Why Is Working With Families Important?

- Providing families with accurate information leads to positive changes:
  - Increases their knowledge.
  - Improves the school or agency’s culture in developing relationships with youths and their families.
  - Increases family involvement.
- A well-known case example: MADD
Guiding Principles Of Family Driven Care

1) Family members as empowered partners.
2) Family members are well informed.
3) Families get involved in family-run organizations.
4) Providers become more family-driven.
5) Incorporating family-driven care into practice.
6) Changing community attitudes.
7) Increasing cultural sensitivity.

ADAPTED FROM THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH, 2008
Family Guide Development Steps

Step One: Developing the "skeleton" of the guide

Step Two: Brainstorming with the community

Step Three: Revising

Step Four: Feedback from the community

Step Five: Final Review

Step Six: Additional comments from the community

Step Seven: Final product

Some important risk factors include:

- Previous suicide attempts
- History of substance abuse
- History of mental illness (e.g., depression, anxiety, bipolar, PTSD)
- Relationship problems (e.g., conflict with parents and/or boy/girlfriends)
- Legal or disciplinary problems
- Access to a gun or other harmful means (e.g., pills)
- Recent death of a family member or a close friend
- Ongoing exposure to bullying
- Losing a friend or family member to suicide
- Physical illness or disability

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

- Making suicide threats
- Feeling like a burden to others
- "Sometimes I feel like I just want to die"
- "You would be better off without me"
- "When I am gone, I want you to have this"
- Making funeral arrangements
- "I'll try anything, I'm not afraid to die"
- "If I died would you miss me?"
- Engaging in "risky" behaviors
- Self-harm behaviors like cutting
- "Leave me alone"
- "Isolation or feeling alone"
- Aggressiveness and irritability
- Possessing lethal means (e.g., pills, guns)
- Negative view of self
- "I am worthless"
- "Drastic changes in mood and behavior"
- Always talking about death
So let’s pretend... We are going to create a Family Advisory Board and Training for Suicide Prevention. What steps would you use?

- What are the primary goals of such a Board?
- How do we reach potential members?
- Will they be engaged and active in the Board?
- What do they think is important in a suicide prevention training?
Our Suicide Prevention and Intervention Pyramid For Family Involvement

- Leadership
- Partnership
- Support
- Education & Awareness
Family Guide Distribution Sectors

- Child Welfare
- Juvenile Justice
- Mental Health
- Education
- Community Based Service Systems
- Other

Now that we have gotten the word out...
Your Interactions With Families…

- What have you observed to be the general attitude about working with families in your community?
- How do you get families to attend an event?
- Do you have any examples of times that you or people you know have formed successful partnerships with families?
- Where do you find the **LEADERS** in suicide prevention?
HOW DID WE FIND AND REACH FAMILIES?

Existing Activities

- Examples: DJJ, Diversion, Teen Court, Foster Care, Truency, Orientation, Advocacy Groups, Grass Roots Organizations, Churches
YOU HAVE A VOICE
FAMILY ADVISORY BOARD

- Develop in a Suicide Prevention Coalition
- Participate in focus groups to develop family suicide prevention trainings
- Reach families touched or affected by suicide
- Members may become trainers of the It’s Time To Talk About It Workshop
- Advocate for suicide prevention in your community
HOW DO WE REACH FAMILIES?

Marketing!!!

- Invitations
- Email blasts on ListSrvs
  - SOSP, DCF, DOH, DJJ, LMHC, LCSW, ME, CMHAs,
    Neighbor to Family, churches, Health Planning Council
- Press Releases
- Community Calendar
- Flyers – event boards

MONTHLY MEETINGS – “Same time, same place”
Be patient, persist, and show you care!!!

-QPR
BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Resistance to talking about SUICIDE “Not our children”
- Rejection from Direct Family Groups PTA/PTSA
- Political and Cultural Lack of acceptance
- Financial Constraints “How many Guides or trainings was that?”
- Timeframe and Schedule Delays

Develop an Effective Marketing Plan!!!
CONCLUSION

- Partnering with Families is Important!
- Partnering with Families is a Process!
- Embed within existing activities!
- Stick with it, no matter how many come!
- Marketing is essential
- *It’s Time To Talk About It Family Suicide Prevention Training is on the way*...