Five Years Later: Assessing the Impact of the CARE Net (Consultation, and Resource Evaluation) Program on University Policy, Practice and the Long-Term Academic Success and Retention of Students who Present with Suicide Risk

Estela M. Rivero, Ph.D.
M. Dolores Cimini, Ph.D.
University at Albany, SUNY
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- Heidi R. Wright, Psy.D., Project Coordinator
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Learning Objectives

- Identify and understand the ways that key elements of the CARE Net Suicide Prevention Program have been developed and are being implemented.
- Identify the ways in which the CARE Net Suicide Prevention Program has been integrated into University policy and practice.
- Identify the ways in which the effectiveness of the CARE Net Suicide Prevention Program has been evaluated during the past five years, both in regard to short-term goals and objectives and long-term indices, such as student retention and impact on policy and practice.
- Explore the ways in which implementation and evaluation methods utilized within the CARE Net Suicide Prevention Program might be adapted to the needs of other campuses.

University at Albany Profile

- University Center, **64-campus System**
- **Urban Setting**
- Research University
- NCAA Division I

- **Students:**
  - Undergraduates: 12,457
  - Graduate Students: 4,977
- **Faculty:** 967
- **Employees:** 4,197

- **Degree Programs:**
  - Undergraduate: 61
  - Masters: 89
  - Doctorate: 39
The UAlbany Landscape

- “Seriously considered suicide”
  - 11 per 100 undergraduates
  - 4 per 100 graduate students

- “Attempted suicide” (non-lethal)
  - 2 per 100 undergraduates
  - 1 per 100 graduate students

Source: ACHA National College Health Assessment Spring 2008 Data (931 & 264 respondents)

The CARE Net Program
Context and Need for CARE Net

- National attention and incidence of college student suicide attempts
- Incidence of suicide attempts in UAlbany residence halls
- Disruptive effect of suicide attempts on residential community
- Need to address suicidal behavior in a just and timely manner using current psychological theory and proactive as well as appropriate due process

CARE Net Program Objectives

- 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
- 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
Key Referral Markers

- Student has threatened suicide verbally or in writing
- Student is making overt plans and preparations for suicide
- Student has deliberately caused serious injury to self

Referral Process

- Residential Life staff member refers student to Director of Residential Life
- Director of Residential Life refers student for CARE Net evaluation
  - CARE Net evaluation should be scheduled within 7 to 10 days of student referral
- Director of Residential Life contacts parents/ legal guardians of student upon referral to CARE Net
Where do I go for my appointment?

The Health and Counseling Building is located on the upper campus at the corner of University Drive West and Tri-Centennial Drive (next to Empire Commons and across from the Podium West Lot). The University Counseling Center is on the Second Floor. When you arrive for your appointment, check-in with the receptionist at the Front Desk.

Service Providers
CARE Net services are provided by licensed psychologists.

Cost
All University Counseling Center services have been paid as part of tuition and University fees.

Confidentiality
Clients are assured of confidentiality in accordance with ethical and legal standards. Student visits and conversations do not become part of the academic record.

Emergency Services
OFF-CAMPUS emergency:
Dial 911
Albany County Mobile Crisis Unit: (518) 447-9900

ON-CAMPUS emergency:
Dial 911 from a CAMPUS PHONE
Dial 442-111 or from a NON-CAMPUS PHONE

Non-Emergency Services
University Counseling Center
(518) 442-5400

Middle Earth Peer Hotline
(518) 442-5777

University Health Center
(518) 442-5259

What is CARE Net?

CARE Net stands for consultation and resource evaluation. It is a required program for students living in residence who display suicidal behavior. Suicidal behavior can be either a public suicide threat (verbally or in writing), evidence that a student is making plans or preparations for suicide, or serious self-inflicted injury.

The goal of CARE Net is to help you get the assistance and support you need after a display of suicidal behavior. Residential Life has referred you to CARE Net. Failure to complete this program will result in a referral to the Office of Conflict Resolution and Civic Responsibility.

Your appointment is scheduled for:

Date: ____________
Day: ____________
Time: ____________
With: ____________

What should I expect?

Within 7-10 days of your referral, you will participate in one 2-hour consultation with a University Counseling Center licensed psychologist. Occasionally, more than one session is needed to complete this process. During the session(s), the psychologist will:

- Assess your present suicidality
- Evaluate your willingness and ability to refrain from suicidal threats and behavior in the future
- Recommend psychiatric, psychological, and educational services, as needed
- Help you develop a CARE Plan (a plan to access services and keep yourself safe)

What should I bring?

In order to help you, we will need to contact your parents or guardians, treatment provider, or other emergency contact. Your CARE Plan will be forwarded to the individual you identify so that they can help assist you in appropriate help-seeking behavior.

Bring with you:

- The address and telephone number of your parents or guardians
- The name, address, and telephone number of a current or potential treatment provider (e.g., psychologist, psychiatrist, clinical social worker)

This can be a provider you have worked with previously, a preferred provider listed under your insurance plan, a University Counseling Center psychologist, or a University Health Center psychiatrist.

A Guide for Students Referred to CARE Net
Parent/Family Involvement

- **Reasons for Notification:**
  - To involve parents as a key element in the student’s support system
  - To underscore degree of concern over incident
  - To enhance compliance with CARE Net referral

- No parent/family notification is carried out in cases where such notification may be detrimental or harmful to the health and well-being of the student

CARE Net Interview Process

1. Students provided with a written informed consent stipulating the limits of confidentiality and the specific information to be released

2. An orientation to the CARE Net program and review of Residential Life policy regarding self-injurious behaviors

3. A review of the circumstances surrounding the recent development of suicidal ideation and intent

4. Assessment of present/immediate danger (i.e., evidence of ongoing suicidal intent and the means “on hand”) and undertaking appropriate steps to safeguard students who are determined to be “in crisis”
**CARE Net Interview Process**

- Assessment of the student’s willingness and ability to look for alternatives to threatened or actual self-injurious behaviors as manifested in the collaborative development of a safety plan identified as a CARE Plan

- Collaborative development of a CARE Plan, identifying general and specific potential sources of psychiatric, psychological, and academic assistance tailored to the student’s particular needs

- Referral for additional needed services, e.g., alcohol assessment or treatment, couples counseling, academic support services, psychiatric assessment

- In usual circumstances, written notification to parents and/or other emergency contacts and existing treatment providers of the student’s CARE plan

**Target Areas Assessed**

- Details of Circumstances Precipitating Referral

- Assessment Findings
  - Evaluation of level of risk and strengths/resources

- Actions Needed
  - Referral to treatment, academic accommodations, medical withdrawal, etc.
Student Non-Compliance

**Students are referred to the University judicial system by the Director of Residential Life if...**

1. They do not appear for their scheduled CARE Net appointment

2. They refuse to voluntarily engage in the CARE Net assessment during the scheduled appointment

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Program Evaluation

[Image of a document or form]
Program Evaluation:
Total Referrals by Semester (2004-2009)

Program Evaluation:
Referrals by Academic Year (2004-2009)

Total Referrals: 86
Total Completed: 74
Program Evaluation:
Referrals by Gender (2004-2009)

Program Evaluation:
Referrals by Race-Ethnicity (2004-2009)
Program Evaluation:
Enrollment Status & Retention Rates (2004-2009)

Program Evaluation:
Grade Point Average (2004-2009)
Lessons Learned
& Keys to Successful Implementation

Lessons Learned

- University Policy Issues
- Liability Issues
- Staff Buy-In & Training Issues
- Referral Issues
- Communication Issues
- Student Privacy vs. “Need to Know”
Keys To Successful Implementation

- Buy-in at all university levels
- Clear statements of protocols and procedures
- Consistent implementation of stated procedures with appropriate tracking
- Training and ongoing communication with professional and support staff
- Process and outcome evaluation

Discussion & Questions

ThankYou!
Contact Information

Estela M. Rivero, Ph.D.
Director
erivero@uamail.albany.edu

M. Dolores Cimini, Ph.D.
Assistant Director for Prevention and Program Evaluation
dcimini@uamail.albany.edu

University Counseling Center
University at Albany, SUNY
400 Patroon Creek Boulevard, Suite 104
Albany, NY 12206
Phone: 518-442-5800
Website: www.albany.edu/counseling_center/