Campus-wide Suicide Prevention Strategy

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Some things we know about university student suicide

Â 4-10% of students report seriously considering suicide within the past 12 months
Â About 1% report an attempt within the past 12 months
Â Perhaps 100 attempts per 1 death
Â Rate of death by suicide among university students is 6.5-7.5 per 100,000 (U.S. data)
Â Rate of suicide among university students is half that of non-university attending peers
Â Students who receive counselling are 6 times less likely to die by suicide than those who don’t
Recent in-depth study of suicidal experiences of university students (Drum et al., 2009)

Â 18% - serious suicidal thoughts in their lifetime
Â 55% - some form of suicidal thinking in their lifetime
Â 6% - serious suicidal thoughts during past year
   ï 56% - lasted a day or less
   ï 5% - lasted for many months
   ï 46% - told no one about their thoughts

Drum et al., 2009 (cont.)

Â 54% - had serious thoughts in past year and told someone about it
   ï 2/3 told a peer
   ï < 50% received professional help
Â 69% - had thoughts of suicide that were recurrent
Â 50% - had serious thoughts of suicide that they described as “strong”
Â 31% - described their intent to kill themselves as “strong”
Early Intervention

**Early identification**
- Online screening programs
- Routine screening in primary care
- As the result of training and awareness programs

**Outreach**
- Individual or group treatment
- Coping skills, stress management
- Treatment for risk promoting conditions
  - Insomnia
  - Substance use
Proactive Prevention

- Primarily psycho-educational
- Interventions applied to the entire student population or specific sub-groups
- Interventions designed to promote health, increase internal assets, coping skills, interpersonal connectedness, etc.
- Interventions do not need to be about suicide
- Represent a shift in resources and target audience

Ecological Prevention

- Promoting connectedness
  - Classroom structure
  - Residence Life
  - Architectural design
- Faculty incentives
  - Courses
  - Mentoring
- Policy
  - Strong institutional support for key departments
  - Aspects of campus environment
Treatment & Crisis Intervention

- Availability and accessibility
- Collaborative
- Important connections
  - Hospital, Psych Unit, ER
  - Psychiatry
  - Campus Security, City Police
  - Crisis Centre, Mobile Crisis Unit
- Proper assessment

Relapse Prevention

- Support high risk students
- Collaborative and coordinated follow-up treatment (privacy issues)
- System to track students
- Voluntary withdrawal and leave of absence policies
Resources

Å Taub & Robertson (2013). Preventing college student suicide. New Directions for Student Services

More Resources

Å The Jed Foundation
Å The Jack Project
Å American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Å Suicide Prevention Resource Center