Western Oregon University

Program Name: Western Oregon Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion Project
Grant Type: Garrett Lee Smith Campus
Grant Status: Active
Year Awarded: 2017
State: Oregon

The overall goal of the Western Oregon University (WOU) Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion Project (SPMHPP) is to strengthen the WOU infrastructure by developing a comprehensive, collaborative, effective, and culturally inclusive approach to suicide prevention and mental health promotion on campus. Major components of SPMHPP are to develop additional protocols to strengthen the suicide response system on campus; to create a web presence for suicide prevention and mental health promotion; to train students, faculty, and staff in the risk factors and warning signs of suicide and how to intervene; to reduce the stigma associated with help-seeking behavior; and to increase the awareness and utilization of resources. This project will serve approximately 5,400 students for the duration of the grant. WOU has an annual enrollment of 5,400 students. The campus population is primarily White (65%). Hispanic/Latino students comprise approximately 13% of the student body, American Indian/Alaska Natives 2%, Black/African American 4%, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 3%, Asian 3%, and unknown 4%. International Students represent 6% of the student body, with the primary countries of origin being Saudi Arabia, China, Japan, and South Korea. Activities will be designed to address the needs of high-risk student populations such as first-generation, low-income, Hispanic, veterans and military families, American Indian and Alaskan Natives, and students who identify as LGBTQ+. The project has identified the following six objectives as our foci:

(1) establish a Suicide Prevention Task Force;

(2) develop postvention protocols for supporting the campus in the event of a student suicide;

(3) increase the capacity for staff, faculty, and student leaders to respond to, assist, and refer students at risk through gatekeeper training;

(4) develop and implement ongoing educational programs/seminars/events on suicide prevention and mental health promotion, some of which will be designed to engage and respond to at-risk students (e.g., first generation, low income, LGBTQ+, veterans, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic);

(5) develop and disseminate informational materials addressing issues related to suicide that are culturally and linguistically appropriate for students and families; and

(6) promote the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and local suicide prevention hotlines within the campus community. Additionally, we will evaluate all components of the project through process, performance, and outcome measures.