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NYSCHA Annual Meeting

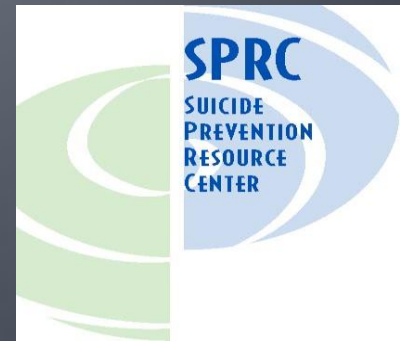
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Wednesday, October 24, 2012

Postvention as a Prevention Tool: Developing a Comprehensive Campus Response to Prevent Suicide Contagion



UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER

University at Albany State University of New York



SPRC
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
RESOURCE
CENTER

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will define postvention and its critical role in addressing and preventing suicide contagion;
- 2.
3. Participants will identify five key stakeholders critical to the development, implementation, and evaluation of postvention protocols on their campuses;
4. Participants will identify and know how to address two key postvention issues – utilizing social media after a student suicide and planning memorial services - with an aim to prevent suicide contagion.

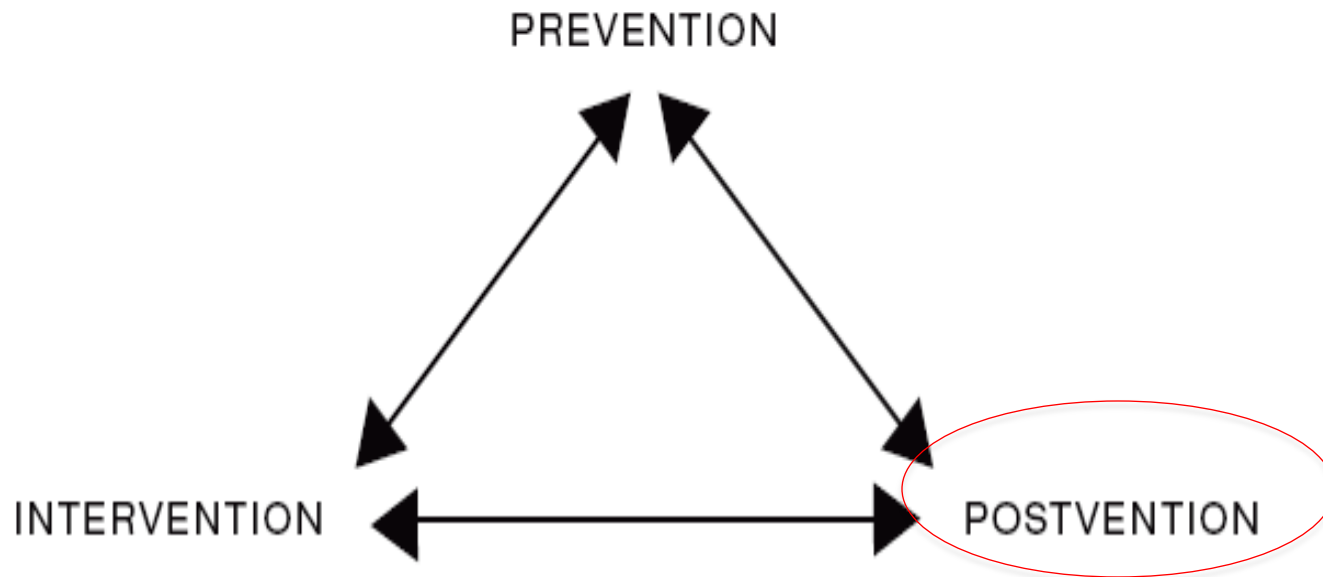
What is Postvention?

Postvention as a Prevention Tool

A Few Definitions

- “The provision of crisis intervention and other support after a suicide has occurred to address and alleviate possible effects of suicide.” (SPRC Postvention Workgroup Definition)
- “... interventions occurring after a tragedy.” (Meilman, 2006)
- “The goal of postvention is to reduce the negative impact of a suicide on ‘survivors.’” (Cerel, & Campbell, 2008)

Postvention is Prevention



“ Planning around one component impacts the planning (and ultimately the effectiveness) of the other two areas.”

(The Jed Foundation, 2006)

Implementing and Evaluating Postvention Efforts

A Protocol is Key

Developing a Protocol



<http://www.jedfoundation.org/professionals/programs-and-research/framework>

Considerations for Developing a Protocol

- First responders
- Communications with the campus community
- Communications with the media

Considerations for Developing a Protocol

- Types of support services
- Targeted outreach
- Debriefing with staff
- Lack of established protocol

Making the Most of Your Protocol

- During protocol development:
 - Include a broad base of stakeholders
 - Define the terminology you will use
 - Consider the ethnic, racial, cultural, and spiritual diversity of your student body

(The Jed Foundation, 2006)

Making the Most of Your Protocol

- Implementation:
 - Determine how you will disseminate and educate the campus community on protocol
 - Identify a “point person(s)” to respond to all questions about the protocol
 - Engage in regular table-top exercises
 - Develop a revision plan

(The Jed Foundation, 2006)

Special Issues in Postvention

Addressing Student, Campus, & Community Needs

Safe Reporting Guidelines

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPORTING ON SUICIDE

Developed in collaboration with: American Association of Suicidology, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Annenberg Public Policy Center, Associated Press Managing Editors, Canterbury Suicide Project - University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand, Columbia University Department of Psychiatry, ConnectSafely.org, Emotion Technology, International Association for Suicide Prevention Task Force on Media and Suicide, Medical University of Vienna, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Institute of Mental Health, National Press Photographers Association, New York State Psychiatric Institute, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Suicide Awareness Voices of Education, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and UCLA School of Public Health, Community Health Sciences.



IMPORTANT POINTS FOR COVERING SUICIDE

- More than 50 research studies worldwide have found that certain types of news coverage can increase the likelihood of suicide in vulnerable individuals. The magnitude of the increase is related to the amount, duration and prominence of coverage.
- Risk of additional suicides increases when the story explicitly describes the suicide method, uses dramatic/graphic headlines or images, and repeated/extensive coverage sensationalizes or glamorizes a death.
- Covering suicide carefully, even briefly, can change public misperceptions and correct myths, which can encourage those who are vulnerable or at risk to seek help.

Suicide is a public health issue. Media and online coverage of suicide should be informed by using best practices. Some suicide deaths may be newsworthy. However, the way media cover suicide can influence behavior negatively by contributing to contagion or positively by encouraging help-seeking.

• **Suicide Contagion or “Copycat Suicide”**
occurs when one or more suicides are reported in a way that contributes to another suicide.

References and additional information can be found at: www.ReportingOnSuicide.org.

<http://reportingonsuicide.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/Recommendations14.pdf>

Working with the Media

- Sticking to protocol
- Preparation of materials prior to an incident
- Teachable moments

Postvention and Social Media

- Distribution of information and resources
- Monitoring student and campus response to a student suicide
- Collaboration with family to:
 - Ensure that families monitor deceased student's social networking sites
 - Bypass privacy settings that might prohibit interventions
- Awareness of Facebook guidelines on reporting suicidal online activity

Planning & Hosting Memorials

- Memorials for other types of deaths
- Multiple suicides
- Input from family
- Ensuring safe messaging
- Other ways to honor the deceased

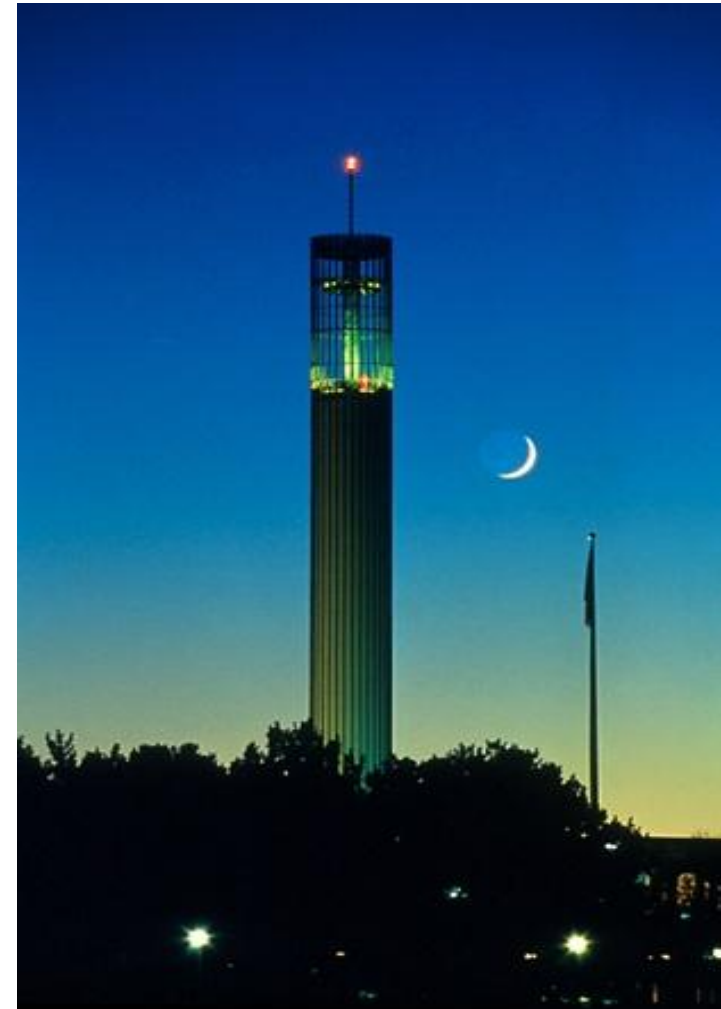
A Case Example

Addressing Student Suicide through Postvention



University at Albany Profile

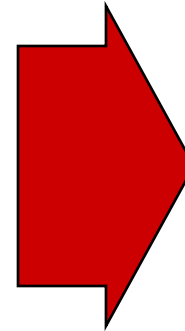
- University Center within 64-campus SUNY System
- Urban Setting
- Research University
- NCAA Division I
- Students:
 - Undergraduates - 13,457
 - Graduate Students - 4,977
- Faculty:
- Employees:
- Degree Programs:
 - Undergraduate - 61
 - Masters - 89
 - Doctorate - 39





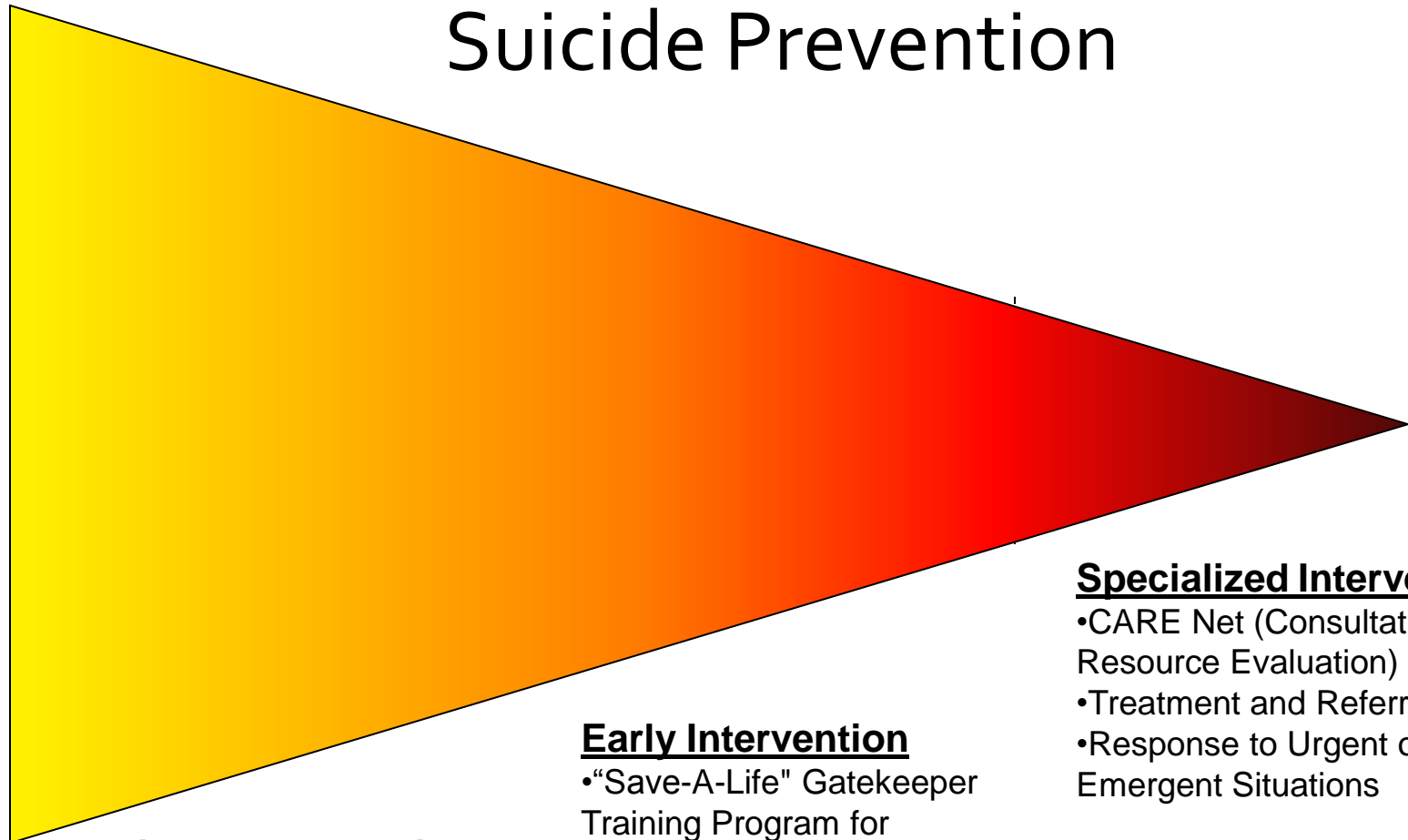
of UAlbany Comprehensive Prevention Program

- ✓ **Presidential Leadership**
- ✓ **Campus Task Force: "BRisk"**
- ✓ **Student Involvement/Leadership**
- ✓ **Social Marketing/Social Norms**
- ✓ **Campus-Community Partnerships**
- ✓ **Education**
- ✓ **Gatekeeper Training**
- ✓ **Early Intervention**
- ✓ **Policy Evaluation/Enforcement**
- ✓ **Parental Involvement**
- ✓ **Treatment & Referral**
- ✓ **Research and Program Evaluation**



Comprehensive Program

Spectrum of Intervention Response: Suicide Prevention



Universal Prevention

- Stigma Reduction Media Campaign
- Peer Services (Peer Education and Hotline Services)
- Educational Brochures

Early Intervention

- “Save-A-Life” Gatekeeper Training Program for Faculty, Staff, and Students
- PRISM (Proximate Risk Index and Screening Measure) Screenings
- Consultations with faculty, staff, students, and parents

Specialized Interventions

- CARE Net (Consultation and Resource Evaluation) Program
- Treatment and Referral
- Response to Urgent or Emergent Situations



The STEPS Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Program Model

Sustaining Student Success

Preventing Suicide Risk Behaviors & Promoting Healthy Behaviors

Engaging Students, Faculty, Staff, & Families in Education About Suicide Prevention

Training Potential Campus Responders & Strengthening a Campus Comprehensive Care Network

Screening and Early Intervention for Students at Risk for Suicide and Related Risk Factors

“Partnerships Working to Prevent Student Suicide... One Step at a Time”



Areas for Postvention

- Student death and other serious campus incidents
 - Response guided by *Responding to Students in Crisis* protocol
- Suicide/homicide attempt or incident in which intent is evident
 - Response guided by *CARE Net (Consultation and Resource Evaluation) Program* protocol



Responding to Students in Crisis

- 1) Provide support and assistance to the students in crisis and to insure their safety and the safety of others.
- 2) Respond, as confidentiality regulations permit, to persons or groups such as:
 - a. the student's parents, legal guardians, and/or significant others,
 - b. the student's friends, roommates, suitemates, and hall residents,
 - c. various University offices to provide services and support to the student and other affected members of the University community,
 - d. the University and Albany communities, as appropriate.
- 3) Address system-wide issues surrounding the crisis.
- 4) Work toward the prevention of similar crises in the future.



Responding to Student in Crisis

Key Elements

- Confidentiality
- Judgment
- Coordination
- Support



The CARE Net Program: Postvention for Suicide Risk

- Assess present suicide risk
- Evaluate student's willingness and ability to refrain from threatened and actual self-injurious behaviors
- Provide consultation regarding recommended psychiatric, psychological, and educational services



The CARE Net Program: Postvention for Suicide Risk

- Minimize disruption of normal functioning for roommates and suitemates in the residence community
- Augment existing crisis intervention services, psychological treatment resources, and consultation with Residential Life staff and students



Addressing Suicide Contagion: Spring 2011

Timeline

- February 2011
- April 2011
- May 2011
- Fall 2011
- Spring 2012
- Future Prevention Efforts

Thank You!



Questions?

Resources

- **University at Albany Crisis Protocol and Postvention Materials:**
http://www.albany.edu/studentaffairs/faculty/albany_only/
- **Postvention Workshop Session at the 2009 GLS Grantee Meeting:**
<http://www.sprc.org/grantees/campus/2009/agenda010909.asp>
- **CDC Recommendations for a Community Plan for the Prevention and Containment of Suicide Clusters:** <http://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/prevguid/p0000214/p0000214.asp>
- Centre for Suicide Prevention. **School Memorials After a Suicide: Helpful or Harmful?:** Available by request at <http://suicideinfo.ca/AboutUs/ContactUs.aspx>
- Cerel, J. , & Campbell, F. (2008). Suicide survivors seeking mental health services: A preliminary examination of the role of an active postvention model. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 38(1), 30-34.
- Clinician Survivor Task Force. **Clinicians as Survivors: After a Suicide Loss:** http://mypage.iusb.edu/~jmcintos/therapists_mainpg.htm
- Georgia Institute of Technology. **When the Whistle Blows:** <http://www.whenthewhistleblows.gatech.edu/>
- Harvard School of Public Health. **Means Matter:** <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/>
- The Jed Foundation. **Framework for developing institutional protocols for the acutely distressed student:** <http://www.jedfoundation.org/professionals/programs-and-research/framework>
- Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program. **Media Guidelines for School Administrators Who May Interact with Reporters about Youth Suicide:** <http://www.maine.gov/suicide/professionals/program/mediaschool.htm>

Resources (continued)

- Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program. **Youth Suicide Prevention, Intervention & Postvention Guidelines: A Resource for School Personnel:** <http://www.maine.gov/suicide/docs/Guidelines%2010-2009--w%20discl.pdf>
- Meilman, P. W., & Hall, T. M. (2006). Aftermath of tragic events. The development and use of community support meetings on a university campus. *Journal of American College Health*, 54(6), 382-384.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. **How to Report Suicidal Users on Facebook:** http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/App_Files/Media/PDF/How%20to%20Report%20Suicidal%20Users%20on%20Facebook.pdf
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. **Lifeline Online Postvention Manual:** <http://www.sprc.org/library/LifelineOnlinePostventionManual.pdf>
- **Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide:** <http://reportingonsuicide.org>
- Sally Spencer-Thomas. **When Tragedy Strikes: Suicide Postvention on a College Campus:** <http://bereavedbysuicide.com/articles/postvention-programs/when-tragedy-strikes-suicide-postvention-on-a-college-campus/>
- SPAN USA & SPRC. **Guide to engaging the media in suicide prevention:** http://www.sprc.org/library/media_guide.pdf
- SPRC. **After a Suicide: Recommendations for Religious Services & Memorial Observances:** <http://www.sprc.org/library/aftersuicide.pdf>
- SPRC & AFSP. **After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools:** <http://sprc.org/afterasuicideforschools.asp>
- SPRC. **Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention:** <http://www.sprc.org/library/SafeMessagingfinal.pdf>

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