Adopting and Adapting Lessons Learned from ATOD, for use in Suicide Prevention and Awareness

The Wyoming Experience

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Using what we know to determine where to go...

WYOMING SUICIDE PREVENTION MULTI-LEVEL APPROACH
- Statewide strategic planning through participatory empowerment
- Community needs assessment using existing data around risk and protective factors
- System focused change through environmental strategies
- Developing targeted messaging with individual level input
Get out your CLICKERS!!!

As a frontier state, Wyoming has how many people per square mile?

A. 46.7
B. 22.2
C. 9.8
D. 4.6
E. 1.2
Wyoming - General Characteristics of the State

• Wyoming is “a small town with very long streets”
• 9th largest state
• Least populous -- 522,000 people
• Frontier state -- 4.6 persons per square mile
• Half the state is owned by state or federal government
• “Cowboy Up” culture hinders help-seeking
• 2/3 of Wyoming citizens believe treatment for suicidal thoughts is socially stigmatizing
Wyoming Suicide Facts

• 4\textsuperscript{th} highest suicide rate nationally (1999-2007) at 19.24 per 100,000

• Nation’s \textbf{highest rate of household gun ownership} (59.7%)
  ➢ 65.7% of suicide deaths were by firearm

• 3\textsuperscript{rd} highest youth completion rate (1999-2006) at 20.63 per 100,000 for ages 15-24

• 2\textsuperscript{nd} \textbf{leading cause of death} for Wyoming youth (after auto accidents)

• \textbf{Two contagion episodes in 2009} in Cheyenne and Casper
History of Suicide Prevention in Wyoming

- 1998 Reno Conference
- 1999 Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent Suicide
- Late 1990s State of Wyoming Suicide Prevention Task Force Forms
- Early 2000s Wyoming State Task Force & Mental Health Division Draft State Suicide Prevention Plan
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- 2004 Congress Passes Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act
- 2005 Wyoming Legislature Passes Suicide Prevention Legislation W.S. § 9-2-102(a) (v)
- July 2005 – State Suicide Prevention Program Begins in MHD

- August 2006 Wyoming Awarded GLSMA Youth Suicide Prevention Grant (Cohort II Grantee)
- August 2006 First Strategic Planning Retreat of State Task Force
- October 2006 Wyoming Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative Begins & WYSPAC Formed

- August 2009 Wyoming Awarded GLSMA Youth Suicide Prevention Grant (Cohort V Grantee)
- 2007 5-Year Strategic Plan Developed
- 2009 State Task Force & WYSPAC Merged into WysPAC
- October 2009 Wyoming Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative Re-Funded
Wyoming has Statutorily Required Suicide Prevention Program

ARTICLE 1 - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

9-2-102. Department of health; duties and responsibilities; state grants.

(a) The department of health is the state mental health authority, the developmental disabilities authority and the substance abuse authority. The department through its divisions has the following duties and responsibilities to:

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(v) Establish a statewide suicide prevention program that includes:

(A) A statewide written plan adopted by the department following at least one (1) statewide public meeting of interested persons and entities;

(B) Assistance to local communities in the development and maintenance of suicide prevention coalitions;

(C) Consultation, technical assistance and training to state and local agencies, organizations and professional groups;

(D) Maintenance of a library of suicide prevention materials and information which shall include copies of or links to Cochrane collaboration systematic reviews or other similar sources relevant to this subject;

(E) Collection and dissemination of information regarding best practices for suicide prevention and intervention.
Social Ecological Model

- Individual
- Family
- Peers
- Schools / Workplace
- Community
- Society

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Core Prevention

• Data-Driven Decisions (SPF SIG Needs Assessments)
• Evidence-Based Practices
• Environmental Change Strategies
• Strong Evaluative Component
Get out your CLICKERS!!!

The SPF Model stands for

A. Super prevention families
B. Strategic prevention framework
C. Suicide prevention factors
D. Source of prevention factors
Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) MODEL

- Potential Influences
- Needs Assessment
- Evidence Based Strategy
- Evaluation
- Implementation Plan
Needs Assessment Workbook

Process

• Each Pilot Community
  - Baseline measures pulled by evaluator
  - Comparison communities identified

• Based on Suicide Risk and Protective Factors (RPF)

• Secondary baseline data identified for each RPF

• Formal Assessment with their Coalition
  local data pulled locally

• Evaluator visits sites to assist in gathering
  local data after 6 – 8 weeks
Welcome!

The Sheridan County Suicide Prevention Coalition is a group of mental health professionals, teachers, social workers, clergy, lay persons, and other individuals who care about the impact of suicide on our community. The Wyoming Department of Health and Northern Wyoming Mental Health Center sponsor our efforts.

One of our goals is to provide comprehensive, compassionate insight into suicide prevention. Some of our members are qualified to train people to recognize and take the first steps in helping suicidal individuals. If you are in crisis, please dial 911.

We are also dedicated to helping those who have lost loved ones to suicide become whole again. We facilitate the Hope & Healing Support Group and maintain a list of local mental health professionals for referral.
Pressroom

Suicide intervention always worthwhile
Park County Pilot Project: Initial Goals

- Assess capacity and needs in Park County, especially focusing on stigma
- Build capacity of key players
- Decrease stigma associated with mental health issues
- Enhance early intervention and referral systems
- Build youth resilience by partnering with schools and after-school providers
- Decrease risk factors associated with youth suicide through means reduction and improved education within the local schools
- Expanded suicide prevention education
- Increased suicide prevention training for mental health professionals
Sources of Strength: Shifting Teen Social Norms to Counter Risk for Suicide

Positive Community Norms Model

Leadership

Communication

Integration

Intermediate Variables

"The Black Box"

Implemented Across the Social Ecology

Why Leadership, Communication and Integration?

Positive community norms require attention to both actions and outcomes.

Proponents of social learning theory believe that actions lead to outcomes that are observed and imitated by others who wish to learn. If we want to be successful in prevention, we need to develop strong leadership skills.

If we want to improve outcomes, we need to have immediate access to the systems that support the health needs of others. This means increasing our knowledge and improving our communication skills.

There is no single solution for "setting the mood" for a health behavior. This requires a combination of strategies and social influences. Integration is a focus on understanding the interdependence between these solutions.

Why do you think leadership, communication, and integration are crucial in implementing social norms? How do you believe these elements can be strengthened in communities to promote positive health behaviors?
Get out your CLICKERS!!!

Based on the data, what was the most common risk factor in Wyoming communities?

A. Access to lethal means  
B. Lack of access to mental health services  
C. Stigma related to seeking help  
D. High wind speeds
Common approaches

• Messages generally DO:
  – Promote help-seeking behavior
  – Promote available resources
  – Emphasize mental illness is treatable

• Concerns around messaging:
  – Provide statistics that may ‘normalize’ suicide
  – Many fail to specify what to do and how to do it
  – Most target the ‘general public’
  – Many not connected to a larger, more comprehensive program
Decrease stigma associated with mental health issues

- Developed a questionnaire to identify gaps in perception between personal beliefs and behaviors and “what most people believe/do”
- Contracted with Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center to conduct the telephone survey
- Contracted with MSU Most of Us to develop positive media campaign
- Attended training in the positive community norms model
Social Norms: Key Terms

Norm

The actual behavior or attitude of the majority of a population; what most people do or believe.

Perceived Norm

The perceived behavior or perceived attitude of most people; what we think most people do or believe.
Get out your CLICKERS!!!

What do you believe **most people** had for lunch today?

A. Beef  
B. Chicken  
C. Vegetarian  
D. Pork  
E. Fish/Seafood
Get out your CLICKERS!!!

What did **YOU** have for lunch today?

A. Beef  
B. Chicken  
C. Vegetarian  
D. Pork  
E. Fish/Seafood
Social Norms Theory

The Norm
The actual behavior or attitude of the majority of a population; what most people do or believe.

The Perceived Norm
The perceived behavior or perceived attitude of most people; what we think most people do or believe.

The GAP

“How often do you smoke?"

“How often do most students in your school smoke?”

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I would be comfortable telling a friend or family member if I feel I needed professional help for suicidal thoughts.
Message Development

- Identify the gaps
- Identify the targeted population
- Hold focus groups with target population
  - (White male attempt survivors, 35-54)
- Determine how to reach and with what message
- Pilot the message with follow up focus groups to evaluate
- Refine
Messaging for the Middle-Aged Man

Photo Voice Project
The Rock for Life program was developed by James Goeke to help youth struggling with the challenges of life through the sharing of his music and personal story. James is a survivor of many years of self-harm and suicidal feelings, as well as a severe suicide attempt as a youth. He shares his personal struggles and how he got through them with the help of music and a determination to never quit.

From his own experiences and extensive suicide prevention training, James speaks with his audience about how to successfully help themselves and others through a suicide crisis. James has brought his Rock for Life program and its message of hope and triumph over personal tragedy to many schools and youth groups in Wyoming.

James believes that success and happiness are the best suicide prevention. In addition to teaching youth key suicide intervention and prevention skills, the Rock for Life program introduces youth to a concept called “Personal Alignment,” the main points of which are to understand yourself, have a goal, welcome challenges, stop and think, and never give up no matter what. James sings and performs original rock songs that highlight the key teaching points of the presentation. These powerful songs are about struggling with life’s ups and downs, overcoming emotional challenges, and “celebrating sadness.”

For more information on the Rock for Life program, contact:
James Goeke
(207) 221-2209
joeke@lodisun.net

A few words from James:

“Growing up on the streets of New York, I witnessed and experienced a lot of violence. I didn’t have the tools to sort out what I felt or to deal with how it all affected me. As a teenager, people constantly asked me, ‘What’s wrong with you?’ After a while, through enough repetition and conditioning, I began to ask myself the same thing. High levels of frustration over a long period of time wore me down. I was internally angry and sad as my life became more and more stressful. When I was at my lowest, I was on the top of the world. Through the pressures of my life seemed unbearable, I found my way through. And having survived, I left behind rivers of tears, a lot of broken walls, and more than a few pizza boxes where I almost said goodbye forever.

“Ask me how I can and look back on everything. I realize now how precious life is. I knew it in my heart even as a kid – I just didn’t have the tools to express it. Even though I have accomplished most of my lifelong goals, I know I am still a work in progress. A huge part of trying to make my life a masterpiece is to help young people who are going through the same desperate feelings that I had throughout much of my life. I often think how blessed I am that I never gave up and made it out on life’s best experiences. My greatest hope is that others can learn from my life and my music, and can come through their darkest hour to see that life really is worth living.”

Click here to listen to James’ song, “All the Tears.”
Living Art Project
Grace for 2 Brothers Foundation is a non-profit (non-profit status pending) foundation outreach center for suicide prevention & survivors of suicide. Created after the death of my sons, Brett and Beau, who completed suicide at the ages of 19 (Brett) and 26 (Beau).

I will NOT go quietly...

Save the Date
August 13, 2011
Walk of Grace
Lions Park Amphitheatre

August 14, 2011
3rd Annual Grace For 2 Brothers Memorial Golf Tournament
READ THE ISSUE ONLINE:

RESILIENCY: What does it look like?

CONTROLLING ONE’S OWN BEHAVIOR:
Self-adjusting one’s personal performance by planning ahead and evaluating success after completing a task.

GOOD ATTITUDES AND EMOTIONS:
Persevering to success, applying problem solving in tough situations, fostering feelings of stamina and hardiness.

POSITIVE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:
With parents, teachers, relatives, neighbors and peers who mentor a youth, are supportive and show they care.

FEELINGS OF COMPETENCE:
In academics, athletics, the arts or other areas, based on their past successes and notable achievements.

“My part-time job gives me money for college.”

“If I try, I will succeed.”

“He listens without judging, helps me, and is fair.”

“My study time really paid off during finals.”

wdh.state.wy.us/mhsa/prevention/wspiindex.html

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WY Suicide Prevention Website:
http://wdh.state.wy.us/mhsa/prevention/suicideindex.html
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- **‘Brain on Drugs’ image.** Partnership for a Drug-Free America. [http://www.drugfree.org/](http://www.drugfree.org/)
- **If you know someone with thoughts of suicide…** [http://www.hopeline.com/](http://www.hopeline.com/)
- **When it seems like there’s no hope poster.** National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. [http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Materials/Default.aspx](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Materials/Default.aspx)
- **Life Happens poster.** Regis University. [http://peoplepreventsuicide.org/spiritual-leaders/](http://peoplepreventsuicide.org/spiritual-leaders/)