Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC)

Program Name: It takes a village: University-community partnership for suicide prevention
Grant Type: Garrett Lee Smith Campus
Grant Status: Alumni
Year Awarded: 2016
State: Illinois

Suicide on campus is a behavioral health concern that University administrations all over the country are concerned about. At Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) the suicide prevention and mental health awareness initiatives are in place but they are not well linked in a referral network. Students, during behavioral health crises, often seek out services from the providers in the community that the University-based providers either do not get to know or get to know at a much slower pace. As the University student population is diversifying as more student veterans and students with LGBTQ sexual orientation increasing on campus new section specific approach needs to be added to the suicide prevention infrastructure. The proposed approach relies on the tenet that it takes a village to create a zero suicide culture in college campuses. And by “village” it signifies a more cogent and effective University-community partnership. The idea of a campus is no longer restricted to a specific geographic entity, rather the social media and off-campus residences of students, non-traditional students and veteran students have brought the community into the concept of “campus”, hence any proposed planning need to take that into consideration. SIUC, thus, seeks to increase collaboration between campus and community mental health providers to establish a workable crisis response protocol so that the University could learn and address warning signs of suicidal ideation and mental health stature of its students across different segments of health care providers network. The objective 8.1 of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention espouses on maintaining a zero suicide tolerance motto that this proposed model plans to adopt for SIUC. The zero suicide approach spreads the onus of suicide prevention beyond the gatekeepers of the University to families, peers, clinicians and the community at large. The mission of the new approach will take an ambitious leap from the current approach by treating suicides of students on campus as a “never event”. This approach could be achieved not only by proposing all new programs, but organizing the existing ones strategically and proposing new programs to enhance the existing ones. Below is a detailed list of goals and objectives:

• Goal # 1: To establish a protocol to facilitate University-Community partnership and collaboration on suicide prevention

• Goal # 2: To provide faculty, staff and student with resources to become emergent gatekeepers of suicide prevention

• Goal # 3: To provide an easily accessible one stop information warehouse of campus suicide prevention resources

• Goal # 4: To promote national suicide hotline number on campus