Texas A&M University - College Station

Grant Type: Garrett Lee Smith Campus
Grant Status: Active
Year Awarded: 2018
State: Texas

The Texas A&M University Department of Suicide Awareness and Prevention will develop a comprehensive, collaborative, well-coordinated approach to enhance efforts to reduce risk of suicide and substance-related death for over 63,000 Texas A&M students. Efforts include a mental health stigma-reduction campaign and training to improve the identification and referral of at-risk students so they can safely and successfully complete their studies. The project will serve the 63,000 Texas A&M students on the main campus, as well as an additional 5,000 distance learners located at special purpose campuses. Texas A&M is a Tier 1 research institution with a student population that is 57% White, 21% Hispanic, and 7% Asian. Texas A&M is consistently one of the top-ranking schools in the country for Veterans. A&M is also home to the Corps of Cadets, a leadership training program that commissions more military officers than any other institution with the exception of the nation’s service academies. The estimated rate of college student suicides is 7.5 per 100,000 students. This equates to between 4 and 5 deaths by suicide per year. With 9 deaths by suicide in calendar year 2017, the rate is nearly double the predicted number. The Student Counseling Service will take the lead in the creation of a campus-wide effort to collaborate in support of at-risk students. A comprehensive awareness campaign will focus on the availability of supportive resources to assist students both on and off campus. Existing Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper training will be provided with the goal of increasing capacity to train faculty, staff and students to identify and refer students that are in psychological distress. In addition, a 3-year license will be purchased for Kognito, an evidence-based computer simulation that teaches techniques to provide support to distressed students. This tool will be available for all faculty, staff and students. Project goals include the creation of a single point of coordination for campus-wide primary, secondary and tertiary response to reduce the risk of suicide on campus; to increase the capacity of students, faculty and staff to identify and support at-risk students; to increase the awareness of available services; and to form partnerships with student organizations that focus on student well-being. Objectives include holding meetings with community stakeholders, holding 2 general mental health and 2 suicide-specific awareness events, providing monthly promotion via email 100% of the Texas A&M faculty, and the provision of 5 trainings to the 180-member staff of Residence Life. Over the life of the grant, 100% of the student body and faculty will receive information about suicide prevention efforts and will have the opportunity to receive gatekeeper training. A projected 1,000 students will participate in suicide prevention events. Through this effort, the number of trained suicide prevention gatekeepers will double from 12,000 to 24,000.

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