

# 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 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
- 1996 - resulted in published document – “Prevention of Suicide: Guidelines for the formulation and implementation of national strategies” (United Nations, 1996)
  - 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

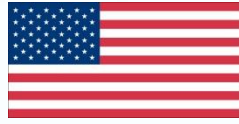
## Mission

*Saving lives through the creation, development, and delivery of innovative training experiences that empower organizations, communities, and individuals to be safer from suicide*

# LivingWorks' history in 25 regions including countries, states, territories and principalities



Canada 1983



US 1987



Germany 1989



Singapore 1990



Australia 1996



Norway 1998



New Zealand 1999



Guam 2001



Northern Ireland 2003



Ireland 2003



Iraq 2003



Scotland 2003



England 2004



South Korea 2004



Kuwait 2005



Japan 2005



South Africa 2005



Afghanistan 2005



Wales 2006



Isle of Man 2006



Samoa 2007



Fiji 2007



Hungary 2008



Sweden 2009



Denmark 2013

# 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”<sup>1</sup>
- Demonstrated capacity to implement, manage, and sustain programs relating to the other pillars

<sup>1</sup> *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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