Postventions: Protocols for Responding to Campus Suicides

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Presentation Outline

- Process of setting up postventions
- Developing Protocols
- Postvention models—CISD model, new approaches
- Challenges for staff—training, stress, secondary trauma
Process of Setting Up Postventions:

- Find out more about individual
- How did the individual complete suicide? Who is affected?
- How long ago did it happen?
- What has been communicated? How much can be shared?
- How are people coping?

Process of Setting Up Postventions

- Consult about what might be helpful
- Encourage smaller group postventions
- Talk to campus staff about how they will let people know about the postvention, best time/place
Developing Protocols

- Goals: to make sure that response to students, faculty, and staff is:
  - Organized
  - Timely
  - Appropriate
  - Sustainable (tied to positions rather than specific individuals)
  - Free of bias

- Protocols should:
  - Set up Communication channels
  - Establish clear procedures
  - Delegation of responsibilities

- Examples of Protocols
  - University-wide
  - Counseling and Psychological Services

UC Berkeley Protocols

- UC-wide protocol for Deaths
  [http://death-response.chance.berkeley.edu/]***

  - Student Deaths: Typically, campus or community police notifies Student Affairs or Chancellors Office, and University Housing (if relevant)
    - These three offices are responsible for informing each other and for verifying death and registration status of student.
    - Dean of Students makes initial contact with parents to offer information and support.
    - CPS will be notified (by police or other University Office) to initiate response for students and faculty/staff who worked with student.

  - Faculty Deaths: Chancellor’s Office and faculty member’s department are notified.
    - Coordinator is assigned (see campus death protocol)
    - CARE is notified (see campus death protocol)
    - CPS may provide support for CARE services, to both augment capacity of CARE and/or to work with students who are affected by the faculty death.
Counseling and Psychological Services Protocol

- Identifying a lead (outreach manager, or other)
- Communication with others in health service and in CPS
- Contact with affected individuals
- Determining Appropriate intervention
  (most personal/intrusive for those closest and most traumatized)

CPS Structures that Support Postvention

- Evening/Weekend outreach back-up schedule
- Crisis kits (handouts, phone numbers)
- Advice Counselor (counselor available for drop-in or urgent consultation)
- Campus Liaisons
- Partnerships with:
  - CARE services (for faculty/staff)
  - Dean of Students (Office of Student Affairs)
  - Residential Living
  - Campus Police
Postvention Models

- CISD (Mitchell & Everly, 1996)
  - Evidence based
  - Well-articulated group interventions with stages
  - Newer research that does not support effectiveness
  - Evidence that can be retraumatizing
  - Difficult to implement on college campuses (often difficult to do multiple interventions, lack of control over size and participation in group interventions)

- Psychological First Aid
  - Newer model
  - Less research
  - Less retraumatizing, less pathologizing
  - No manuals for group intervention

Challenges for Staff

- Training
- Stress
- Secondary Trauma
References


References

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