



Suicide Prevention on College Campuses

Suicide Prevention Grantee Orientation
Meeting

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Crisis on Campus

- Mental health issues are increasing
 - 45% of students self-report depression – depression is believed to be one of the strongest predictors of not graduating from college
 - Depression doubled, suicidal ideation tripled, sexual assault quadrupled over 13 years
 - 91% of counseling center directors believe that students with significant psychological problems are a growing concern on campus
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among college-age students
 - More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from all medical illnesses combined
 - The majority of college suicides are students who were not seen by the counseling service
 - Only 13% of students report receiving suicide prevention information from their college



Barriers To Progress

- Senior management lack of awareness
- Inflexible infrastructure
- No one in charge of wellness
- Poor use of potentially available psychiatric resources
- Departmental “silo effect”
- Legal blur
- Lack of urgency in dealing with highest risk students
- Insurance policy weakness



**What Changes Need to
Happen on Campus to
Save Lives?**



Requires Cultural Change

- Senior administrative awareness and support is critical for cultural change
 - Willingness to reallocate resources to reduce stigma of help-seeking behavior and increase access to services
 - Address the legal barriers that stop many colleges from establishing proactive programming
 - Obtain and maintain appropriate training regarding confidentiality exceptions
 - Clarify and/or institute policies regarding parental notification



Requires Multiple Strategies

- Multi-pronged, preventive approach is needed to reduce depression and campus suicides as well as enhance the overall mental health well being of the student body
- Suggest combination of a high-risk approach and population-based, prevention programs



Building an Effective Safety Net

- Designate leadership to direct the program building efforts
 - Create a new, senior-level administrative position that is in charge of overall student health and well-being (e.g., university health commissioner) to lead this process
 - Organize a mental health task force or committee consisting of representatives of students and departments across campus to examine mental health issues and services
 - Encourage the creation and involvement of a student mental health advocacy group in this process



Building an Effective Safety Net (cont'd)

- Market research – assess your current situation and identify areas for improvement
 - Survey your students to understand the landscape of mental health issues on your campus
 - Survey your students to understand their perception of mental health services on campus; repeat yearly to observe trends and determine progress
 - Survey your peer institutions to learn best practices, compare capabilities
- Allocate resources
- Ensure coordination and communication across various departments and organizations on campus

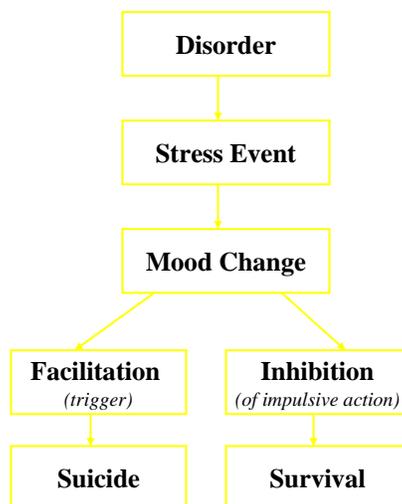


Example Market Research Questions

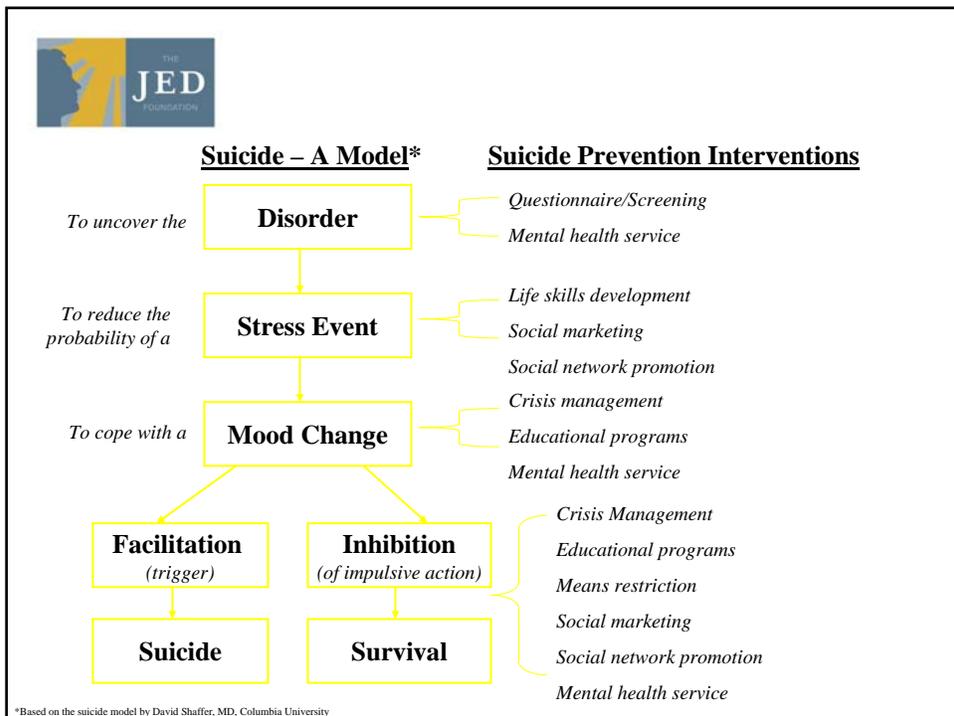
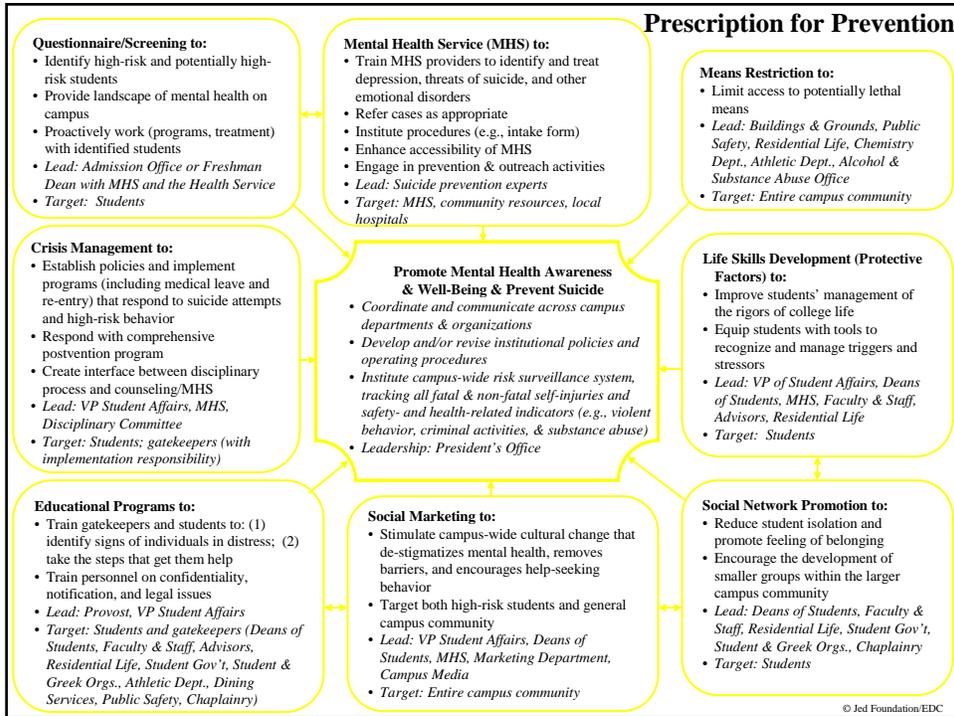
- What do students think about the offerings of the counseling service on their campus?
- How does the offerings of the college counseling center compare to those of peer institutions (e.g., number of FTE, range of services offered, etc.)
- What are the range of emotional disorders present on a particular college campus?
- What is the mental health profile of the first-year class?
- Who are the students at-risk for suicide?



Suicide – A Model*



*Based on the suicide model by David Shaffer, MD, Columbia University





Essential Program Elements

- On-site client-centered counseling and psychiatric services
- Means restriction
- Mental health surveys (pre- and post-enrollment)
- Social network promotion
- Social marketing
- Educational programs and materials
- Stress-reduction programs
- Life skills development
- Non-clinical student support network
- Medical leave policies and re-entry after medical leave
- Postvention programs



Jed Foundation Initiatives

- Ulifeline (www.ulifeline.org)
- Framework for Developing Institutional Protocols for the Acutely-Distressed or Suicidal College Student
- University Pilot Program to Promote Mental Health and Prevent Suicide
- Social Marketing Campaign with mtvU
- CampusCare
- Study Abroad Brochure
- Understanding Depressive and Bipolar Disorders (www.UDBD.org)
- APA Collaboration with The Jed Foundation on Transition from High School to College
- Adapting AAS/SPRC Core Competencies Training Course for the college mental health professional audience
- Depression Screening Initiative with New York City



Ulifeline (www.ulifeline.org)

- Available at more than 580 colleges
- Free, Internet-based resource that provides information to students about mental health and the signs and symptoms of emotional problems
- Customized site for each school with direct link to college counseling center
- Includes the Self E-Valuator, a screening tool developed by Duke University exclusively available on Ulifeline



Ulifeline (www.ulifeline.org)

- New ULifeline launching in early 2006
 - Goes beyond students – includes a new section for counselors and administrators
 - Data (Self E-Valuator, Web traffic)
 - **8,413 Self E-Valuator screening initiated over past 9 months, of which 73% were completed**
 - Resource library
 - Survey tool
 - Fact Sheets
 - National Directory
 - Improved student features (student polls, personal stories)



UDBD.org

- Understanding Depressive and Bipolar Disorders (UDBD.org)
 - Free website designed to help college counseling and other healthcare professionals learn to better distinguish between depressive disorders (unipolar depression) and bipolar disorders in the college population
 - Provides information about these mood disorders and the key questions to ask when evaluating students
 - Includes useful tools, such as tips for differentiating among types of depression and case studies



CampusCare

- Joint initiative of The Jed Foundation and SPRC
- Provide collaborative, consulting services to colleges on an individual basis regarding mental health promotion and suicide prevention
- Currently developing the protocols for this unique service offering, including strategic planning and implementation technical assistance



Protocol Framework

- No consensus about what constitutes a comprehensive, campus-wide approach to managing an acutely-distressed or suicidal student
- Expert roundtable convened in November; co-sponsored by ACHA, ACPA, AUCCCD, and NASPA
- Document will address the following topics: 1) Developing a safety protocol for the student at risk for suicide; 2) Developing an emergency contact notification protocol; 3) Developing a medical leave of absence and re-entry protocol; and 4) Disseminating and providing education around protocols
- Every college will be able to develop protocols specific to its culture and resources based on the final framework



Clinical Core Competencies

- Adapted **Clinical Skills Core Competencies Curriculum for Mental Health Professionals Working with Individuals at Risk for Suicide**, a new course developed by AAS and SPRC, for college mental health professionals
- More than 100 college counseling center directors participated in October 2005 course pilot
- Planning additional course presentations beginning in Spring 2006



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