress (1.5 hours)
  - Held three or four times per year
  - Orientation to student experience
    - Data, discussion, post secret
  - Frame of reference to open conversation
    - Ubiquity of human suffering
    - Brining one's own experience to bear

# Recognizing and responding to Student Distress (cont.)

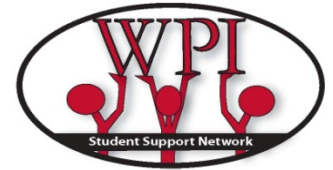
## ▶ Core Content

- Anxiety and depression
- Self harm and suicidal behavior
- Bizarre thoughts and behaviors
- Campus/area resources

## ▶ Experiential elements

- Empathy
  - Role playing
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# WPI Student Support Network (SSN)

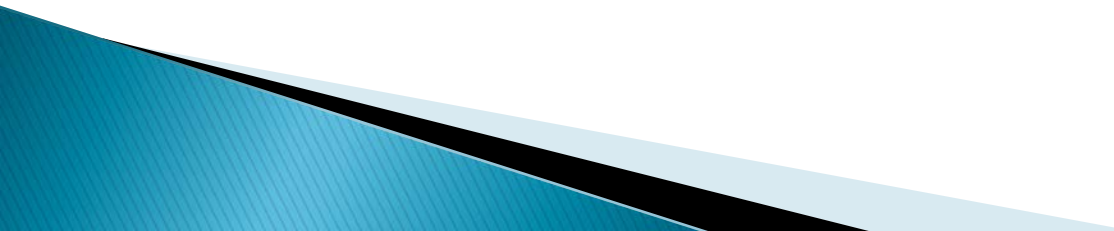


- ▶ Identifying and selecting participants
  - Nominations from students, faculty & staff
  - General advertising/programming
- ▶ Training SSN participants (6 week training)
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Perspectives/Stigma reduction
  - Connection

# SSN Knowledge Areas

- ▶ Mental Health Concerns
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Self-harm
  - Suicide
  - Substance Abuse
- ▶ Orientation to Available Resources

# SSN Skill Areas

- ▶ Providing support in the moment
    - Listening/empathy
    - Resist urges to fix
    - Acceptance
  - ▶ Successfully connecting friends with help
    - Process orientation
    - Stages of change model
    - Working with resistance
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# SSN Perspectives

- ▶ De-stigmatizing view of mental health
  - Normalization of struggles
  - Functional vs. Diagnostic descriptions
  - “It’s not us and them...it’s us and us”
- ▶ Enhancing Connection
  - Networking within support system
  - Helping the helpers
  - Enhancing a community of support

# SSN Outcomes

- ▶ Improved Crisis Responding Skills (SIRI 2)
- ▶ Stigma Reduction (SSOSH, Vogel)
- ▶ Improved Mental Health (AAQ II)
- ▶ Significantly increased consultations with Counseling Center
  
- ▶ SSN Manual
  - [sdcc@wpi.edu](mailto:sdcc@wpi.edu)

# WPI Student Development and Counseling Center

## Contact information

- Charles Morse, MA, LMHC  
Assistant Dean for Student Development  
Director of Counseling  
[cmorse@wpi.edu](mailto:cmorse@wpi.edu)
- 157 West Street  
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609  
508 831-5540  
[sdcc@wpi.edu](mailto:sdcc@wpi.edu)

