

School and Community Suicide Prevention Efforts

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Overview

- ▶ Statistics
- ▶ School-based Prevention Strategies
- ▶ Community-based Prevention Strategies
- ▶ Lessons learned

Is Suicide A Problem?

From 2000-2008 (9 years)	Deaths among Youth age 5-19
Motor Vehicle Accidents	1,124
All Cancers	290
Homicide (Assault)	284
Accidental Drowning	107
Smoke Inhalation/Fire	37
Accidental Firearm	27
Undetermined Firearm	7

Suicide: 420

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Top 10 causes of death in youth:

In the U.S

- ▶ Suicide is #3
- ▶ Causes 11% of all deaths

In Wisconsin

- ▶ Suicide is #2
- ▶ Causes >15% of all deaths

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School-based Suicide Prevention Strategies

- ▶ Laws for schools: what schools must do
 - See **bold** sections on the handout, “WI Youth Suicide Prevention Laws...”
- ▶ DPI will help schools meet legal requirements
 - Educate youth in suicide prevention
 - Curriculum must be part of Health Instruction
 - **Model notice: suicide prevention resources (Handout)**

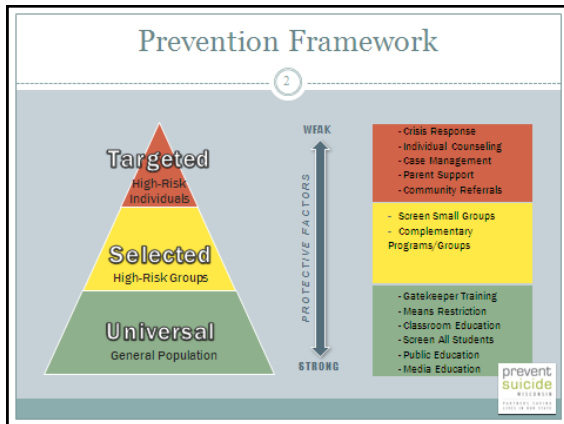
Meet DPI’s legal requirements

- Training and TA for school-based prevention

School-based Suicide Prevention Strategies

- ▶ Many strategies that schools may choose from
 - Resource driven
 - Collaboration with community partners increases resources
- ▶ Based on a three-tiered model of prevention

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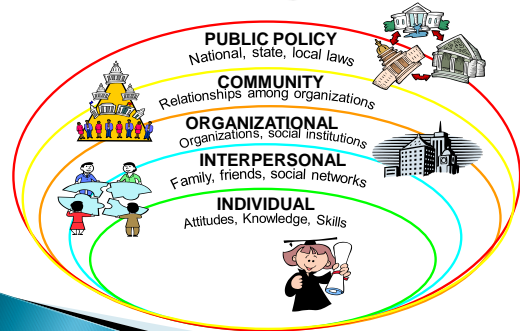


Lessons Learned in Schools

Get Administration buy-in
 Understand how schools operate
 Offer collaboration, not more work
 Tie to another initiative going on (suicide prevention curriculum, which is mandated)
 Grants/funding?
 Connect w/one person in school—ask who (counselor/school psychologist/nurse)
 Volunteer to help
 Offer your references/background

Community-Based Suicide Prevention

The Social-Ecological Model



Individual Examples

- ▶ Gatekeeper Training (QPR, SOS)
- ▶ Individual Assessments and Screenings
- ▶ Meeting with individual students or parents
- ▶ Crisis center assistance

Interpersonal Examples

- ▶ Means restrictions in the home
 - Securing firearms and ammunition
 - Monitoring and locking medications
 - Monitoring and locking alcohol
- ▶ Support Group

Organizational/Institutional Examples

- ▶ School suicide (crisis plan) policy and procedure
 - Review annually
 - Gatekeeper training for students and staff
 - Mental health screening
- ▶ Workplace education

Community Examples

- ▶ Media agrees to not report on suicides
- ▶ Healthcare providers sign-on to safer prescribing practices agreement
- ▶ Suicide awareness walk/run
- ▶ Media campaign
- ▶ Form a coalition

Public Policy Examples

- ▶ Regulating firearm sales
- ▶ Requiring bridges to have barriers
- ▶ Reduce barriers to treatment

Community Based Suicide Prevention

- ▶ The more comprehensive the approach, the greater the impact
- ▶ Focus on evidence based or promising practices
- ▶ Impact the Community & Public Policy levels
- ▶ Education and networking provide the foundation for community and policy change.

Marathon County Experience

- ▶ Rate of suicide is higher than state average
- ▶ Suicide Prevention Task Force
- ▶ 11 school districts (8 public & 3 private)
- ▶ Three year GLS grant (2006-09)
- ▶ Actually was able to work with 8 high schools and 3 Middle Schools (within the 11 school districts)

Marathon County Experience

Our grant goals:

1. Provide technical assistance for review and update of crisis policy.
2. Implement SOS (DPI approved curriculum)
3. Provide QPR for all school staff and parents
4. Encourage schools to provide points 1-3 on a ongoing and regular basis.

Successes

- ▶ 4 schools implemented SOS for students
- ▶ 2 schools implemented QPR for students
- ▶ 7 schools offered QPR for staff
- ▶ 2 schools updated their crisis policy
- ▶ 2 schools put SOS and crisis hot line number in student planners

Challenges

- ▶ One principal said that everything in the classroom is driven by ACT scores and it's too difficult to add additional suicide prevention training.
- ▶ One school crisis plan did not even mention suicide. It was a low priority for principal and staff to update the plan.
- ▶ The biggest challenge for the schools is making time in the classroom for something more.

Challenges

- ▶ Most schools had good intentions and understood the reality of suicide, but many didn't have the time/resources to address it.
- ▶ There is a lack of funding and accountability for schools to meet the required state statutes related to suicide prevention.

Lessons Learned

- ▶ Schools are the coveted community partner!
- ▶ School days offer virtually no idle time for even the most important extracurricular information.
- ▶ Schools provide a captive audience of students and a pathway for information to parents!
- ▶ It's best to tag coalition efforts on to something "mandatory".

Lessons Learned

- ▶ Unless there is a champion within the school to promote the cause, it is tough for an "outsider" to get into the school.
- ▶ The school champion should be a "go-getter".
- ▶ Coalitions must be committed to providing follow-up, technical assistance, and encouragement to the schools long-term.
- ▶ Public recognition goes a long way!

Resources

- ▶ SPRC – Suicide Prevention Resource Center
<http://www.sprc.org/>
- ▶ AAS – American Association of Suicidology
<http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/home>
- ▶ HOPES – Helping Other Prevent & Educate about Suicide <http://hopes-wi.org>
- ▶ Department of Public Instruction
www.dpi.wi.gov

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