Supporting Communities in Suicide Prevention

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#TxSP23
Community Engagement Defined

Community Engagement
The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well being of those people.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Principles of community engagement: 1997

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Why it Matters

- Relationships Matter & Community Voices Matter
- Can help move us away from creating technical solutions to adaptive (systemic) issues, gets to the root of the issues.
- Moves us to participatory decision-making that can uncover and mobilize community assets, strengths, and resources that would have been otherwise overlooked
How it is done
Principle of Community Engagement

Before starting a community engagement effort...

1. Be clear about the purposes or goals of the engagement effort and the populations or communities you want to engage.

2. Become knowledgeable about the community’s culture, economic conditions, social networks, political and power structures, norms and values, demographic trends, history, and experiences with efforts by outside groups to engage them in various programs. Learn about the community’s perceptions of those initiating the engagement activities.

For engagement to occur, it is necessary to...

3. Go to the community, establish relationships, build trust, work with the formal and informal leadership, and seek commitments from community organizations and leaders to create processes for maintaining the community.

4. Remember and accept that collective self-determination is the responsibility and right of all people in a community. No external entity should assume it can borrow on a community’s power to act in its own self-interest.

For engagement to succeed...

5. Partnering with the community is necessary to create change and improve health.

6. All aspects of community engagement must recognize and respect the diversity of the community. Awareness of the various cultures of a community and other factors affecting diversity must be paramount in planning, designing, and implementing approaches to engaging a community.

7. Community engagement can only be sustained by identifying and mobilizing community assets and strengths and by developing the community’s capacity and resources to make decisions and take action.

8. Organizations that wish to engage a community as well as individuals seeking to effect change must be prepared to release control of actions or interventions to the community and be flexible enough to meet its changing needs.

9. Community collaboration requires long-term commitment by the engaging organization and its partners.
# Community Engagement Continuum

## Increasing Impact on Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Consult</th>
<th>Involve</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
<th>Shared Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We will keep you informed.</td>
<td>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.</td>
<td>We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</td>
<td>We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.</td>
<td>We will implement what you decide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Promise to Community](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/communityengagement/pdf/PCE_Report_508_FINAL.pdf)
Outreach
- Networking

Consult
- Coordinating

Involve
- Cooperating

Collaborate
- Collaborating

Shared Leadership

Collaborative Continuum

CDC Model

Himmelman's Collaborative Continuum
What Makes a High-Functioning Collaborative?

- **Shared Purpose** and passionate members
- **Shared Leadership** (not held by an individual or single organization)
- **Action oriented** to drive effort toward the common goal
- Members feel **trust and respect** one another
- Membership is **diverse and inclusive**
- Structure developed to assist and sustain

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Community Engagement Continuum

Increasing Community Engagement

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PASSIVE</td>
<td>REACTIVE</td>
<td>PARTICIPATORY</td>
<td>CO-CREATION</td>
<td>COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP</td>
</tr>
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Community Stance

- Transactional Engagement
- Transitional Engagement
- Transformational Engagement

Modified from Wahlman, S. 2007, Models of Community Engagement (Scottish Community Development Centre, Scotland)

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Texas Suicide Prevention Council

The Importance of Local Coalitions
Of the 160 million acres encompassing Texas, 130 million are classified rural.
FUNDING AND POINT OF CONTACT ARE INVERSELY RELATED

How funding flows:

Where Texans intersect:

Community
State
Federal

Community
State
Federal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>No local coalitions reported funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>No local coalitions reported funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>2 received funding</td>
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</table>
In 2001, 10 communities informally came together to draft the first Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention.

Their mission:

• Create, support and empower Texas communities;
• Advance suicide prevention education through local and state policy;
• Implement community-based priorities;
• Enlist local communities and organizations; and:
• Support state agency and legislative action for suicide prevention.
Texas Suicide Prevention Council

140 entities working together to improve suicide prevention outcomes:

• Statewide Partners
• Local Coalitions
• SMVF Partners
• Higher Education Partners
Texas Suicide Prevention Council

Collaboration and Capacity Building

Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention

Training and Symposia

Outreach

Coalition Development
  • Technical Assistance to support partners
Local Coalitions

Abilene Suicide Prevention Coalition
Alamo Area Teen Suicide Prevention Coalition
Austin-Central Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition
Bastrop-Tri County Suicide Prevention Coalition (Bastrop Cares)
Bell County Suicide Prevention Coalition
Bexar County Suicide Prevention Coalition
Big Bend Suicide Prevention Awareness
Brazos Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition
Caldwell County Suicide Prevention Coalition
Collin County Suicide Prevention Coalition
Comal County Suicide Prevention Coalition
Dallas Area Suicide Prevention Coalition
Del Rio-Val Verde Suicide Prevention Coalition
Denton County Suicide Prevention Coalition
Eagle Pass Suicide Prevention Coalition
East Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition
El Paso Suicide Prevention Coalition
Ft. Bend Area Suicide Prevention Coalition
Galveston County Suicide Prevention Task Force
Hays County Suicide Prevention Coalition
Heart of Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition (Waco)
Highland Lakes Suicide Prevention Coalition
Hill Country Suicide Prevention Coalition
Houston Area Suicide Prevention Coalition
I.A.M.Here Coalition-Grant Halliburton Foundation
Laredo Suicide Prevention Coalition
Levelland Suicide Prevention Project
Lubbock Suicide Prevention Coalition
McMullen Suicide Prevention Coalition
Mental Health Task Force of Brazoria County
Midland Suicide Prevention Coalition
Milam County Suicide Prevention Coalition
Montgomery County Behavioral Health & Suicide Prevention Task Force
Morris County Collaborative
Panhandle Suicide Prevention Coalition
Pick With Austin
Rio Grande Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition
Suicide Awareness Coalition of Tarrant County
Suicide Prevention Coalition of Corpus Christi
Texas Tech Mental Health Institute
Uvalde Together Resiliency Center
Wichita Falls Suicide Prevention Coalition
Williamson County Suicide Prevention Coalition
 Wise County Suicide Prevention Coalition (Star Council)
Texas Suicide Prevention Council
Texas Suicide Prevention Council Inquiry
Regional Coalition

Collaborating Across Sectors and Regional Partners
How it all started

2014
- Mental Health Task Force came together to discuss gaps and needs
- Consisted of twenty-nine provider agencies and city and county officials
- Over a series of meetings, the task force established a written plan and shared goals for the community

2015
- MAP was established (Mental Health Advocacy Partners)
- Website for the community to access resources was a key focus
- With the support of the McKenna Foundation, MCOT and SOS (Signs of Suicide) were established
- The development of MCOT and SOS has not only been a support to a suicide safer community but gives the ability to track data and see true numbers to the unique challenges in Comal County
Continued Growth

-MAP has become a clearinghouse for the community, partners, and citizens to rely on for vetting mental and behavioral health resources, training, and events

The last two years MAP has focused on three areas

- Training
- Outreach
- Suicide Prevention Council
The Suicide Prevention Council of Comal County

Why did we need the council?

- By participating in Zero Suicide meetings, we recognized Comal County was underrepresented in the data considered for the state’s plan for suicide prevention
- There was a focus on outreach and training for the community, but the prevention piece was missing
- The increase in the number of completed suicides over the years proved the need for a council

How we got started?

- With the support of MAP the Suicide Prevention Council of Comal County was able to launch a successful first year
- MAP revised their website to include information specific to the SPC (logo, hashtag, resources, and suicide prevention colors)
- MAP also provided the first order of promotional items including stickers, business cards, magnets, etc.
Our First Two Years

- Comal County Fair Parade
- Workforce Lunch and Learn
- Pride
- 1845 Creative Golf Classic Fundraiser
- Men’s Health Fair
- Movie advertisement at all theaters in Comal County
- Documentary screening of STAY followed by panel discussion
The Future

- Multidisciplinary approach to prevention
- Continue to offer trainings to the community/workforce
- Stay involved in community events
- Establish and grow a social media presence
- Consider 501c3 designation as we continue to fundraise

Making the SPC a household name for training, resources, and support by expanding outreach efforts
Applying Coalition Models to Community Settings

Meeting People Where They Are
Healthy Minds, Healthy Communities: A Community-Initiated Model

Focused in ten diverse zip codes (40K) with:
- Highest disproportionate impact of COVID-19
- Highest number of suicides
- Lowest usage of behavioral health services

Goals:
- Build sustainable networks led by community members committed to changing attitudes and beliefs about mental health, suicide, and emotional wellness
- Provide tools and training so that community members can better support each other in real time
- Strengthen access bridges between qualified behavioral health professionals and communities throughout Harris County

Harris County:
Most populous county in Texas and third most populous county in the United States at 4.8 million people as of 2020 census.

Houston:
Largest city in Texas and fourth largest city in the United States with 2.5 million people as of 2020 census, with 145 different languages spoken and 48% of residents speaking a language other than English at home.
Who are the people in your neighborhood?
Intervention #1: World Cafés in Focus Communities

Using a Community Initiated Care Model means identifying what communities want and need first.

- **Task Sharing**: The community shares in the solution to the challenge.
- **Community Acceptance**: The culture, ethos, stigmas, and perspectives of the community must be reflected in the project.
- **Community Leadership**: Sustainability is only possible with community ownership and investment in the project.
- **Perspective Matters**: Everyone in the community must have a voice in the process for it to have a long-lasting impact.
Who’s NOT at the table?

• Non-English speakers
• Different socio-economic classes
• Varying educational attainment
• Diverse faith communities
• Newcomers to the community
• Different age groups

Does your coalition reflect the varying demographics of your community, city, or county?
EMERGENT STRATEGY
THE 9 PRINCIPLES

adrienne maree brown

1. SMALL IS GOOD; SMALL IS ALL
   (THE LARGE IS A REFLECTION OF THE SMALL)
2. CHANGE IS CONSTANT (BE LIKE WATER)
3. THERE IS ALWAYS ENOUGH TIME FOR THE RIGHT WORK.
   THERE IS A CONVERSATION IN THE ROOM THAT ONLY THESE
   PEOPLE AT THIS MOMENT CAN HAVE. FIND IT.
4. NEVER A FAILURE, ALWAYS A LESSON
5. TRUST THE PEOPLE
   (IF YOU TRUST THE PEOPLE, THEY BECOME TRUSTWORTHY)
6. MOVE AT THE SPEED OF TRUST
7. FOCUS ON CRITICAL CONNECTIONS MORE THAN CRITICAL MASS
   BUILD THE RESILIENCE BY BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
8. LESS PREP, MORE PRESENCE
9. WHAT YOU PAY ATTENTION TO GROWS