Allies in Action

A Suicide Prevention Campaign for GLBTiQ and Gender Identity Minority Students

Goals

Why? Focus on GLBTiQ

Evaluation & Sustainability

Public Health Approach

Program Development

Needs/Strength Assessment
Garrett Lee Smith Campus
Suicide Prevention Grant

- Three Years
- Three Partners – Regis University, The Carson J Spencer Foundation & The BACCHUS Network
- Three Goals
  1. Align networking infrastructure
  2. Increase the number of suicide prevention gatekeepers
  3. Change culture
     - Faith Communities
     - Men
     - Students with Pre-Existing Mental Health Conditions & their families
     - Healthcare Professionals
     - GLBTiQ

Why focus on GLBTiQ Students?
Program Justification
“Suicide attempts are often caused by the stress of a homophobic society. People are not killing themselves because they are gay, but because they are dealing with a society that discriminates.” --SoulForce.Org

Why Regis University? Why Now?
A Public Health Approach

Developing a Comprehensive Strategy

- Define the problem: Surveillance
- Identify causes: Risk & protective factor research
- Develop and test interventions
- Implement interventions
- Evaluate effectiveness
Needs and Strengths Assessment

A Research Approach
Focus Groups

Q: What do you see are the particular risk factors for GLBT young adults that increase suicide ideation? At Regis?

A: Religious intolerance creating hostile environment

“Of the three people I know who have attempted suicide, all three are lesbians. One transferred. They are aware of what is going on campus. I don’t know if being a part of the GLBT crew is why they did or did not. There are other factors, but we shouldn’t ignore it.”

Focus Groups

Q: What do you see are the particular risk factors for GLBT young adults that increase suicide ideation? At Regis?

A: Religious intolerance creating hostile environment

When I was working at a church camp I thought about suicide. I thought that my faith and my identity were not reconcilable. Being gay couldn’t be the right life for me, not what I had been taught about.”
Focus Groups

Q: What do you see are the particular risk factors for GLBT young adults that increase suicide ideation? At Regis?
A: Religious intolerance creating hostile environment

“Regis has a hostile environment towards gays. It’s not just a perception of pocketed hostility. It’s not always seen as a hate crime and usually is not reported. For example, when someone writes derogatory words on a door...this feels like a rejection from campus culture.”

Focus Groups

Q: What do you see are the particular risk factors for GLBT young adults that increase suicide ideation? At Regis?
A: Religious intolerance creating hostile environment

“‘Don’t hate the person, hate the sin’ – fact of nature is sinful; this is not an empowering message to GLBTiQ community.”
Focus Groups

Q: What is the best way to create change around this issue?

A: Make the allies visible and vocal leaders

“The silence of the allies is overwhelming. Many wonder, ‘Can I say anything based on my faith?’”

Focus Groups

Q: What is the best way to create change around this issue?

A: Make the allies visible and vocal leaders

“Allies can choose not to engage to avoid the backlash – In the classroom, teachers make these programs optional, students who are uncomfortable avoid the dialogue then presenter ends up preaching to choir.”
Survey

- N=223
- 18% 18-19; %65 20-29 and 17% were 30+
- 72% female (reflective of the university at large)
- 75% Caucasian; 6% African American, 4% Asian/PI, 8% Latino, 1% Native American, 7% “other” (representative ethic breakdown)
- 9% identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual and questioning
- No differences in suicide attempt
- Significant differences in suicidal ideation in the last two years

Jensen, J (2007)

Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Struggled with suicidal thoughts</th>
<th>65%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attempted suicide</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken his or her own life</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jensen, J (2007)
What is your opinion of...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat Helpful</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat Unhelpful</th>
<th>Unhelpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regis University’s Personal Counseling Services</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus Therapists/Counselors</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Hotlines</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jensen, J (2007)

Pair Up Discussion Questions

1. On your campuses what are the strengths and needs of serving the mental health concerns of your GLBTiQ students?

2. What opportunities already exist that your campus might build upon to address these needs?
Strategic Planning

Begin with the end in mind

Our conclusions from the needs and strengths assessment...

1. Our GLBTiQ student (and staff) population was largely underground because of the perceived hostile environment on our campus. Being unable to reconcile the personal identity with the environment was the driving force behind the emotional distress our students experienced.

2. There were many people (“Allies”) on campus who were very supportive of GLBTiQ students (and staff), but they were largely invisible. It was much safer for Allies to “come out” and create safe space than the GLBTiQ students.

3. We needed to create a series of messaging strategies and programs to help “out the allies” (willingly, of course).
Task Force

- Assistant Vice President for Diversity
- Vice President for Mission
- Office of Counseling and Personal Development
- Faculty – Sociology, Communication
- Library
- Leadership Development
- Service Learning
- GSA, Active Minds and other students
- Residence Life

Logic Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Target Populations</th>
<th>Immediate Impact</th>
<th>Short-Term Impact</th>
<th>Long-Term Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task Force</td>
<td>Educational Programs</td>
<td>Number of people impacted by educational programs</td>
<td>Primary GLBTQ Traditional College Age Students</td>
<td>Increased awareness of suicide in a social justice venue for GLBTQ students</td>
<td>Increased compassion for the emotional impact of intolerance on GLBTQ students</td>
<td>Decreased severity of mental health symptoms and hopelessness among GLBTQ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide Prevention Coalition</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Number of people impacted by trainings</td>
<td>Secondary Wider campus community</td>
<td>Increased number of allies visible to campus community</td>
<td>Increased sense of community among allies</td>
<td>Increased sense of community among allies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eros (GSA)</td>
<td>Social Marketing</td>
<td>Number of posters, buttons, and brochures developed and distributed</td>
<td>Increased number of identified, trained “safe people” on campus</td>
<td>Increased number of identified, trained “safe people” on campus</td>
<td>Increased barriers to help-seeking due to normalization of struggle</td>
<td>Increased isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Minds</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>Number of media hits</td>
<td>Increased awareness of mental health and diversity resources on campus</td>
<td>Increased awareness of mental health and diversity resources on campus</td>
<td>Increased early identification and referral for GLBTQ students who are struggling</td>
<td>Increased inclusiveness in the community</td>
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Enhance Protective Factors

- Increase support for help seeking
- Increase strength of community support, sense of belongingness
- Improve coping skills
- Increase cultural beliefs that support self-preservation

Decrease Risk Factors

- Increase early identification and intervention for mental disorders
- Decrease alcohol use disorders
- Decrease hopelessness
- Increase social support
- Decrease isolation
- Decrease stigma for help seeking
- Decrease barriers to accessing care
- Decrease unsupported financial/social loss
Program Development

Allies in Action

What is an ally?

**Allies** support the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, straight, queer and questioning communities through action. They pledge to help end discrimination and provide a safe space by listening well, promoting inclusiveness, celebrating difference, and taking a stand against intolerance.
Educational Programs

“Prayers for Bobby” made for TV docudrama
January 2009

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBVcTCpKx3g
Educational Programs

Allies in Action Breakfast

Additional Educational Programs

- For The Bible Tells Me So
  Friday, April 17th  2:30pm  Loyola 10
- National Day of Silence
  Friday, April 17th  all day and 5:00pm
- Enough Already! Candlelight Vigil
- Matthew Shepard’s Legacy
  Sunday, April 19th  4:30pm  Regis Chapel
Training

Safe Zone Training

- Encourage open and honest communication
- Meeting people where they are at
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- The relationship between religious and community intolerance and suicide

QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training

- Helping students, faculty and staff identify risk factors and warning signs and learn how to refer

Social Marketing

ALLIES IN ACTION
Saying Lives by Respecting the Dignity and Worth of Every Person

WOULD IT MATTER IF...
...were gay?
ALLIES IN ACTION

SHOULD IT MATTER WHO I LOVE?
ALLIES IN ACTION
You matter to me
Social Marketing

End of year – full-page spread in student newspaper. Five different students sharing their experiences of discrimination and support at Regis University

Campus Pride Blog – picked up from Facebook

BACCHUS’ “The Peer Educator” (step-by-step)

NPR Coverage

YouTube

Public Relations
Evaluation

Did we do what we intended?

Please rate the effectiveness of the components of the Allies in Action Campaign during the Spring of 2009 in preventing suicide and promoting mental health among Regis’ GLBTQ students.

- Allies in Action Task Force
- "Prayers for Uobby": movie and discussion
- Step/Zone Team/biathlon
- Allies in Action (breakfast, game, photography)
- Posters and brochures

[Bar chart with ratings for each component]
Evaluation

SOCIAL MARKETING: “I think that the most effective part of the campaign was the creation of the posters. This increased visibility and awareness for students, staff and faculty more than any other component because the posters were something that was visible on a daily basis. People didn’t need to attend a training or event to realize what the issue was/is and raise awareness through visibility.”

Evaluation

TASK FORCE: “I think force members for that the most effective part was the support of the task students in need. I recognize that this is largely based upon my own experience, but when the task force worked swiftly to plan the 'enough already' candle vigil. I think that was the strongest support that I ever saw on campus for LGBTQ folk. I think that was also an important sign to the community that there was a ton of support on campus in a time when suicide risk would be even higher than normal for marginalized LGBTQ folks.”
Evaluation

SAFE ZONE TRAINING: “Opportunities to engage in thoughtful dialogue around issues of sex, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. I especially believe that opportunities to engage in dialogue where there are disparate opinions may lead to the most effective and lasting change as it takes place in a personal context.”

Evaluation

BREAKFAST: “I loved the breakfast. It was great to have so much support in one place.”
Sustainability

- Materials achieved on www.PeoplePreventSuicide.org
- Allies in Action Task Force continues
  - Art show Fall 2009 – “By Any Other Name”
  - Coming Out Panel
  - Planned for 2010 – Allies in Action Breakfast
  - Safe Zone Training
- “I believe Regis has started a ‘ball rolling’ that is best kept moving with the momentum already established. Such an effort is an ongoing one and will continue to require intentionality on the part of all members of the Regis community.”

References

- Young, X. & Malley, E. (2009, June 8) Action planning to address suicidal behavior among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. A webinar by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC).
- Jensen, J. (2007). An overview of suicidal ideation among gay, lesbian, bisexual and questioning college students at a small Jesuit university. A doctoral paper presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of Professional Psychology Office of Graduate Studies at the University of Denver in Denver, CO.