Housatonic Community College

Program Name: Project SPEAK (Suicide Prevention through Education Awareness and Knowledge)
Grantee Website: Housatonic Community College
Grant Type: Garrett Lee Smith Campus
Grant Status: Active
Year Awarded: 2020
State: Connecticut

At Housatonic Community College, an urban community college located in Southwestern Connecticut, the purpose of Project SPEAK (Suicide Prevention through Education Awareness and Knowledge) is to prevent and create awareness of suicides at HCC through QPR (Question Persuade Refer) and Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR) training, dissemination and presentation of printed and digital online materials and information, and through the utilization of college-wide resources and linkages with external community-based mental health organizations including the Single State Agency, Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services through a comprehensive, collaborative, and well-coordinated approach. As one of two evidence-based model cited, Project SPEAK will partner with the Jed Foundation to serve as its external evaluator. The primary goal of Project SPEAK is to expand the campus culture around wellness and help-seeking for all students. The program serves the entire college student body (5,138 students) and places special emphasis on these high-risk groups: 1. Veterans, 2. LGBTQ, 3. international student sub-populations. Strategies/Interventions: Grant funded activities will run for three years beginning from September 30, 2018 – September 29, 2021. Year One focuses on building general awareness of suicide prevention; Year Two emphasizes the targeted at-risk sub-populations; Year Three ensures the program’s sustainability beyond the grant period. The strategies utilized will include the following: Training and Workshops: QPR training for staff and students and AMSR training for designated staff; Distribution of Suicide Prevention and Health and Wellness Materials; Screenings and Referrals; Partnerships and Networking; Evaluation and Quality Improvement; and Project Institutionalization.

Project Goals are as follows:

1) Expand existing infrastructure,

2) Expand existing primary prevention efforts through outreach,

3) Train students, faculty and staff to respond effectively to at-risk students with mental health and suicidal ideation, and

4) Provide comprehensive mental health and suicide prevention and treatment services to students.

The outcomes will be a college-wide increased awareness of the causes and warning signs of suicidal and self-destructive behaviors, a reduction of these behaviors, and a deeper familiarity with the support services available on campus and in the external community. By the end of the third year, fall of 2020, the program will achieve the following outcomes: six partnerships with external mental health agencies; 4,930 individuals (year 1: 1,560, year 2: 1,560, year 3: 1,560) exposed to awareness messaging in print and online; 250 individuals trained in Mental Health related practices/activities and/or in suicide prevention and mental health promotion.

Links within this resource