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# **SPRC Research to Practice Webinar**

## **Promoting Help-Seeking Among College Students: Strategies for Suicide Prevention**

May 22, 2014

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm EDT

# Moderator

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Bonnie Lipton, MPH  
Campus Prevention Specialist, Suicide Prevention Resource Center

# Learning Objectives

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- Summarize new research on the barriers and facilitators to help-seeking among suicidal college students
- Describe ways to engage students and enhance peer networks of support to promote help-seeking
- Describe ways to promote help-seeking among students at greater risk of suicide, including those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or Questioning (LGBTQ)
- Describe ways to enhance cultural congruence, including utilization of natural support systems and communication in students' first languages

# Presenters

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**Marilyn Downs, PhD, LICSW**  
Director of Outreach, Counseling and Mental Health  
Service, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts



**Charlie Morse, MA, LMHC**  
Assistant Dean for Student Development &  
Director of Counseling, Worcester Polytechnic  
Institute, Worcester, Massachusetts

# Presenters

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**Alma Rosa Silva-Bañuelos**  
Director, LGBTQ Resource Center,  
Division for Equity & Inclusion,  
University of New Mexico,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico



**Frankie Flores**  
Caring @ Every Connection Coordinator,  
LGBTQ Resource Center, Division for  
Equity & Inclusion, University of New  
Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico



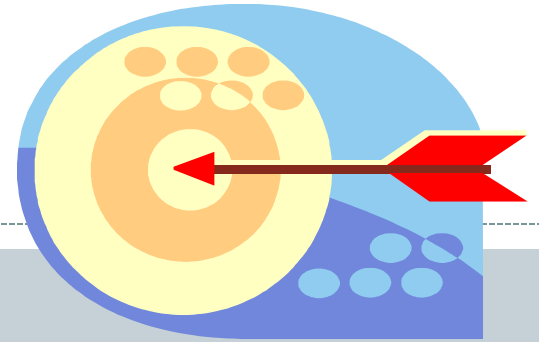
**Eugenia Curet, PhD, MSW, LCSW**  
Assistant Dean of Students for Support  
Services, The University of  
Texas Pan American, Edinburg, TX

# Promoting Help-Seeking SPRC Research to Practice Webinar



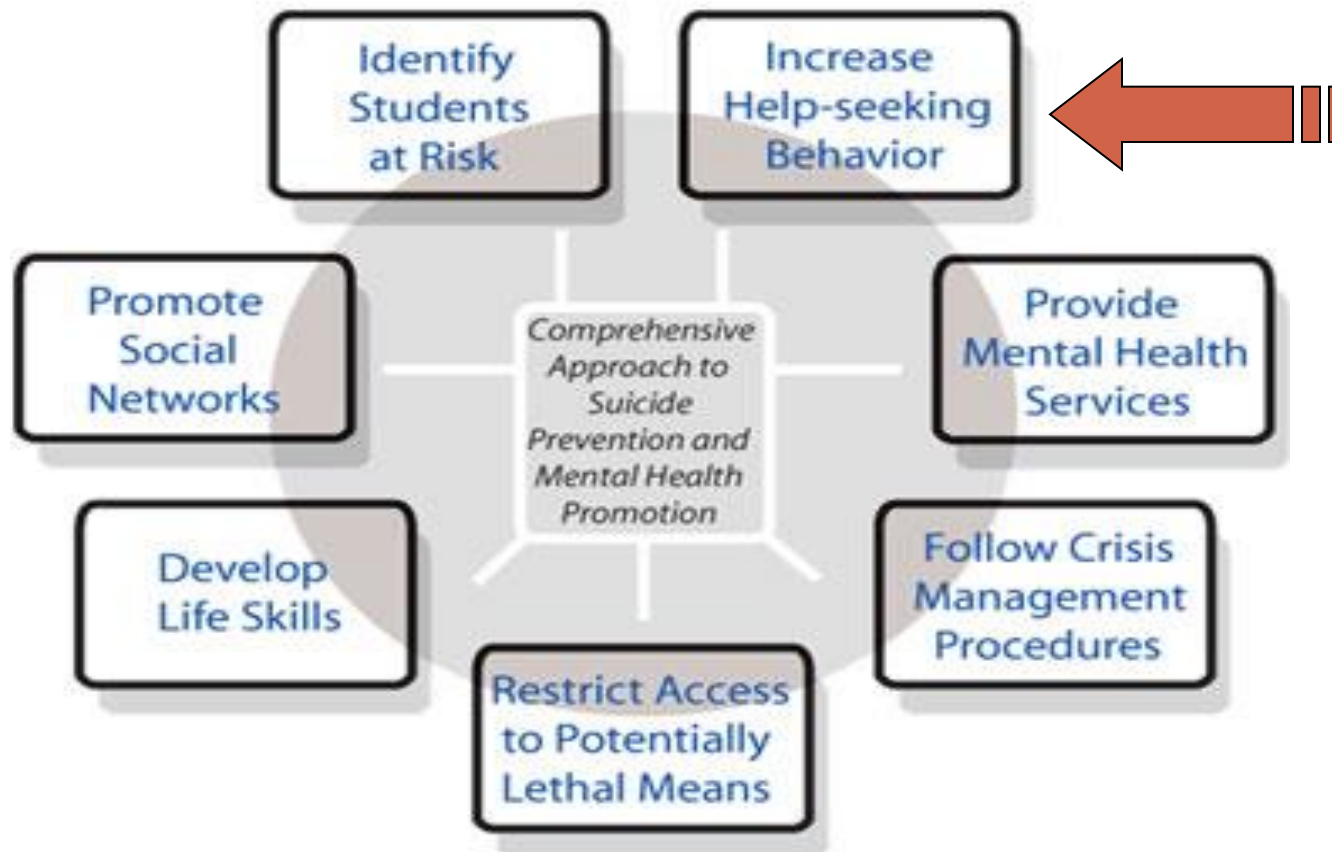
Marilyn Downs, Ph.D., LICSW  
Tufts University Counseling and Mental Health Service  
May 22, 2014

# Objectives



- Understand the process of help-seeking within a broader theoretical context
- Learn about recent research on help-seeking among suicidal college students
- Discuss applications to campus populations and settings

# Comprehensive approach to suicide prevention



*(Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion  
The Jed Foundation/Suicide Prevention Resource Center, 2006)*



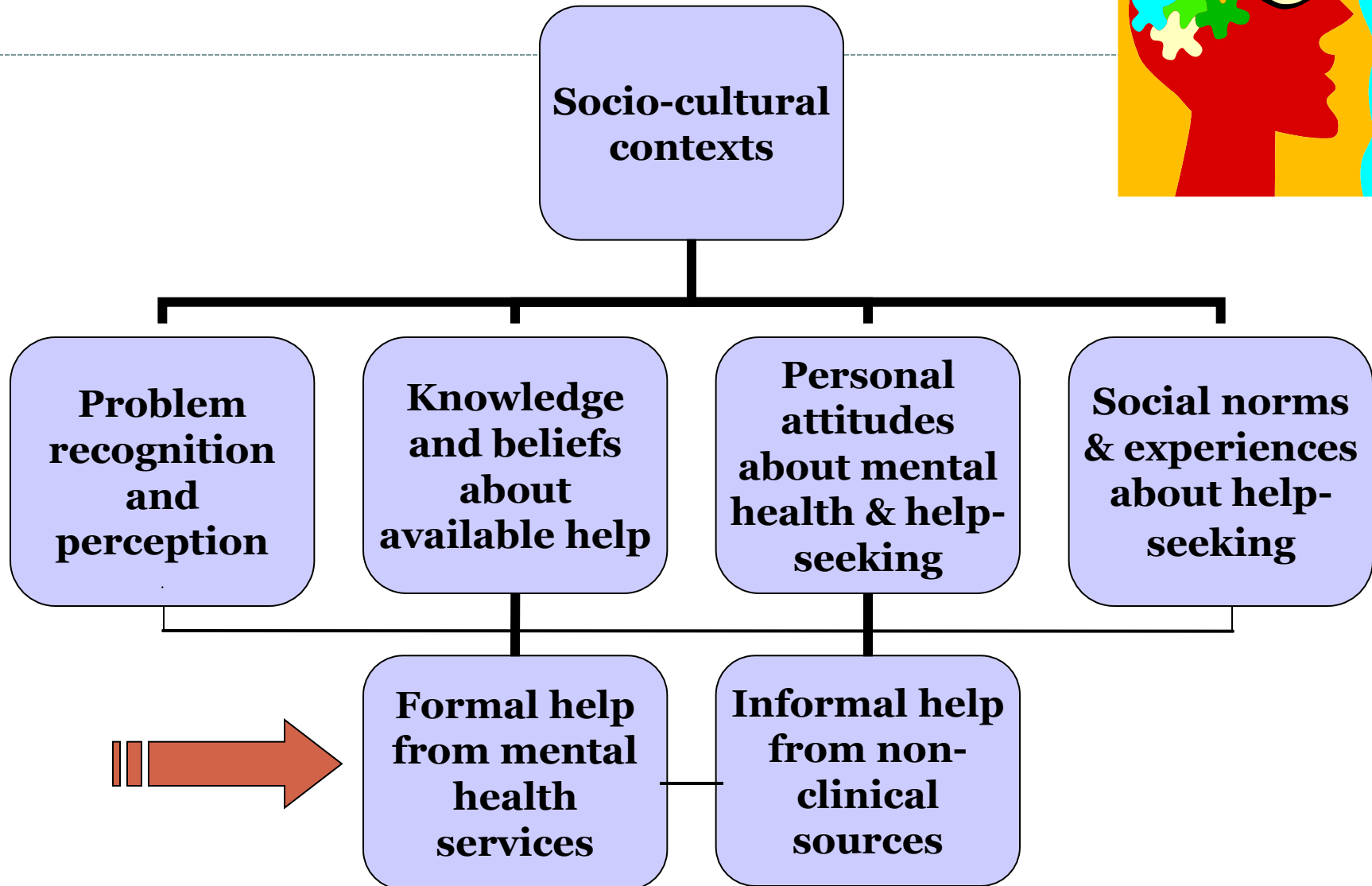
# Starting Points



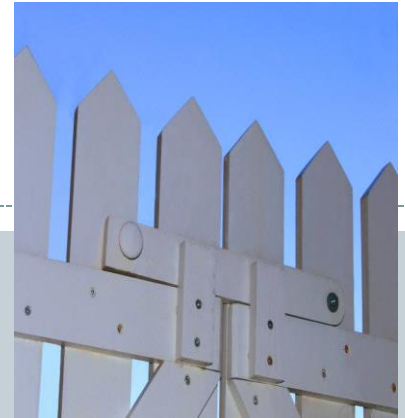
- Only 1/2 of college students with serious thoughts of suicide receive services
- An estimated 80% of college students who die by suicide were never seen by campus mental health services
- This underutilization of help is especially noteworthy in a college population, where most students have access to free or low cost services
- Increasing the rate of help-seeking requires a better understanding of what factors affect students' decisions to seek care.

Sources: Downs & Eisenberg, 2012; Drum et al., 2009; Gallagher 2009

# Conceptual model of help-seeking



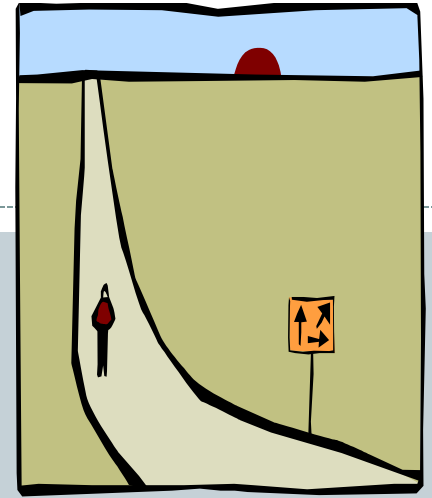
# Top reasons suicidal\* students say about why they did not get services



- I prefer to deal with issues on my own
- Stress is normal in college
- I question how serious my needs are
- I don't have time
- Financial reasons
- I worry what others will think of me
- I question whether treatment is helpful
- The problem will get better by itself

[\*Note: Students who had “serious thoughts about committing suicide” in the past 12 months]

# Predictors of treatment use among suicidal students



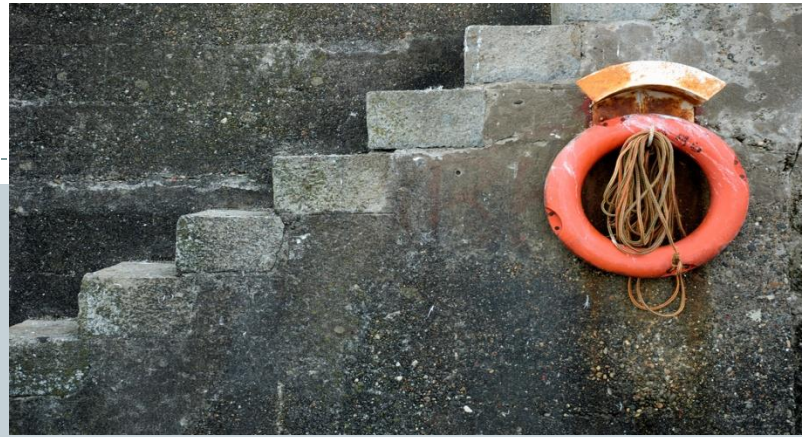
- Perceived need for help
- Belief that treatment is effective
- Contact (personal knowledge) of service users
- Lower level of personal stigma (respondent's own views) regarding use of mental health services
- Knowledge about services and how to access them

# Social influences on use of counseling among suicidal students



- Two-thirds of suicidal students say that encouragement from others is an important reason for seeking services.
- 90% of suicidal students who did not initiate services on their own say that other people were an important influence.

Source: Healthy Minds Survey



How do we translate these findings into campus efforts to promote help-seeking ?

# Tufts University



- Private university located near Boston
- Student body on the Medford-Somerville campus
  - ❖ 5,000 undergraduates and 3,500 graduate students
  - ❖ 1/2 female and 1/2 male
  - ❖ 60% Caucasian and 40% ALANA & International
  - ❖ 10% of student body identify as LGBTQ

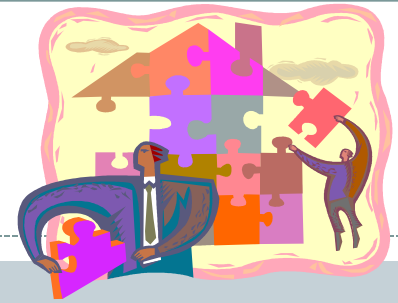
# Translating research to practice



- **Enhance problem recognition and “perceived need”**
  - Increase awareness of signs/symptoms of mental health problems
  - Broaden universal screening efforts (primary care, on-line)
  - Emphasize that mental health problems are common and treatable
- **Increase awareness & knowledge about mental health services**
  - Raise awareness of counseling services, processes, and outcomes
  - Provide clinically and culturally competent services
  - Enhance familiarity with counseling staff through campus outreach
- **Promote positive attitudes about help-seeking**
  - Use social norms messages to correct inflated perceptions of stigma
  - Highlight that 1 in 4 Tufts students use counseling each year
  - Challenge notions that mental health problems = personal failure
  - Key message: “We all need help sometimes”
- **Involve campus community**
  - Promote helping capacities of students, faculty, staff and families
  - Foster a campus culture of help-seeking *and* help-offering
  - Tailor prevention efforts to reach targeted populations



# Some examples of specific efforts at Tufts



- Tufts gatekeeper training for: 1) students; 2) faculty-staff
- Research-informed health communication strategies
- Universal depression screening in Campus Health Services
- AFSP Interactive Screening Program targeting men
- Campus liaison system between CMHS and all departments
- Active consultation service to Tufts community
- Workshops for int'l students, e.g. "intercultural friendships" "effective communication" and "coping strategies."
- Collaboration with Active Minds on outreach efforts

# Student Voices



In collaboration with Active Minds we created a short film, “*Talk Helps: Tufts Students Tell their Stories.*” (<http://ase.tufts.edu/counseling/video.html>) that is shown at orientation to all incoming students.

## **Examples of student messages in the film:**

### About mental health problems:

- ❖ “It’s normal, it happens and other people have gone through it.”
- ❖ “Letting someone know they are not alone is the biggest relief.”

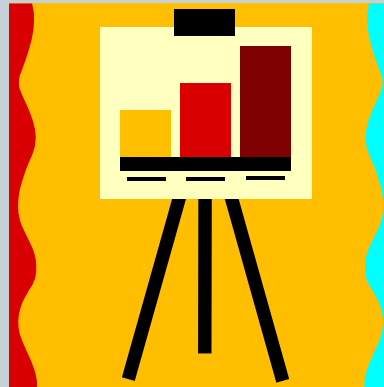
### About telling others:

- ❖ “Once you’ve gotten it out instead of keeping it in your head...really helps.”
- ❖ “If you don’t share then you don’t know...that your friends are probably going through the same thing.”

### About counseling:

- ❖ “1 in 4 Tufts students seek help every year.”
- ❖ “Counseling is more [of an] informal...conversation than you would think.”
- ❖ “No reason is too big or too small to at least go in and talk about it.”

# Have our efforts at Tufts made a difference?



A few results....

# Tufts 2007 to 2012: Changes in help-seeking attitudes and actions



Measure	Tufts 2007	Tufts 2012
Know where to go for services	68%	77%
Know 3+ treatment users	39%	51%
Perceived stigma (0 – 5 scale)	2.3	1.8
Personal stigma (0 – 5 scale )	1.03	0.77
Past year treatment use (all students)	19%	30%
Past year treatment among those with positive screen for depression/anxiety	39%	54%

Source: Tufts University Healthy Minds Survey 2007 - 2012

# Additional information



- **Contact:**

Marilyn Downs, Ph.D.

Director of Outreach

Counseling and Mental Health Service

Tufts University

[marilyn.downs@tufts.edu](mailto:marilyn.downs@tufts.edu)

617-627-3360

- **For more about the Healthy Minds Study:**

PI: Daniel Eisenberg, Ph.D.

University of Michigan

<http://www.healthymindsnetwork.org/>

# Enhancing and Supporting Peer Networks to Increase Student Help Seeking

SPRC Research to Practice Webinar

May 22, 2014

Charles Morse, MA, LMHC  
Assistant Dean for Student Development  
Director of Counseling  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
[cmorse@wpi.edu](mailto:cmorse@wpi.edu)

# National Data on Students Considering Suicide

- 55% of students had experienced suicidal thoughts in their lifetime
- 46% never talk to anyone else about thoughts or suicidal attempts
- Of those who talked to others, 67% first told a friend/peer
- Of those who talked to others, 52% found it helpful and 58% were advised to seek professional help

Drum et al, 2009

National Research Consortium of Counseling Centers (June 2009 issue of *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*)

# mtvU and Associated Press College Stress and Mental Health Poll (Spring 2009)

- Friends and family are most sought out
  - 77% would turn to friends for help
  - 67% would turn to parents for help
- Students are less inclined to seek professional help
  - 20% say they would turn to school counseling
  - 6% would turn to Resident Advisor
  - 3% would turn to a crisis hotline



# Naturally Occurring Networks of Student Peer Support

- What are some of the pre-existing social support networks for students, formal or informal, that exist on our campuses?

Residence halls

Academic majors

Clubs & organizations

International students

Unofficial interest groups

Greek life

Religious groups

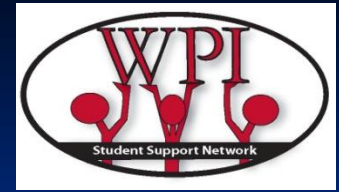
Athletic teams

Under-represented students

# Networking within Networks

- Who are the “Key Students” within these natural networks of student support?
  - Student Leaders
  - Natural Helpers

# WPI Student Support Network (SSN)



- Identifying and selecting student participants
  - E-mail to faculty and staff
  - General advertising/programming
- Training SSN participants (6 week training)
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Perspectives/Stigma reduction
  - Connection

# SSN Knowledge Areas

- Mental Health Concerns
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Self-harm
  - Suicide
  - Substance Abuse
- Orientation to Available Resources

# SSN Skill Areas

- Providing support in the moment
  - Listening/empathy
  - Resist urges to fix
  - Acceptance
- Successfully connecting friends with help
  - Process orientation
  - Stages of change model
  - Working with resistance

# SSN Perspectives

- De-stigmatizing view of mental health
  - Normalization of struggles
  - Functional vs. Diagnostic descriptions
  - “It’s not us and them...it’s us and us”
- Enhancing Connection
  - Networking within support system
  - Helping the helpers
  - Enhancing a community of support

# Empowering and Supporting Student Initiatives

- Specialized training offered in key areas
- Supporting additional opportunities for student involvement
  - Programming
  - Marketing
- Feeds existing and new traditional Peer Ed
- Active Minds at WPI

# Evaluating SSN Outcomes (over 400 student participants)

- Students demonstrated significant improvement in the following areas:
  - Recognizing warning signs for suicide
  - Making appropriate referrals for support
  - Convincing someone to get help
  - Discussing suicide with others
- Significantly increased student outreach to the SDCC for consultation (tripled over past 5 years)
- Increased contact and programming with student organizations



# Trainee Outcomes

- Over 400 SSN trained students on campus at any given time (10% of undergraduates)
- Improved Crisis Responding Skills (SIRI II)
- Significant decreases on mental health help seeking stigma on two measures (SSRPH & SSOSH)
- Improved mental health functioning (psychological flexibility; measured by AAQ –II)

# Student Participant Perspectives

- “The series opened doors to talking about issues generally classified as taboo. The easy-going, relaxed atmosphere made it very comfortable to talk and learn.”
- “It was worthwhile because I got to know the SDCC staff and learn of the resources available for troubled students.”
- “I feel it helped me realize how to help others cope with their problems and also how to better cope with my own. Most importantly, I feel like I could actually help someone talk about and solve their issues.”
- “It was worthwhile because even if I don’t end up using this in college, it is something that I can use for the rest of my life.”

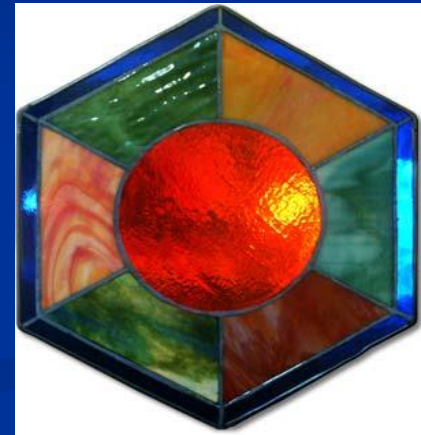
# More Information on WPI Student Support Network

- SSN Training Manual is listed on the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) Best Practices Registry <http://www.sprc.org/bpr/section-III/student-support-network>
- Manual is freely available to campuses who are considering implementing a peer networking program
  - Contact us at [sdcc@wpi.edu](mailto:sdcc@wpi.edu)
  - <http://www.wpi.edu/offices/sdcc/support-network.html>
- SSN training is evolving to include a staff/faculty track and specialized cohorts for specific populations.

# WPI Student Development and Counseling Center

## Contact information

- Charles Morse, MA, LMHC  
Assistant Dean for Student Development  
Director of Counseling  
[cmorse@wpi.edu](mailto:cmorse@wpi.edu)
  
- 157 West Street  
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609  
508 831-5540  
[sdcc@wpi.edu](mailto:sdcc@wpi.edu)



# Techniques to promote help-seeking amongst LGBTQ students

SPRC Research to Practice Webinar

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Presenters:

Alma Rosa Silva-Bañuelos, Director, LGBTQ Resource Center  
University of New Mexico

Frankie Flores, Caring @ Every Connection Coordinator, LGBTQ Resource  
Center, University of New Mexico

# University of New Mexico

- Hispanic Serving Institution, HIS
- Student population: aprox. 27,000
  - Non-traditional students
- Student demographic Spring 2013:
  - Hispanic 38.22%
  - African American 2.46%
  - American Indian 5.60%
  - Asian 3.23%
  - Native Hawaiian 0.19%
  - White 40.92%
  - Foreign 3.63%
  - No Response 3.15%
  - 2 or more responses 2.59%



# Learning Objectives

- Describe ways to promote help-seeking among students at greater risk of suicide, including those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or Questioning (LBGTQ)
- Gain understanding of basic LGBTQ terminology
- Understand methods to create LGBTQ peer support and access to resources
- Learn methods to integrate student voices in program and peer support planning

# LGBTQ Terminology

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Questioning
- Queer





# LGBQ Youth Statistics

- According to American College Association 7.2% of college students identify as LGB.
- LGBQ Youth are 4 times more likely, and questioning youth are 3 times more likely, to attempt suicide as their straight peers<sup>1</sup>
- Suicide attempts by LGB youth and questioning youth are 4 to 6 times more likely to result in injury, poisoning, or overdose that requires treatment from a doctor or nurse, compared to their straight peers<sup>2</sup>
- Internalized homophobia and conflict about sexual orientation appear to contribute to suicide risk among LGB youth.

<sup>1</sup>The Trevor Project; <sup>2</sup>CDC 2011

# Transgender & Gender Non-Conforming Youth Statistics

- 54% of Transgender/Gender non-conforming multi-racial individuals reported at least one suicide attempt, as documented in the report, “Injustice at every turn.”
- Notably, suicide attempt rates rose dramatically when teachers were the reported perpetrators: 59% for those harassed or bullied by teachers in K-12 or higher education, 76% among those who were physically assaulted by teachers and 69% among those who were sexually assaulted by teachers.<sup>1</sup>
- There was a prevalence of suicide attempts amongst those who are younger (18 to 24: 45%), multiracial (54%) and American Indian or Alaska Native (56%), or have lower levels of educational attainment (high school or less: 48-49%)<sub>2</sub>
- There was an 18% decrease in suicide attempts for individuals that completed a graduate degree.

<sup>1</sup>National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce; <sup>2</sup>The Williams Institute; <sup>3</sup>ibid.

# LGBTQ Visibility

## Campus Community

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- LGBTQ & Ally campus events
- LGBTQ social networking
- Rainbow flags
- Academic support
- Out & Ally list
- Staff & Faculty support

## Safe Zone

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- Campus Education - LGBTQ
- Build sense of awareness, safety & cultural competency campus wide
- Safe Zone trainings
- LGBTQ 101 & presentations
- Transgender 101
- LGBTQ “story” panels

# Visibility Events as Signifiers of Inclusivity on Campus

- Rainbow Graduation
- UNM Comes Out for Pride
- National Coming Out Day
- Transgender Day of Remembrance Week of events
- National Trans Visible Day
- National Day of Silence



# Student Voices

- Students connect at visibility events/entry point
- Students access LGBTQ Resource Center and become involved
- Students invited to participate in peer support groups, student orgs, Queer Voices Round Table
- Students voices must be integrated from the beginning to represent students at all levels

# Developing Student Leaders as Peer Support Facilitators

- Student Facilitator training
- Listening sessions/ Wellness check
- Suicide Prevention/QPR trainings for all student staff & student leaders
- Enact Caring @ Every Connection- Suicidality Protocol
- Peer Support Groups
  - OUT Womyn
  - Gentlemen's Society
  - Trans & Gender Non-Conforming (group name in process)
  - Queer & Trans People of Color, QTPOC
  - UNM Two-Spirit Society

# Fostering student peer groups

- **Transgender & Gender Non-Conforming groups**
  - Facilitated discussions surrounding mental, emotional, spiritual well-being for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming students/share experiences, successes and struggles
- **Sexual Orientation focused groups**
  - Facilitated discussions about stigma, internal and external phobias and coping mechanisms for issues such as coming out, stressors, etc...

# LGBTQ Counseling

- LGBTQ specific counselors
- Free counseling to students, staff, faculty & community
- Practicum Site- Counseling & Social Work
- Counseling is part of LGBTQ Resource Center
- Partners with UNM Student Health & Counseling, SHAC



# Counselor led support groups

- Transgender and gender non-conforming focus for support groups
- LGBTQ focused support groups for women
- Most recent- LGBTQ Women Veteran counseling group

# Caring @ Every Connection

- Caring @ Every Connection – suicide prevention campus wide program
- L.O.V.E (Listen, Observe, Validate, Engage)
- Safe Zones
- LGBTQ inclusive language in informational packets
- Suicide prevention trainings include LGBTQ issues, scenarios, resources and support networks



# C@EC – Suicidality Protocol

- Prevention programs
- Intervention protocol
- Postvention programs
- Wellness Check-In
- Caring @ Every Connection Response Team: members from student service or resource centers

# LGBTQ Intersections of Identity

- Honor Intersections of Identity
- Holistic approach- honor intersection of identity & authentic self
- Cross promote LGBTQ resources & services
- Outreach Ethnic & Resource Centers
  - African American Student Services
  - American Indian Student Services
  - El Centro de la Raza
  - Women's Resource Center
  - Veteran's Resource Center
  - Accessibility Resource Center
  - Graduate Resource Center

# Thank you





# SPRC Research to Practice Webinar

## CAMPUS SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM (CSPP)

Eugenia Curet, Ph. D., LCSW, ACSW  
Assistant Dean of Students for Support Services  
Student Health and Counseling and Psychological Services  
University of Texas Pan-American  
curete@utpa.edu  
(956) 665-2485

Collaborators:  
Ayaciuán Madrigal-Burt, M.S.  
Marianela Guzman, B.S.



Working together for the future of Texas

# Topics

1. Brief description of the Campuses
2. Demographics
3. General aspect of the Hispanic culture to take into consideration when providing mental health services and implementing a suicide prevention program for Hispanics
4. De-stigmatizing mental health seeking services
5. Implementation of the Campus Suicide Prevention Program

The University of Texas Pan-American (UTPA) and The University of Texas Brownsville (UTB) - two Hispanic Serving Institutions of Higher Education that offer undergraduate, graduate and doctoral academic programs. (University of Texas Rio Grande Valley- UTRGV by 2015)

## Location: South Region of Texas – Border with Mexico

Demographics: (2012-13)

UTB Enrollment 8,146

92.6% Hispanics

18-25 age range

58.2% females – 41.3% males

UTPA Enrollment 19,301

88% Hispanics

18-25 age range

58% females – 42% males

Residents in the larger communities (approximately 90.7%) are Hispanics of Mexican descent with a long history of living in Texas since 1836, when Texas acquired independence from Mexico.



# Cultural Attributes to Take into Consideration When Working with Hispanic Students

- \* Shared worldview that values collectivism or familism over individualism
- \* Personalismo and Familismo - expecting closeness in interpersonal relationships; achievements are focused on the family over the individual. Personalismo refers to Hispanics preference for warm, personal and engaged relationships (González-Ramos, Zayas, & Cohen, 1998)
- \* Family expects that the individual member will seek to resolve any problems within the family (“lo que pasa en la familia se queda en la familia”)

# Cultural Attributes to Take into Consideration When Working with Hispanic Students

- \* Utilization of natural support systems before utilizing traditional institutions (priest, minister, curandero, herbalists, espiritista)
- \* Mental health staff providing services should be bilingual and representative of the student population
- \* Materials in Spanish and English

# Input from Students in the Planning of the Campus Suicide Prevention Program (CSPP)

Focus groups to elicit input from various students cohorts: veterans, GLBTQI, students receiving service from the disability office, general population of male and female students

- \* In general the groups conveyed their concern about stigma and being identified as mental health patients and for some what it would mean in terms of their future careers

# Efforts to Engage the Campus Community and De-stigmatize Mental Illness

- \* **Mental Health Forums:** Each semester with the collaboration of the Active Minds students organization. Interactive in the form of Q and A – i.e. what are some of the mental health disorders; can people recover; how effective is psychotherapy/counseling; medications; confidentiality; and privacy of treatment records among other questions.

# Efforts to Engage the Campus Community and De-stigmatize Mental Illness

- \* **Conferences:** Implemented an annual conference on issues of mental health and suicide prevention among adolescent and young adults – including issues such as bullying, sexual and domestic violence, veterans and PTSD.
- \* **Inclusion of students and parents in the program advisory board.**

# Implementation of the CSPP

- \* Identification of candidates to train as trainers on suicide prevention (QPR and ASK from Texas Mental Health America)
- \* Faculty from the Guidance and Counseling Department; Education Department; Campus Police; Nursing, Dean of Student Office; Director of Housing and Residential Life; Students' Rights and Responsibility Office; Mental Health and Medical Staff; Disability Office; Veterans; GLBTQI (Change Organization) students.

# Implementation of the CSPP

- \* Groups Trained as Suicide Prevention Gatekeepers: Residential Aids; Tutors, Mentors, Sororities and Fraternities; Freshman students; Criminal Justice students; Disability; GLBTQI (Change); Counseling students; Nursing students; International Students; Physical Plant staff; Human Resources staff; Division of Student Affairs staff; Enrollment and Financial Aid staff

# Implementation of the CSPP: Engaging Students and Families

- \* Presentation to parents in Spanish and English during Orientation and special Open House by the Student Health Services: Video produced by students on college adjustment issues they face.
  - \* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4phJBOQXkE> (English)
  - \* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBY15gYU6cs> (Spanish)



# Provision of Services Where the Students Are and at Times Favorable for Them

- HOUSING
- CLASSROOMS
- DURING THEIR ORGANIZATION MEETINGS
- CAMPUS WIDE ACTIVITIES

# Number of Individuals Trained as Suicide Prevention Gatekeepers

**2011 – present**

<b>UTB</b>	<b>1933</b>
<b>UTPA</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Community</b>	<b>1027</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3214</b>

# Additional References

Falicov, C. J. (1998) Latino families in therapy: a guide to multicultural practice. New York: Guilford Press.

Santiago-Rivera, A. L., Arredondo, P., & Gallardo-Cooper, M. (2002). Counseling Latinos and la familia. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

# Q&A

# Announcements

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- Evaluation
- Submit Your Questions on the SPRC Web site

# Contact Us

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**Edna Pressler, PhD**  
**SPRC Training Institute**  
**Director**

[epressler@edc.org](mailto:epressler@edc.org)

**617-618-2979**

**Dominique Lieu, MA**  
**SPRC Training Institute**  
**Training Specialist**

[dlieu@edc.org](mailto:dlieu@edc.org)

**617-618-2984**

[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

# Thank you!