

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 2026 WISCONSIN ZERO SUICIDE TRAINING

July 28-30, 2026
Live Online via Zoom

A. Background

Mental Health America of Wisconsin (MHA), with support through a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services/Division of Care and Treatment Services, is inviting applications from eligible entities to participate in the 14th Annual Wisconsin Zero Suicide Training (WZST) and subsequent monthly learning community. Zero Suicide is a long-term commitment to quality improvement that includes both a cultural shift and a set of best practices in addressing suicide prevention within health and behavioral health care organizations. Zero Suicide presents an aspirational challenge and practical framework for system-wide transformation toward safer suicide care. Successful implementation of the Zero Suicide framework requires assessing your current organizational culture to understand your readiness to enact the necessary changes, a commitment to make appropriate allocation of human and financial resources over time to realize identified opportunities, and a reassessment to determine system-wide impact.

Zero Suicide operationalizes the core components necessary for health care systems to transform suicide care into seven elements. See the Zero Suicide Toolkit and seven elements here:

<https://zerosuicide.edc.org/toolkit/zero-suicide-toolkit>. Learn more about Zero Suicide efforts in Wisconsin that build on work that MHA has been doing since 2013 here: <https://www.preventsuicidewi.org/zero-suicide>.

B. Eligibility

Eligible Organizations: Eligible organizations are health care or behavioral health organizations committed to adopting and implementing the Zero Suicide framework and whose client population includes adults with Serious Mental Illness or youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance.

A wide variety of organization types are welcome to apply. Some examples include:

- Health maintenance organizations
- Hospitals or hospital systems
- County human service programs, including mental health/substance use, crisis intervention services, community support programs, etc.
- Other public/private outpatient mental health/behavioral health programs
- Local health departments
- Federally qualified health centers
- Veterans Administration hospitals or clinics or WI Department of Veterans Affairs facilities
- Campus counseling centers
- Long-term care facilities

C. Training Description

The live online three-day training includes presentations from state and national Zero Suicide faculty on the seven elements of the Zero Suicide framework, suicide care resources and tools, examples of different types of organizations that have implemented the Zero Suicide framework, and breakout group implementation planning sessions. Teams will be supported by faculty in developing action plans to begin this process. See page 6 for a preliminary list of faculty members.

Prior to the 3-day training all teams must attend an Introduction to Wisconsin Zero Suicide Zoom session on Wednesday July 22, 2026, from 10:00-12:00pm.

The training will run from approximately 9:00 am - 2:00 pm CT July 28-30th. A detailed agenda will be provided for those accepted into the training. Calendar invitations with Zoom meeting links and phone lines to connect will be sent to all participants for both the introduction session and training.

The objectives of the WI Zero Suicide Training are to:

- Explore our attitudes about suicide and understand the perspectives of those with lived experience
- Understand the philosophy of Zero Suicide and the seven elements as a continuous quality improvement framework
- Develop an action plan for the initial steps that an implementation team can take at your organization

D. Expectations

Implementation Team: The ideal implementation team would have generally five to ten individuals, depending on organization size. Key participants preferably include:

- A senior level administrative staff from organizational leadership (a senior decision-maker) who is positioned to engage in action planning during the training and who can ensure the framework is embedded in the organization's structure and budget
- A senior clinician serving as the lead clinical champion familiar with the current knowledge and skills of the clinical staff who will facilitate action planning promoting changes to clinical practices and training
- Individuals with lived experience of suicide (thoughts, attempts, and/or loss) who can provide critical insight into the impact of organizational practices on those seeking care
- Key community partners, such as leaders of local suicide prevention coalitions or local health departments, to facilitate the spread of Zero Suicide within the broader community
- For large organizations, the following participants are strongly encouraged:
 - Quality Improvement (QI)
 - Information Technology (IT)

Community of Practice (CoP): Organizations that attend the training are expected to participate in a monthly virtual community of practice (CoP) for one-year post-training. The CoP meetings are intended to be an opportunity to review each of the seven elements in detail, discuss implementation of action plans, share successes and challenges, and obtain consultation from faculty and fellow implementing organizations. Each organization's team lead is expected to participate in at least six of the eight CoP sessions.

Evaluation: Organizations will be required to complete an Organizational Self-Study after they are accepted into the training to provide updates on the progress of their work. Details for completion will be discussed during the team introduction meetings. The purpose of the initial Self-Study is to obtain an honest assessment of current suicide prevention practices to use as a baseline for action planning. The Self-Study is best completed by a team of individuals who can speak to both administrative and clinical practices within the organization. It will be utilized in action planning at the training, so those attending the training should ideally have participated in its completion. Organizations are expected to submit a new Self-Study to MHA at the end of one year to measure change within the organization.

Pre-Training Preparation: To optimize training time, attendees may be asked to do some preparation. Organizations that are accepted for the training will be notified of any pre-training assignments or readings.

E. Timeline and Submission Process

Call for Applications Released	Monday, March 9, 2026
Applicant Q&A	Friday, March 27, 2026, 12:00-1:00pm
Applications DUE	Monday, April 20, 2026, 11:59 pm
Applicants Notified of Status	Monday, May 4, 2026
Team Orientation Calls (a scheduling form will be sent to sign up for a time slot)	Week of May 18, 2026, or week of May 26, 2026
Organizational Self-Study Due	Monday, June 29, 2026
Introduction to WI Zero Suicide	Wednesday July 22, 2026, 10:00-12:00pm
WI Zero Suicide Training Dates	Wednesday July 28-30, 2026

Notification of Changes: Any changes or updates to the application or instructions will be communicated through the Prevent Suicide Wisconsin e-newsletter: <https://www.preventsuicidewi.org/e-newsletter>.

Applicant Q&A Webinar: A live webinar will be held by MHA staff to provide an overview of the WI Zero Suicide Training, review the Call for Applications and expectations, and respond to any questions. Registration is not required, but you are welcome to save these details to your calendar if you plan to attend the Q&A webinar:

Friday March 27th, at 12pm CT

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2600741751?omn=89213791643>

Meeting ID: 260 074 1751

One tap mobile +13052241968,2600741751# US

This Q&A will be recorded, and the recording will be posted following the live webinar here: <https://www.preventsuicidewi.org/zero-suicide>.

F. Cost: A fee of \$250 per team participating in the training will be payable upon notification of acceptance.

G. Continuing Education Hours (CEHs): MHA will be applying for CEHs through the National Association of Social Workers-Wisconsin Chapter. These would qualify for meeting the requirement of 30 hours of

continuing education per two-year credential period for licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, Professional Counselors, and Social Workers. Last year, we were approved for 12.5 hours. We will notify participants when these are awarded.

H. Selection Criteria:

Each application will be reviewed by MHA. A variety of factors will be considered in making selections:

- The completeness of the responses to the Application Narrative found on page 5.
- The degree to which the organization serves the priority populations of adults with Serious Mental Illness and youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance
- Consideration of geographical and organizational composition

Application Submission: The Application Narrative (see page 5) must be completed using this [link](#), by **Monday April 20, 2026, at 11:59 pm.**

Please contact MHA with any questions related to this application or the training:

Kelsey Van Hoorn, Zero Suicide Program Coordinator: kelsey@mhawisconsin.org

Application Narrative: Please respond to each of the following questions.

1. Provide a description of your organization. For example, are you applying as a health system, a behavioral health clinic, an FQHC; and how many individuals do you cover/serve on a yearly basis?
2. Discuss how you serve adults with Serious Mental Illness and/or youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance. If applicable, discuss how you serve individuals with substance use disorders. Identify whether you have unique programs for these individuals.¹
3. Briefly describe your team goals for participating in the Zero Suicide training and what the team hopes to learn.
4. Identify each team member and include the following information: name, credentials, email, job title, and job duties (including job duties as it relates to this project). You are encouraged to include individuals with lived experience, those representing local suicide prevention coalitions and/or other community partners. See “Implementation Team” under Sec. D above.
 - a. Please indicate the team lead; this person will receive all correspondence related to questions about the application, notification of acceptance, and information related to the training itself.
5. Describe what your executive leadership has done and will do to support implementation of the Zero Suicide framework.
6. What have you done within your organization to date to prevent suicide among your population served? What have the results been? Please describe any involvement in community-based suicide prevention efforts.

¹ Wisconsin Zero Suicide training is supported by funds from the federal Mental Health Block Grant, which has these specific populations as target populations.

Wisconsin Zero Suicide Training Faculty and Facilitator Bios

Clinical Faculty

Sue Jungen, CSAC, ICS is a Certified Substance Abuse Counselor-Certified Clinical Supervisor, who has worked as a Substance Use Counselor/Clinical Supervisor-Program Manager and Director for 38 years. Her last role prior to retirement was Director of Mental Health Services for Affinity Health System.

Sue is a former board member and Co-Chair/Founder of the N.E.W. Mental Health Connection and Co-Chair of the Fox Valley Substance Abuse Coalition. Sue has also served as the Chair of the Tri County Zero Suicide Initiative. Currently she serves as the Vice Chair for United Way's Health Impact Panel and a member of the Grants Committee. She is Past President with Appleton Noon Lions Club and currently Chairs the Fox Valley Medical Loan Locker Capital Campaign. Sue provides Clinical Supervision at Samaritan Counseling. Sue also serves as Vice President of her HOA and sits on the City of Menasha Appeals committee. On Voting day, you will find her working the polls!

Sue will share her lived experience having lost a significant other to suicide as well as a child who was an attempt survivor. After attending Henry Ford Perfect depression care conference in 2013, she has been very active in sharing her philosophical shift as it relates to suicide. She is a national faculty member for the SPRC/EDC Zero Suicide Academy and faculty for MHA/PSW State Zero Suicide Training since 2016.

Personally, Sue enjoys spending time with her spouse and 4 children, playing Mahjong, reading, and having lunch with friends, playing board games with her grandchildren and volunteering.

Jim Salasek, PhD, retired in 2016 after 42 years of active clinical practice. Throughout his career he provided clinical services primarily to individuals who generally expressed their anger in maladaptive ways engaging in acting out behaviors associated with domestic, community and workplace violence. He also served in numerous administrative capacities including director of behavioral health services at Agnesian HealthCare. Jim was part of the team from Agnesian that participated in the first Wisconsin State Zero Suicide Academy in April 2015 and was responsible for implementing Zero Suicide at Agnesian HealthCare. He has been a WI Zero Suicide Faculty member since 2016. He was on the Steering Committee of Prevent Suicide Wisconsin for several years and assisted with the annual Prevent Suicide state conference prior to moving to Minnesota in 2019. He was on the Executive Committee of Comprehensive Services Integration of Fond du Lac County, Inc. serving as chair of the Suicide Prevention subcommittee where he worked with community stakeholders to implement a three-year grant: Destination Zero – Reducing Suicide in Fond du Lac County. He was also on the Trauma-Informed Care committee and served five years on the Advisory Board of YScreen, an emotional health screening offered to all ninth graders in Fond du Lac County which has a focus of reducing suicide in the high school age population county-wide.

Toni Simonson PhD, FACHE, Toni Simonson's career in behavioral health care spanned over forty years. During this time, she served as a provider of treatment services, consultant, and executive leader. Toni has worked in both public sector and private sector health care systems, implementing the Zero Suicide framework into the health care delivery system.

Toni retired from her position as the Executive Director of Behavioral Health at Hospital Sister Health System & Prevea Health in 2024 but she is now working part-time as a behavioral health surveyor for the Joint

Commission. She remains passionate about suicide prevention and has served as national Zero Suicide Institute Faculty since the summer of 2016.

Addressing the opioid epidemic, along with other substance use crises, has been a focus of Simonson's work. She led the development and deployment of a robust Medication Assisted Treatment program in Western Wisconsin, which helped hundreds of people in their recovery journey.

Toni is involved in many local initiatives and is a member of several committees dedicated to improving the health of people within her region, all while continuing to advocate for safer suicide care.

Andrea Nauer Waldschmidt, LPC, is a Crisis Clinic Manager for Milwaukee County. She has worked within crisis services in several counties and states, with a background in counseling. Andrea is part of Prevent Suicide Wisconsin and assisted in writing Wisconsin's Suicide Prevention Plan *Strategies for Action and Hope*, which was released in 2025. Additionally, she is on the Milwaukee Suicide Death Review Commission, Community Advisory Board for Medical College of Wisconsin Division of Suicide Research and Healing and has supported Milwaukee County's Zero Suicide implementation since 2017.

Andrea is an advocate for mental health, suicide prevention, and client rights. She has advanced community awareness through the facilitation of gatekeeper trainings and the delivery of specialized instruction on suicide screening for law enforcement across local and statewide Crisis Intervention Trainings. Andrea's work centers on strengthening community capacity and promoting equitable access to compassionate, evidence-informed support. She is dedicated to fostering environments where individuals feel valued, empowered, and equipped with the resources they deserve to navigate life's most challenging moments.

Chris Wojnar, MSN, APNP, PMHNP-BC, is a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, mental health advocate, and the founder and CEO of a psychiatric/consulting practice. He has more than a decade of healthcare experience and brings a unique combination of clinical expertise, systems leadership, and lived experience to suicide awareness, intervention, and postvention work. Christopher serves in leadership roles at the local, state, and national levels focused on health worker well-being, suicide prevention, and postvention, and he is widely recognized for advancing trauma-informed, human-centered approaches to care. His work centers on improving suicide prevention across healthcare and community settings, strengthening workforce mental health, and elevating the role of lived experience in education, policy, and system change. As Zero Suicide faculty, Christopher brings both clinical insight and personal perspective to help organizations build safer, more compassionate, and more effective suicide care."

Lived Experience Faculty

Val Neff is a Minneapolis-based therapist at Cedar Hill Therapy. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and a Bachelor of Music degree in music performance from Lawrence University and a master's of science in education degree in Professional Counseling from UW Oshkosh. She was formerly employed with NAMI Fox Valley as the Assistant Director at Iris Place Peer Run Respite, and she also co-facilitated NAMI FV's Alternatives to Suicide support group and their Young Adult Support and Transition group. She was also a member of the Prevent Suicide Wisconsin Steering Committee, as well as the Tri County Zero Suicide Coalition. All of her experiences, both personal and professional, have instilled in her the importance of individualized person-centered support, as well as the need for more strengths-based approaches in the human services field.

Patty Slatter Lived Experienced Speaker, involved in NAMI Rock County, Involved with Mental Health America Wisconsin, Faculty Member for Zero Suicide Initiative of Wisconsin and a member of the Rock County Behavioral Health Redesign Steering Committee, Police Commissioner for Milton Police Department.

Trained in NAMI facilitating peer support groups, Youth Mental Health First Aid Prevent, NAMI CIT Presentations, and NAMI Raise Your Voice.

My involvement with mental health and suicide awareness is driven by my lived experience of over 20 years. After a long road of recovery, it has been my pleasure to share my lived experience in order to give others hope and assist others in identifying treatment gaps.

In all my roles, I am powered by my passion to raise awareness, support my peers, and increase knowledge and understanding to all community members in the hopes to break the silence around mental health challenges and suicide. I love collaborating with local organizations on mental health and suicide Awareness!!

Additional Faculty and Facilitators

Julianne Dwyer, JD, is with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), Division of Care and Treatment Services, where she is the Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Coordinator. She administers the state's Mental Health Block Grant funding for suicide prevention, which supports the systems approach of Zero Suicide and the annual Wisconsin Zero Suicide Training. Julianne attended the first DHS-sponsored Zero Suicide training at the Henry Ford Health System in 2013 and has since continued to work on the development and delivery of Zero Suicide training in Wisconsin. She has also been involved in the state's implementation of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Brian Michel, JD, Previously served MHA-WI as Chief Operating Officer. His experience facilitating the WZST began in 2019, and he supported MHA-WI to successfully transition the training to an improved virtual format. While at MHA-WI, Brian provided oversight of suicide prevention and peer support programming. This work included support for the Prevent Suicide Wisconsin coalition, leading a research project to address veteran suicide in Wisconsin, and participating in the SAMHSA/VA Governor's Challenge to prevent suicide among veterans and service members. Additionally, Brian had an essential role in MHA-WI's expansion of peer support services by securing grant funding for the R&R House, Wisconsin's peer-run respite for veterans. Brian is a former member of the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health, and served as Co-Chair of the Council's Legislative and Policy Committee. He currently serves as an advisory board member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and is collaborating with the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health to establish a public-private partnership to develop a study to research biomarkers to improve the recovery options for those living with treatment-resistant depression.

Kelsey Van Hoorn, MPH, is the Zero Suicide Program Coordinator for MHA-WI. Kelsey got her MPH in Policy and Administration from UWM Zilber School of Public Health in May 2023 where her research included national and state policies to prevent firearm suicides. She started working on suicide prevention programming at MHA-WI in July 2023. Prior to getting her MPH Kelsey worked in different hospitals across Wisconsin monitoring the spinal cord and nerve roots during spine surgeries. Along with coordinating the Zero Suicide training and monthly CoPs at MHA-WI she helps coordinate all Prevent Suicide Wisconsin (PSW) activities including the Steering Committee meetings, general coalition meetings, website, annual conference, and

helped to coordinate and write the recently released *Wisconsin Suicide Prevention Plan: Strategies for Action and Hope*. She also works on youth suicide prevention efforts at MHA-WI and coordinates peer-to-peer grants for schools across Wisconsin.

This is a preliminary list of faculty and facilitators and may be modified closer to the training dates.