Gettysburg College

Grant Type: Garrett Lee Smith Campus
Grant Status: Active
Year Awarded: 2018
State: Pennsylvania

Gettysburg College (GC) proposes the Suicide Prevention Initiative (SPI) to train our community to recognize and respond to students at risk, strengthen coalitions across campus in a united effort to educate and intervene with students, strengthen partnerships with external resources, build the capacity of Counseling Services (CS) to respond to increased demand, and create a template and schedule for sustaining ongoing efforts. SPI activities include creating an organized network and safety net for students: campus community training, preventative education and intervention, ongoing screenings, postvention preparation and training, and additional clinical hours. We will be especially attentive to student groups that are at higher risk for 1) mental illness and associated self-harm and/or 2) mental illness that is untreated or undertreated, especially students who identify LGBTQ (2.9%), students of color (21.4%), first-generation college attendees (17.4%), international students (6.8%), and athletes (24%). SPI interventions will reach at least 1000 persons per year and 3000 by the end of the grant period, with an exponential impact on community members given that GC is a smaller, residential institution. GC CS staff see approximately 25-30% (higher than the national average of 15-17%) of all students who are on campus each year. The number of client sessions has risen substantially, from 3628 (2012) to 4114 (2017) and a projected 4350 in 2018. CS staff find that on average each year 30% report passive suicidal ideation, 10% thoughts of harming others, 7% were hospitalized for psychiatric care before college matriculation, 19% admit to committing self-harm, 23% report active suicidal ideation, and 6% have attempted suicide. CS is experiencing the increasing complexity of presenting problems that most CS directors are reporting nationwide. Goal 1: Increase the capacity of the GC community to recognize and respond to at-risk students, and reduce/eliminate symptoms and factors associated with greater risk of self-harm and mental illness. Objectives: by January 2019, provide up to 20 hours/week of outreach planning and directed programming; by January 2019, provide up to 12 additional clinical hours/week; by January 2019, train 15 trainers to provide Question, Persuade, and Refer Gatekeeper training to campus community; by May 2019, add 1 partner to network of campus and community resources for treating students; by summer 2021, add 3 additional partners; by September 2019 and each September thereafter, provide QPR training to 1000 students (at-risk student groups targeted first); by January 2019 and each September thereafter, provide QPR Gatekeeper and/or ALR training to 200 staff; by January 2020, develop and test a suicide postvention plan; by fall 2019 and each fall thereafter, provide information about suicide and resources to 90-100% of the campus community; by September 2021, publish a plan for sustainability of programming efforts. Goal 2: Identify and respond to areas of unmet need. Objectives: beginning January 2019 and every two years thereafter, evaluate need based on the results of the Healthy Minds Study; by January 2021, complete remediation of physical areas of high-risk to suicidal students.