Suicide Safer Communities

Recognizing Community Commitments to Suicide-Safety

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Overview of Presentation

• What is a suicide-safer community?
• The Origins
• LivingWorks and the Evolution of Suicide-Safer Communities
• The nine pillars
• England Relevance
• How do communities earn the Suicide-Safer Community designation?
What is a Suicide-Safer Community?

• Suicide prevention is everybody’s business

• Suicide prevention is a shared responsibility throughout a community

• Everyone has a fundamental right to a life lived with dignity

• Citizens have access to life-saving supports and resources

• Sustainable coordinated and collaborative approaches and activities to suicide awareness, prevention, intervention, post-intervention, and postvention

• Communities working together within their own local/national frameworks
The Origins

- 1991 - UN request for LivingWorks founders to convene a small international group to prepare a suicide prevention national strategy guideline that the UN and WHO could distribute around the world.
- 1993 - meeting convened.
- 1993 – Finland only country with suicide prevention national strategy known.
  - Emphasis on inter-sectoral collaboration, multidisciplinary approaches, and continued evaluation and review.
The Origins

• 1997 – survey by Rachel Jenkins and others identified 3 strategy groups
  • Nations with comprehensive strategies (or setting them up)
    • Finland, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden
  • Nations with national preventative programs
    • England, USA, Netherlands, France, Estonia
  • Nations without national action
    • Canada, Japan, Denmark, Austria, Germany
The Origins

• 2013 – IASP and WHO found
  • 28 countries have a national strategy or action plan for the prevention of suicide
  • 13 countries in development of a strategy or action plan
  • 47 countries of those that did not have a plan did have a range of activities implemented around suicide prevention
The Origins

- 1989 - Idea initially stemmed from the Manifesto for Safe Communities identifying ‘safety as a universal concern and responsibility for all’ – related to accident and injury prevention

- Over 350 Safe Communities Network Members adhering to indicators for an International Safe Community

- Mostly focused on unintentional injury

- Self harm and suicide not well integrated
LivingWorks Vision –
Living Works: a life affirming, suicide-safer world
LivingWorks

Mission

Saving lives through the creation, development, and delivery of innovative training experiences that empower organizations, communities, and individuals to be safer from suicide
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Evolution of Suicide-Safer Communities

• 2009 - LivingWorks began formulating the transfer of this idea in relation to suicide prevention

• 2010 – soft launch – many gaps in process; lack of infrastructure and human resources to support initiative

• 2013-2015 further development/expansion
  • Reviewed key elements in many national strategies (including England)
  • Incorporated key elements from WHO: Preventing Suicides a Global Imperative
  • Reviewed National Suicide Prevention Strategies – A Comparison (2009 Martin, Page)
  • Grassroots extensive feedback on Pillars and process
  • Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention feedback
  • Zero Suicide Initiative feedback

• 2015 – World Suicide Prevention Day – launched Suicide-Safer Communities Designation
Suicide-Safer Community Designation

• Nine pillars aligned with core elements of most national suicide prevention strategies
• Roadmap for suicide prevention approaches and actions tailored to the community’s specific needs
• Recognizes a community for its leadership in formulating and implementing sustainable approaches
• Honors ongoing efforts to build capacity for hopeful, life-affirming living environments
Nine Pillars of a Suicide-Safer Community

1. Leadership/Steering Committee
2. Background Summary
3. Suicide Prevention Awareness
4. Mental Health and Wellness Promotion
5. Training
6. Suicide Intervention & Ongoing Clinical/Support Services
7. Suicide Bereavement
8. Evaluation Measures
9. Capacity Building/Sustainability
1. Leadership/Steering Committee

- Develops, guides, and coordinates the strategic efforts
- Includes diverse representation of the community membership and businesses
2. Background Summary

- Summary of the scope of the problem of suicide within the community which led to the need for a strategy or action plan
- Overview of goals, objectives, and targets to address community needs
- Helps to inform the progression of activities in the other pillars
3. Suicide Prevention Awareness

- Primary prevention education and awareness campaigns with a focus on:
  - raising public awareness,
  - improving community attitudes, and
  - increasing public dialogue about suicide

- Incorporation of best practice/informed media guidelines
4. Mental Health and Wellness Promotion

- promotion of living conditions that support mental health and allow people to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles
- Inclusion of a comprehensive plan used to inform, educate and increase awareness about mental health and wellness
5. Training

• Increase awareness of attitudes and beliefs
• Development of skills and knowledge to increase competencies of community members, lay persons, and professionals
• Key areas of training include suicide prevention, intervention, post-intervention, and postvention
6. Suicide Intervention & Ongoing Clinical/Support Services

- Collaborations between suicide intervention and clinical support services
- Ensure access to services and continuity of care along the continuum of awareness, prevention, intervention, post-intervention, and postvention
7. Suicide Bereavement

- Resources and supports available to those bereaved and affected by suicide
8. Evaluation Measures

- Data collection, evaluation, and systems to track progress
- Share findings with relevant audiences in a timely, unbiased, and consistent manner for each of the services provided across the pillars
- Summary of the inter-connectedness of the other pillars
9. Capacity Building/Sustainability

• Community capacity is “the combined influence of a community’s commitment, resources, and skills that can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community problems”\(^1\)

• Demonstrated capacity to implement, manage, and sustain programs relating to the other pillars

\(^1\) Building Community Capacity: The Potential of Community Foundations, by Steven E. Mayer
England Relevance

• England’s National Strategy for Suicide Prevention
• Public Health England- Guidance for Developing a local suicide prevention action plan
• National Suicide Prevention Alliance Strategic Framework
How do communities earn the designation?

• The designation celebrates and acknowledges those communities making significant progress in reaching suicide-safer goals in their national and local suicide prevention strategies.

• Once the nine pillars have been addressed, communities are invited to send a letter of intent followed by an application.

• Applications are reviewed by a panel experienced in suicide prevention, drawn for LivingWorks and allied organizations in the country of the applicant.
Our hope is that local efforts to create suicide-safer communities be acknowledged, encouraged, and supported
Thank YOU

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