

Assessment and Planning for Lethal Means Restriction on Campus

**SAMHSA Annual Campus Grantee Technical Assistance
Meeting
January 8, 2009**

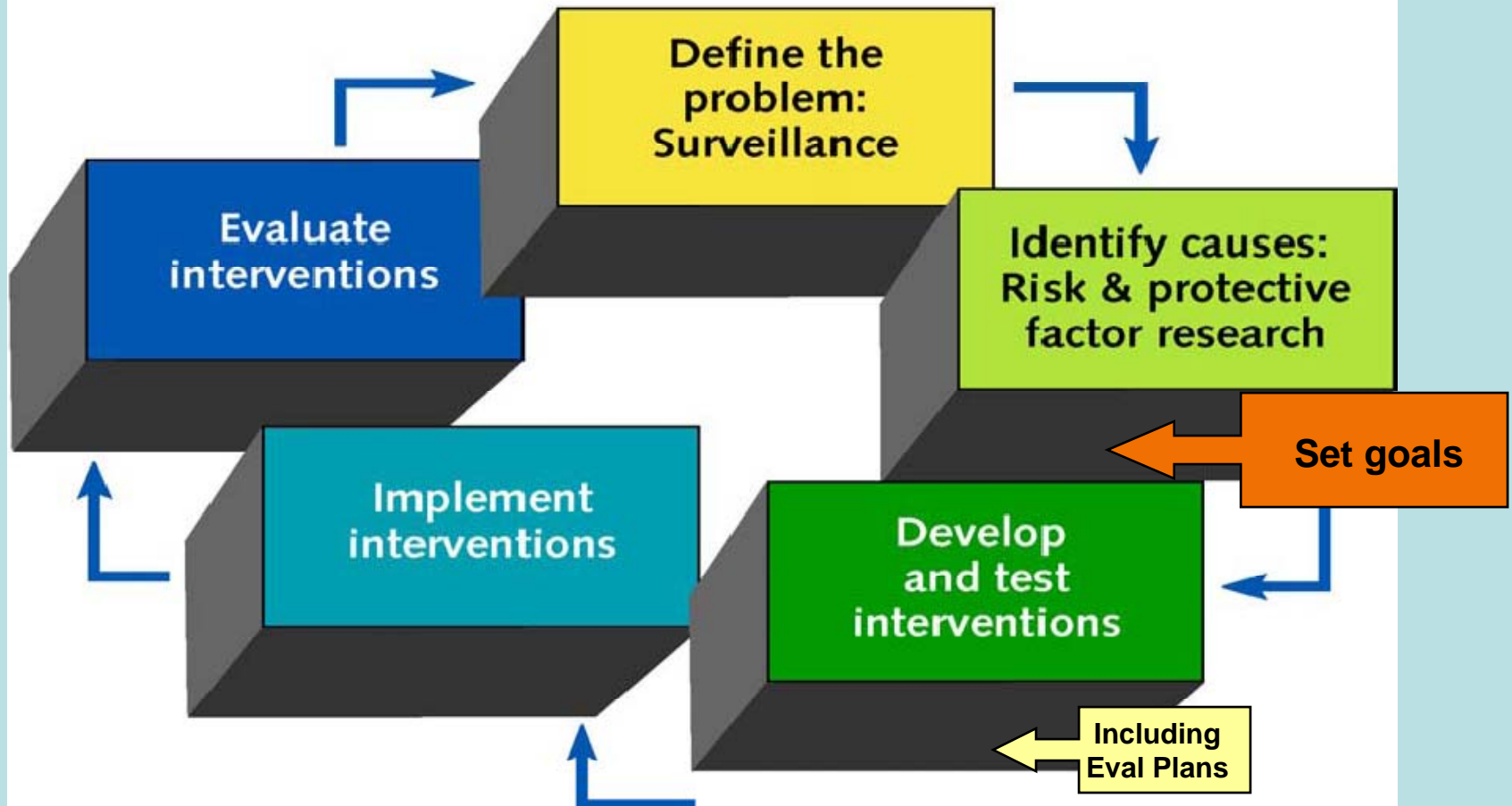
Julie Halverson, MA & Mort Silverman, MD
Suicide Prevention Resource Center

- ❖ **Overview of risk and protective factors, Julie Halverson, SPRC**
 - ◆ Environmental approach

- ❖ **Overview of methods used by college-aged students, Mort Silverman, SPRC**

- ❖ **Assessment & Planning for Means Restriction on Campus, Ross Artwohl, LCSW, Oregon State University**

The Public Health Approach to Prevention



Risk Factors

- ❖ **Access to lethal means**
- ❖ Exposure to media normalizing/glamorizing suicide
- ❖ Impulsivity
- ❖ Depression, alcohol and other drug use
- ❖ Lack of social support, isolation

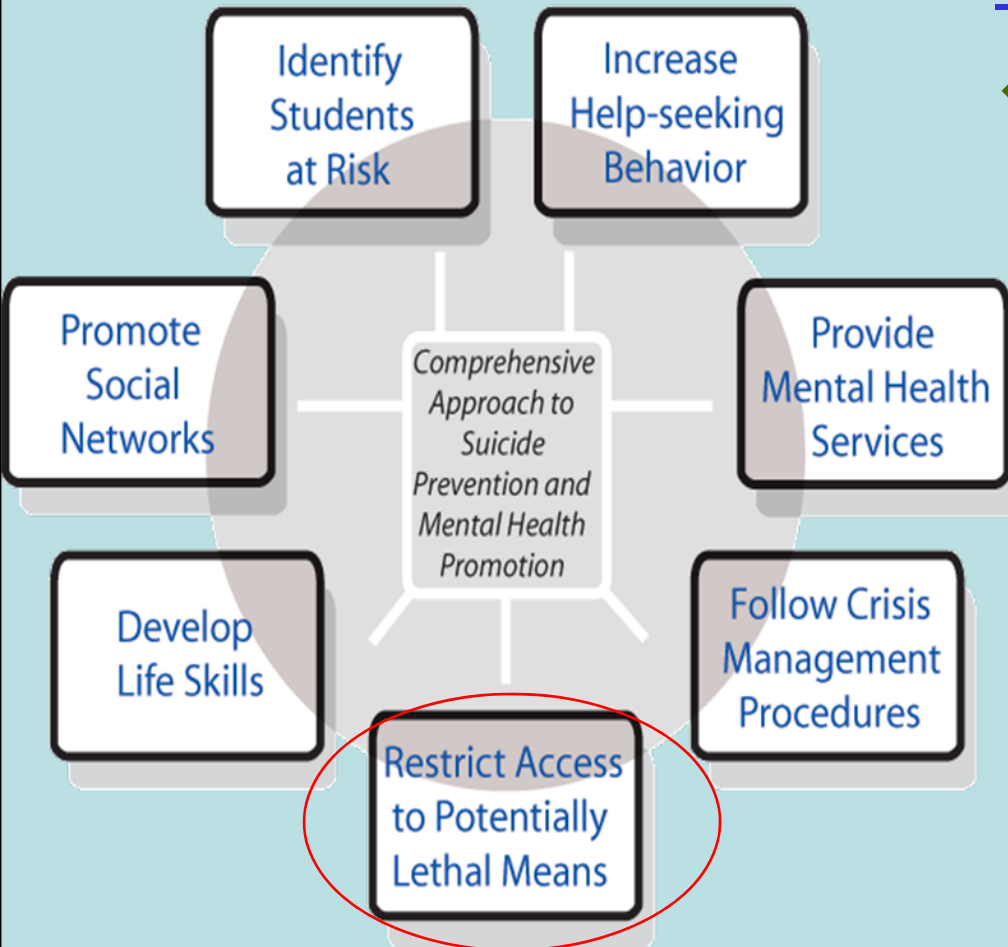
<http://www.sprc.org/library/srisk.pdf>

Protective Factors

- ❖ **Restricted access to lethal means**
- ❖ Norms discouraging suicide
- ❖ Strong connections to family & community support
- ❖ Skills in problem-solving, conflict resolution, etc.

Goal:

- ❖ To limit access to potential sites, weapons, and other agents that may facilitate dying by suicide



1. Problem assessment

2. Scan

3. Analysis

4. Response/Implementation

5. Evaluation

1. Gather data about lethal means

2. Environmental scan of campus
– where are lethal means
accessible?

- Engage key stakeholders

3. Analyze access to means,
develop potential interventions

4. How will you implement the
intervention?

5. Is this effective?

A Brief Overview of Methods Use in College-Aged Students

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Senior Advisor

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

January 8, 2009

- ❖ Method used among 18-24 year olds differ between fatal and non-fatal outcomes

	Method 1	Method 2	Method 3
Fatal Outcomes	Firearm (54.7%)	Suffocation (29.2%)	Poisoning (9.1%)
Non-fatal Outcomes	Poisoning (61.2%)	Cutting (27.8%)	Suffocation (1.1%)

- ❖ Important because indicates differences in thought processes, intention, severity, preparation, and reason b/w fatal & non-fatal outcomes

Among all 18-24 year olds who died by suicide:

- ❖ Almost 50% were due to intimate partner problems
- ❖ Other reasons included:
 - ◆ legal/criminal (20%),
 - ◆ financial (12%),
 - ◆ relationship problem with friend or family (13%)
- ❖ Important to attend to youth who have had a recent life event (relationship problem), who are depressed, and a tendency towards impulsiveness, especially within 2 weeks of life event

Among all 18-24 year olds who died by suicide:

- ❖ 40% left a suicide note
- ❖ 30% had disclosed to someone their intent
[males more likely to disclose intent to someone]
- ❖ 25% previously attempted
[females more likely to previously attempt]
- ❖ Important to take intent to commit suicide seriously and provide necessary mental health treatment
- ❖ Important to consider the ecological context of the behavior

Among all 18-24 year olds who committed suicide:

- ❖ **1 in 5 occurred on the same day as an acute life crisis**
- ❖ **1 in 4 occurred within 2 weeks**
- ❖ **Approx. 46% occurred either on the same day or within 2 weeks of a life crisis**

- ❖ **Important because impulsiveness of suicide**
 - ◆ **Crucial to provide immediate help**
 - ◆ **Develop means for students in crisis to cope, provide safe haven, ensure support system in place**
 - ◆ **Given time frame, most will use most available method for self-harm**

Among all 18-24 year olds who committed suicide:

Time between injury and death

- ❖ **Immediate in 26% of cases**
- ❖ **Under 2 hours in over 50% of cases**
 - ◆ **Important to seek care & emergency response immediately**
 - ◆ **Important to limit access to means**
- ❖ **66% occurred at the victim's residence**
 - ◆ **Important for parents to be vigilant of home environment - pertaining to both the individual at-risk as well as access to means**

Big 10 University Suicide Study (1980-1990)

Methods of Suicide

Big Ten Suicide Study: E Code by Class Year

E Code	Class Year					Total
	Fresh	Soph	Jun	Sen	Grad	
950 Chemical Poisoning	3 (11%)	8 (20%)	9 (18%)	7 (13%)	30 (36%)	57 (22%)
952 Gas	5 (18%)	3 (8%)	7 (14%)	9 (16%)	4 (5%)	28 (11%)
953 Hanging/Asphyx.	6 (21%)	8 (20%)	6 (12%)	11 (20%)	15 (18%)	46 (18%)
954 Drowning					2 (2%)	2 (1%)
955 Firearms	6 (21%)	12 (30%)	17 (34%)	21 (38%)	17 (20%)	73 (28%)

Big Ten Suicide Study: E Code by Class Year

E Code	Class Year					Total
	Fresh	Soph	Jun	Sen	Grad	
956 Knife	1 (4%)	1 (3%)		1 (2%)	1 (1%)	4 (2%)
957 Jumping	4 (14%)	6 (15%)	3 (6%)	3 (5%)	6 (7%)	22 (9%)
958 Vehicle/Elect.	1 (4%)		1 (2%)	2 (4%)	3 (4%)	7 (3%)
Unknown	2 (7%)	2 (5%)	7 (14%)	2 (4%)	6 (7%)	19 (7%)
Total	28	40	50	56	84	258

Postsecondary students:

- ❖ **58% suffocation or hanging**
- ❖ **34% guns**

Non-postsecondary students:

- ❖ **54% guns**
- ❖ **34% suffocation or hanging**
- ❖ **Other: poison**

Primary Means Considered

Method	Percentage
Overdose	51.07
Combined method	35.17
Cutting	25.69
Motor vehicle	16.21
Gun	14.68
Jumping	13.15
Other	9.17
Hanging	7.65
Carbon monoxide	3.98
Declined to answer	3.98

Brownson, 2006

- ❖ **Youth depression & alcohol**
 - ◆ Drinkers 2X more likely to be depressed
 - ◆ “Binge” drinkers 4X more likely

- ❖ **Suicide & alcohol: individuals**
 - ◆ 68% of serious suicide attempts give evidence of alcohol or substance abuse

- ❖ **Suicide & alcohol: environment**
 - ◆ As alcohol consumption rises, suicide mortality rates increase