

Region 5 Suicide Advisory Board

March 22, 2023, 10:00-11:30AM

Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Abby Wood, Kathy Hanley, Allison Fulton, Kayla Champagne, Jeff McKenna, Jules Calabro, Maureen Crick Owen, Alyssa Cole, Stacy Kovalevsky, Carrigan Costello, Cathy Vellucci, Donna Culbert, Donna Bielefield, Joanna Keyes, Robyn Hoffman, Sheila Levine, Victoria Giordano, Ashle Hupchick, Alyeska Tilly

1. Introductions and discussion questions:

Who are some populations in Region 5 that are at risk for suicide and mental health concerns that need more attention?

- LGBTQ+ population; specifically transgender individuals due to backlash across the country that sends a negative and stigmatizing message to that community
- Students/Youth- due to the following: trauma, struggles reintegrating after COVID school closures and remote learning, lack of coping skills, substance use and poor mental health, and lack of purpose
- Veterans or others who have experienced trauma
- Youth in foster care or the DCF system
- Those who are homeless or home insecure due to financial stress and rising rents
- Youth adult 18+ who struggle due to loss of a school safety net and parental and peer supports, experience depression, anxiety and isolation
- There is a need to focus on the broad spectrum of the population as well

How do we improve our outreach so that we are reaching these populations and engaging those at highest risk?

- For the LGBTQ+ population: more supports in general, outreach, identify allies, reach out to Gay/Straight Alliances in schools to collaborate on events, supports and resource sharing. Messaging to reduce stigma is important as is education about the LGBTQ+ population (i.e. pronouns, understanding gender, identifying specific needs)
- It is important to reconnect with those who may have once reached out for help but then “fade away”
- Partner with DCF to alert them of any concerns with individuals at risk
- Share existing resources like the One Word, Once Voice videos tailored to specific populations. View using this link- <https://vimeo.com/connectingtocarect>
- Work on erasing stigma overall around suicide

- Family and Children's Aid is expanding services to include young adults
- Creating safe spaces for people in our communities so there is a safety net when individuals cannot connect to a provider due to waitlists
- Meet needs of students at school- Signs of Suicide training, make connections and interact with youth, create and promote safe spaces for kids afterschool (also substance free)
- Creating flyers with QR codes that connect young people to resources (indirect, non-threatening access to supports; they just snap a picture with their phone)

2. Spring Training & Meeting Calendar

- What is Postvention? & SPIN Discussion Meetings*
 - Abby shared the new flyer with dates for the Regional Suicide Advisory board through December. These meetings are open to anyone interested in suicide prevention in Region 5
 - Also included in this flyer are dates for the "What is Postvention" 90-minute introductory training open to anyone who wants to learn more about postvention and for new members of a local Suicide Postvention Information Network or SPIN.
 - The SPIN Discussion meetings have also been scheduled to provide an opportunity for established community SPINS to share and learn together
 - Western CT Coalition lends support to all these endeavors
- QPR Suicide Prevention Training Webinars*
 - A new flyer went out with dates scheduled for April through June. We have changed the date to the 4th Wednesday with a new time- 1:00-2:30 p.m.
 - We invite all RSAB members to attend a QPR training if you have not already done so
 - It is recommended as a baseline training prior to attending "What is Postvention"
- Mental Health Menu of Services*
 - Abby shared the flyer with a brief description of all training WCTC offers in the region

3. December Suicide Prevention Newsletter Review

- Abby shared the content of the recent newsletter

4. Torrington Area Health District - CDC Grant Update

- Stacey and Joanna shared that they have created a postvention plan and a website with postvention materials and prevention resources.
- They will be conducting a gap analysis with UConn
- They are also promoting the Drug Take Back Day in April with resources, mailers, radio interviews and pizza box stickers

5. *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health* <https://www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/>

- Abby provided an overview of the book, resources (including videos, GIFs and still images), and curriculum
- Books can be ordered and are free for those in CT. A pdf of the book is available on the webpage for download
- It is based on the Brown and Stanley safety plan (evidence based)
- It helps youth understand their feelings, find coping skills, and recognize a trusted adult.
- A pledge is available for adults and youth
- WCTC will offer a \$200 stipend to any community group who hosts a Read-Along event. It is a great opportunity to partner with your local prevention council and library

6. Additional member updates and discussion

- Sponsorship of a program for the media - how they report on suicide or an untimely death
- Gather a list of activities taking place in the region for Mental Health Month in May
- NAMICON is taking place in May (virtually in June) - <https://convention.nami.org/>

*Attachment to minutes

Next R5SAB Meeting – June 28, 2023

The Region 5 Suicide Advisory Board seeks to:



- Integrate and coordinate suicide prevention, intervention, and response activities across multiple sectors and settings including all 43 communities in Region 5.
- Support the overall vision of the **Statewide Connecticut SAB** and provide the local and regional infrastructure for suicide prevention and postvention response activities.