Suicide Prevention Outreach: Challenges, Creativity and Collaboration

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Why focus on Suicide Prevention?

• We don’t want student deaths

• Increased pathology among student populations

• Risk factors for suicide are risk factors for other mental health/emotional issues.

• Overextended internal resources at UCCs
What does Suicide Prevention look like?

- Increasing knowledge:
  - Trainings and In-services
    - QPR
    - American Association of Suicidology
- Increasing awareness and sensitivity:
  - Create a community of caring on campus
  - Decrease stigma
  - Focus on entire population not just high risk groups
Suicide Prevention: Catch 22

If you’re doing a good job with prevention efforts, people may get the impression that prevention efforts are not needed!
Suicide Prevention: Challenges

- Doesn’t fall under anyone’s purview
  - Diffusion of responsibility
  - Limited personnel
  - Different focus/competing needs

- Training challenges
  - Staff turnover
  - Different levels of comfort
  - Maintaining up-to-date training

- Budgetary Constraints
Suicide Prevention: Challenges con’t

• Reactive vs. Preventative orientation
  ▫ Impacts receptivity of the campus
  ▫ Logistics impede the process

• Barrier to access
  ▫ We see the need more than larger campus community
  ▫ Commuter campus culture

• Limited time allotted for training workshops/activities
Creativity

"Thinking outside of the box is difficult for some people. Keep trying."
Suicide Prevention: Creativity

• Panther AID

• Partnering with faculty
  ▫ 5-10 minutes in staff meetings
  ▫ Brochures and Resource Cards

• Passive awareness building
  ▫ Display boards; Posters on buses
  ▫ T-shirts
  ▫ Community theme: Be the Change!
  ▫ Marquees
National Suicide Prevention Week, Sept 6-12

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STUDENT HEALTH CENTER
LANDMARK DINER
COMMONS MARKET

Asking questions saves lives
Be the change!
Suicide Prevention: Creativity con’t

• Programming
  ▫ Overnight INCEPT
  ▫ Mental Health 101
  ▫ Marketplaces/Emergency Resource cards
  ▫ Targeted trainings & workshops
    • RA Orientation; Behind Closed Doors; Monthly In-Service

• Technology is your friend 😊
  ▫ Interactive Website
  ▫ Suicide video in class presentations
  ▫ At-Risk Module (http://www.kognito.com/atrisk/trailer.html)
  ▫ Informational video (BOR?)
Suicide Prevention: Using Events

• When a University community (yours or others) experiences an incident, concern is more acute
  ▫ Opportunity to have more access to resources (time, money, personnel, etc.) for prevention

• This is not an ideal avenue for suicide prevention!
  ▫ Requires an unfortunate event to occur first
    • Goal should be to prevent such events
What are some of the challenges and creative initiatives on your campuses?
Collaboration
Suicide Prevention: Collaboration

• Primary Prevention by Partnering
  ▫ (3 P’s of Suicide Outreach)

• Identify invested partners
  ▫ Gather information about what suicide prevention looks like to others.
  ▫ Assess the needs of other invested partners.
  ▫ Establish dialogue/communication among all invested parties.
  ▫ Start small.
Suicide Prevention: Collaboration con’t

• National awareness weeks
  ▫ Mental Health Month
  ▫ Suicide Prevention Week
  ▫ Mental Health Awareness Week

• Interdepartmental Committee to talk about various initiatives
  ▫ Identified invested partners
  ▫ Keep thinking about who else might join or visit!
Suicide Prevention: Future Directions and Discussion

• Health and wellness charge in student fees.

• Additional coalition building.
  ▫ Academic faculty
  ▫ Multiple staff in the various offices
  ▫ Students
  ▫ Athletic Department
  ▫ Additional staff who have frequent contact with students
• Questions?
• Comments?
• Ideas?
Thank you for your time and attention!