Using Surveillance Data from Youth-Serving Public Systems

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Agenda

• Identify how suicide surveillance data from juvenile justice, child welfare, and public behavioral health systems can enhance suicide prevention efforts.

• Identify needs and opportunities to accessing and using suicide-related data from these systems.

• Identify future needs: What additional information would be useful to you as you engage in data sharing in these systems?
Poll: For which of the following systems do you currently have access to suicide-related data?

- Juvenile Justice
- Child Welfare
- Public Behavioral Health
Poll: If you HAVE access, how have you used the data? If you DON’T have access, how might you use this data?

- Assess Program Impact
- Enhance Prevention Planning
- Motivate for Action
- Focus Quality Improvement
Background

✓ Youth in juvenile justice, child welfare, and public behavioral health systems can have a large number of suicide-related risk factors.

✓ But… State suicide prevention efforts haven’t historically known much about:
  ✓ How to connect with these systems
  ✓ Suicide-related data availability and quality in these systems
SPRC-Related Resources

In response, SPRC has developed two resources:

1. “Breaking Down Barriers: Using Youth Suicide-Related Surveillance Data from State Systems” (report)

2. Suicide Surveillance Success Stories (series)
Breaking Down Barriers
Breaking Down Barriers: Using Youth Suicide-Related Surveillance Data from State Systems

Purpose:

• Explore availability and utility of suicide surveillance data from youth-serving state systems.

• Offer recommendations and resources for working with surveillance data from youth-serving systems.

Report audience: Garrett Lee Smith state grantees and their partners
Breaking Down Barriers: Using Youth Suicide-Related Surveillance Data from State Systems

Methods:

- Key informant interviews with state administrators
- Survey of Garrett Lee Smith grantees
- Review of archival data, including Garrett Lee Smith state grant proposals
Findings

Existing Resources:
Availability as a Barrier

• Narrative data

  “…Narrative data may include personally identifiable information and is often not easily aggregated, so preparing this data for sharing and/or surveillance use may be too time-consuming to be practical.”

• Informal sharing agreements

• Lack of system resources
Availability as a Barrier: Sample Recommendations

• Understand what data exist and develop a vision for how you’d like to use it.

• Articulate how shared data may be mutually beneficial, focusing on the positive impacts for all partner organizations.
Data Quality as a Barrier

• Lack of standardized definitions

• “…inconsistencies may be present even with a single state system; for example, a state’s privately run jails may have different suicide-related data collection protocols and definitions than the state’s prison or probation system.”

• Inconsistent reporting

• Difficulty tracking youth
Data Quality as a Barrier: Sample Recommendations

• Consult with partners to enhance their ability to collect quality data.

• Enhance connections between existing suicide surveillance groups (e.g. Child Death Review) and youth-serving state systems.
Share your story!

• How has availability impacted your use of surveillance data from these systems?
• What about data quality?

• What tools/resources have you found to be helpful?

• Questions??
Sample Worksheet

WORKSHEET 1: Before Connecting with Partner Agencies to Explore Data-Sharing Possibilities

1. Assess your current relationship with the identified partner.
   a. Do you have an existing relationship? What existing linkages already exist?
   b. Which stakeholders/agency leaders from that state system need to be brought on board to generate approval for data sharing? Which stakeholders/agency leaders can facilitate data-sharing agreements (e.g., are there in-system champions, agency personnel with connections to the suicide field)? How can they be brought on board?

2. Develop a clear vision of your data-related needs.
   a. What kind of suicide-related data would you be looking to receive (e.g., deaths, attempts, ideation)?
Barrier: Efforts are not System-Wide

- Need for efforts that have adequate delivery and reach.
- “…limited prevention efforts that do not result in systems change and have less reach should not expect that system-level data, even if it is accessible, will demonstrate change.”
Barrier: Efforts are Not System-Wide
Sample Recommendations

• Conduct an environmental scan to understand the extent of existing prevention efforts in these systems.

• Use a systems-level prevention approach.
Share your story!

- Who is involved with implementing change to a system as a whole?
  - How have you used related data for evaluation?

- If you’re not working with the whole system, how have you used the data?

- What tools/resources have you found to be helpful?

- Questions??
Barrier: Interpreting Trends with Small Numbers

- Small number of suicides, particularly in small systems, makes it difficult to interpret trends over time.
  
  “…If we make major changes to our prevention efforts because of a chance fluctuation in a small population, we will be constantly shifting our prevention plans, when in fact these changes are likely random and not connected to the success or failure of our efforts.”

- Unintentional personal identifiers can also be a concern when working with small numbers.
Barrier: Interpreting Trends with Small Numbers

Sample Recommendations

• Consider using alternative measures to triangulate findings.

• Consider combining data points over time to increase the number of suicide-events.

• Use small numbers to inform quality improvement efforts.
Share your story!

• How has interpreting trends with small numbers impacted your use of surveillance data from these systems?

• What tools/resources have you found to be helpful?

• Questions??
What’s Next?

What other barriers exist to accessing and using surveillance data from youth-serving public systems?

What other solutions/resources would you like to share?

What technical assistance would be helpful as you continue to work to access and use data from these systems?
Resources


Suicide Prevention Resource Center. *Suicide Surveillance Strategies for American Indian and Alaska Native Communities.* Waltham, MA: Education Development Center, Inc. (expected release in Spring 2018)

*Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Surveillance Success Stories.* These stories detail how states and/or counties have partnered with public behavioral health systems to collect and use suicide-related data:

- Kentucky: http://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/surveillance-success-stories-kentucky

www.sprc.org
Thank you!

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