A Framework for Campus Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention

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Overview

• Public health principles
• Strategic planning and evaluation
• Understanding campus problems
• A comprehensive approach
Public Health Principles

- Problem is one of the entire campus and community
- Include prevention and treatment

Focus Only on High Risk?

[Graph showing mortality threshold and population distribution across low and high suicide risk levels with annotation to identify and treat high-risk individuals.]
Treating Only High Risk

Focus on Population
Mental Health Care/Suicide Prevention Continuum

- Enhancing health
- Primary prevention
- Early recognition and intervention
- Treatment
- Postvention

Public Health Principles

Effective prevention is *comprehensive*

- Addresses multiple contributors
- At both individual and environmental levels
- Using multiple initiatives
Social Ecological Model

- Individual factors
- Interpersonal factors
- Institutional factors
- Community factors
- Public policy

Public Health Principles
Effective prevention is *strategic*

- Based on understanding of problems
- Specifies behavior change goals
- Chooses strategies likely to produce the desired outcomes
  - Based on evidence, or, in the absence of research…
  - Theory or logic
Public Health Principles

Effective prevention work is *planned*

– Uses a systematic process to design, implement, and evaluate the program
– Builds in evaluation from the beginning

Strategic Planning and Evaluation

1. Problem Analysis
   - Long-range goals
     - Consult the evidence base: Science / Theory / Assumptions
     - Strategies → Activities & Evaluation plan
     - Implement program activities
     - Evaluate whether goals were achieved

1st three steps are a non-linear process
Understanding the Problem

NCHRBS – NCHA Data 1995-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NCHRBS 1995 (N=4,609)</th>
<th>NCHA Spring 2000 (N=15,977)</th>
<th>NCHA Spring 2005 (N=54,111)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seriously considered attempting suicide</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>M: 9.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: 10.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted suicide</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: 1.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: 1.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seriously considered attempting suicide

Attempted suicide

M: Male, F: Female
Depression

In the past school year,

- Approx. 45% of college students were so depressed they found it difficult to function
- 5.5% of females, and 2.5% of males reported being in treatment for depression
- 7.4% of females, and 3.4% of males were taking medication

[Source: NCHA Survey 2005]

AOD and Mental Health

- Alcohol and depression
- Alcohol and anxiety
- Sex and drugs and depression
- Depression and dieting and alcohol and smoking
- Gambling and alcohol
Alcohol and Suicide

- Alcohol or substance abuse proximate risk factor in 68% of serious suicide attempts
- As alcohol consumption rises, suicide mortality rates increase
  - Relationship stronger for females

Promote Mental Health Awareness & Well-Being & Prevent Suicide

Hall et al 1999; Mann et al 2006
Jed Foundation/EDC
Comprehensive Approach

- Identify Students at Risk
- Increase Help-seeking Behavior
- Promote Social Networks
- Develop Life Skills
- Restrict Access to Potentially Lethal Means
- Provide Mental Health Services
- Follow Crisis Management Procedures

Effective Health Promotion: Tactics

- **Leadership**: president, campus task force
- **Collaboration** across campus departments
  - Faculty and student involvement
- **Data collection**
- **Strategic planning**
- **Evaluation**
- **Sustainment**
Summary

• Problems must be addressed by *entire campus community*
• Problems must be addressed *at multiple levels*
• Think/plan *strategically*
  – Understand problems
  – Set clear, measurable, achievable goals
  – Choose evidence-, theory-, or logic-based strategies