

# Community Effort to Address Postvention Needs

Amy Hart

Suicide Prevention Coordinator  
Crisis Line of Central Virginia

Christina Benton, MPH

Suicide Prevention Manager  
Virginia Department of Health



# Postvention

A strategy or approach that is implemented after a crisis or traumatic event has occurred that includes the support for the bereaved (family, friends, professionals and peers).



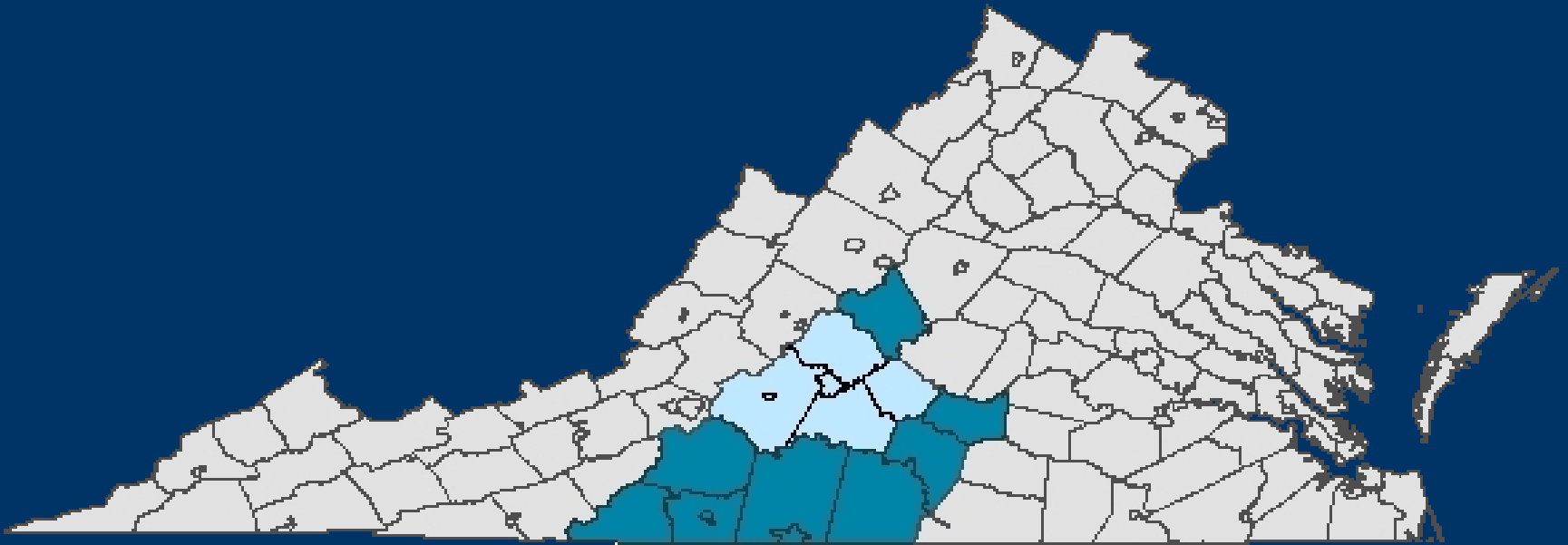
# Assessing Community Needs...

## Postvention Questions:

- Does the agency provide postvention services?
- If so, what kind? (support group, counseling, educational materials, other)
- Strengths of postvention services provided?
- Challenges faced when delivering postvention services?



# Crisis Line of Central Virginia



# Central Virginia Population – 2009

## Youth (Ages 10-24)

**Youth Population Total: 116,275**

- |          |     |                      |     |
|----------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| • Male   | 50% | • Black, NH          | 24% |
| • Female | 50% | • Hispanic, Any race | 2%  |
|          |     | • Other, NH          | 2%  |
|          |     | • White, NH          | 72% |



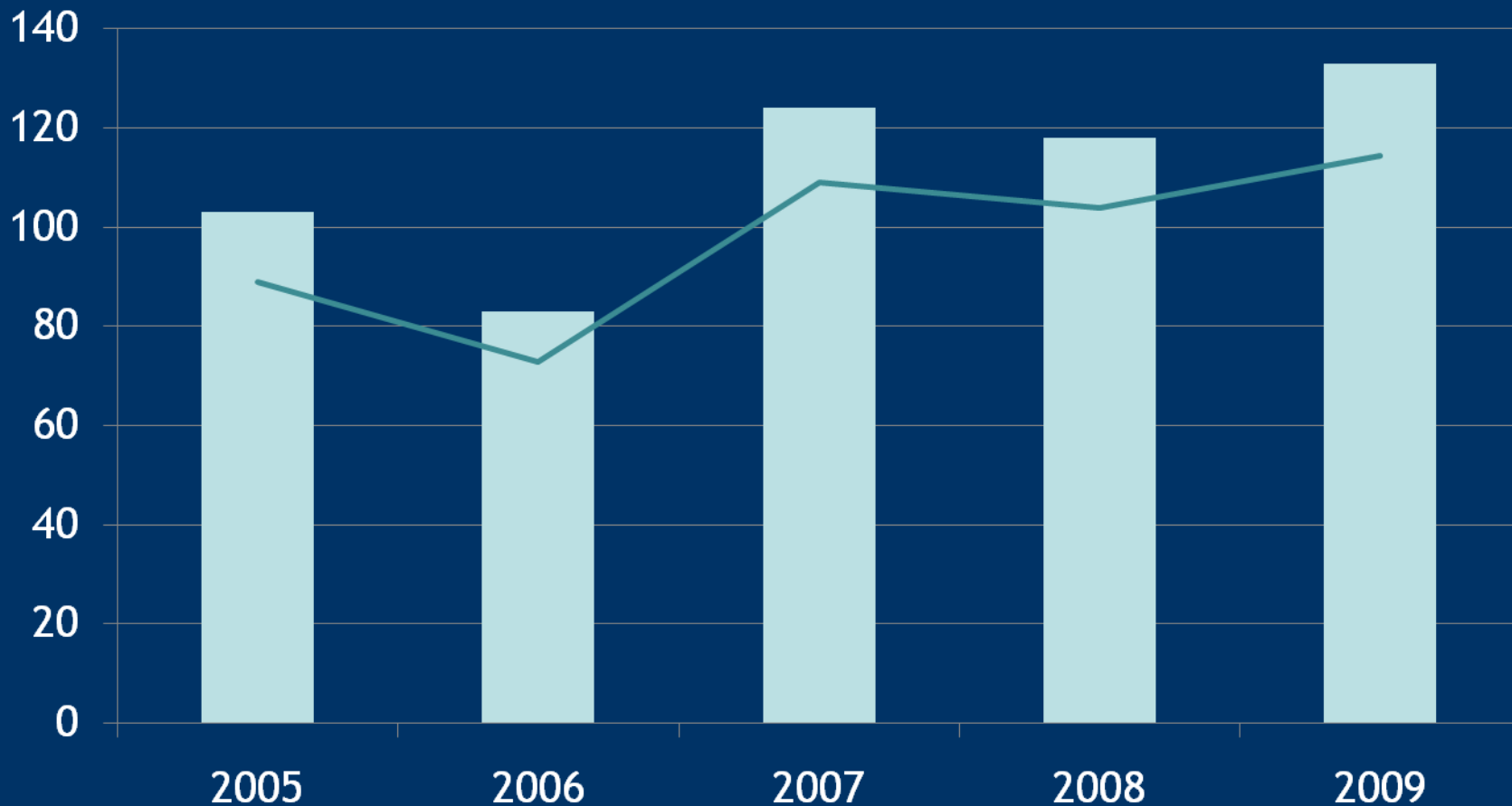
# Central Virginia Youth Suicide Rate

**51**

youth suicides over five year period  
(05'-09'), for a crude rate of  
**8.9 per 100,000**



# Central Virginia Youth Self Inflicted Injury Rate



■ Number — Rate



# Needs Assessment Results

## Survey Respondents\* (n=83)

- Community Services Boards 6%
- Social Services 8%
- Physicians 53%
- Social Worker 14%
- Psychiatrist 1%
- Private Counselor 7%
- Other 13%

\*Respondents were able to choose more than one category.





# Needs Assessment Results

- 74% of responding organizations work with youth
- 39% of responding organizations provide postvention services



# Needs Assessment Results

What postvention resources does your agency/organization offer to suicide survivors?

- Support Groups 7%
- Counseling 25%
- Educational Materials 12%
- No Postvention Services 11%
- Other 19%



# Needs Assessment Results

“Not enough staff/funding - would be good to have ongoing support group.”

“Limited training, funding.”

“Time restraints. Lack of referral capability.”



# Needs Assessment Results

“Clients often wait for a psychiatric consult or are unable to get a psychiatric appointment due to lack of the ‘right’ insurance.”

“Availability of private therapists for people without insurance.”



# Needs Assessment Results

“Lack of available number of staff.  
Waiting list.”

“Challenge to get appointments with  
counselors and psychiatrists  
quickly.”



# Community Stakeholders Meeting

- Invitees
- Attendees
- Decisions



# Agency Collaboration

- Mental Health America: Survivors of Suicide Support groups
- Kids' Haven: A Center for Grieving Children
- Local Coalition



# Compilation

## Information for Loss Survivors

- Acknowledging the loss
- How to cope
- Explaining suicide to children
- Myths and facts about grief
- Stages of grief
- Survivors Bill of Rights





# Compilation

## Information for Loved Ones of Attempt Survivor

- What Happens in the Emergency Department
- Next Steps After the Emergency Department
- Safety Planning
- Moving Forward



# Compilation

## Information for Attempt Survivor

- Brief acknowledgement of feelings
- After the Emergency Department
- Step by step help



# Compilation

## Resources

- Crisis Hotlines
- Support Groups
- Local Counselors
- Local and State Resources
- National Resources



# Distribution

- List compilation
- Guide mailing
- Agency website



# Moving Forward

- More requested
- Expansion planned

