Strategies & Challenges for Community Suicide Prevention: AF Suicide Prevention Program

A Model For Community & Organizational Approaches to Prevention

ADAF Suicide Rates

Pre-AFSPP Average = 13.8/100K
Post-AFSPP Average = 10.0/100K

AFSPP launched in late 1996

Data current as of 13 Nov 06
Implementation Strategies

- Embrace suicide prevention as organizational priority
  - Atmosphere of responsibility and accountability
- Clearly Articulated Vision:
  - Suicide prevention is a community responsibility
  - Leadership involvement essential for success
  - Affirm and encourage help-seeking behavior
- Prevention through early identification of and intervention
  - Requires widespread community knowledge & skills
- Organized around an integrated system of 11 initiatives
  - Integrated network of policy and education
  - Built upon existing organizational infrastructure & culture

Sustainment Issues & Challenges

- Sustaining success
- Living with new expectations of success
- Winning buy-in from all segments of community
- Overcoming stigma
- Continuous program refinement
- Succession of leadership issues
- Competing for resources in face of new priorities
- Explaining program components to newcomers
- Translating program into novel settings
Applications beyond the USAF

- USAF admittedly unique population
  - Initiatives can be required for all personnel
  - Organizational and community elements
  - Differences may be more superficial than substantive

- Results suggest that coordinated network of policy and education initiatives may be effective in decreasing suicide risk in a population

- Program may be particularly adaptable in workplace, university, or other organizational settings

QUESTIONS?
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