

Suicide Prevention on a College Campus: It Takes an Entire Campus

2010 Texas Suicide Prevention Symposium

Presented By

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Session Goals

- Discuss the prevalence and nature of college student suicidal behavior.
- Learn about the elements of public health for suicide prevention.
- Explore how two campuses used the public health approach to implement their comprehensive suicide prevention programs.

PART I: DATA

National Research Consortium of Counseling Centers in Higher Education

- Founded in 1991 at the University of Texas at Austin
- 5 completed studies to date
 - 2 with presenting problems in clinical samples
 - 2 with mental health issues in non-clinical samples
 - Nature of Suicidal Ideation
- Membership in Consortium is determined study-by-study, and all are encouraged and welcome to participate
- Research is an essential ingredient for defining a subspecialty of college mental health (Penn State, Director's Surveys, etc.)

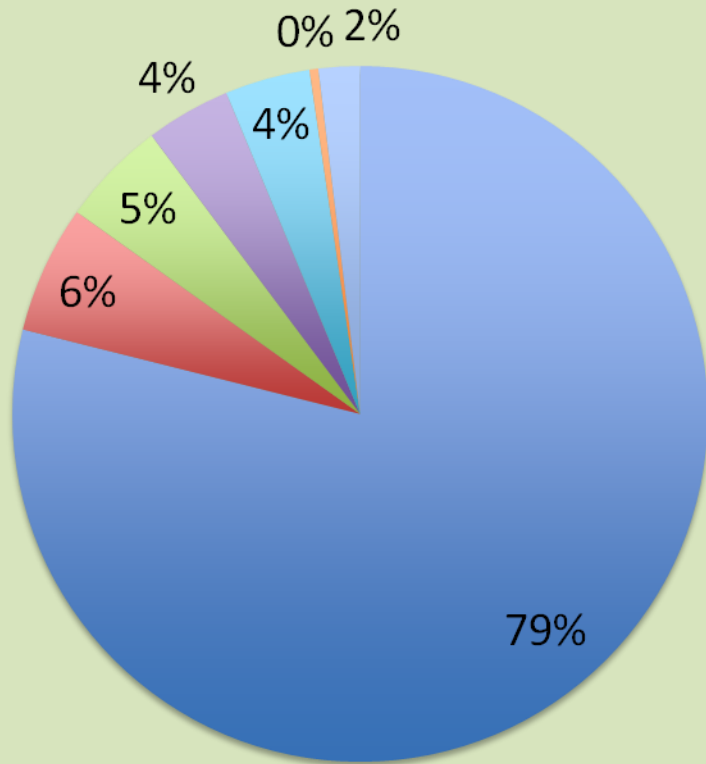
Study Overview

- Web-based survey designed to both gather information and raise awareness
- Students were randomly sampled from 70 participating four-year colleges and universities
- Over 26,000 undergraduate and graduate student responses

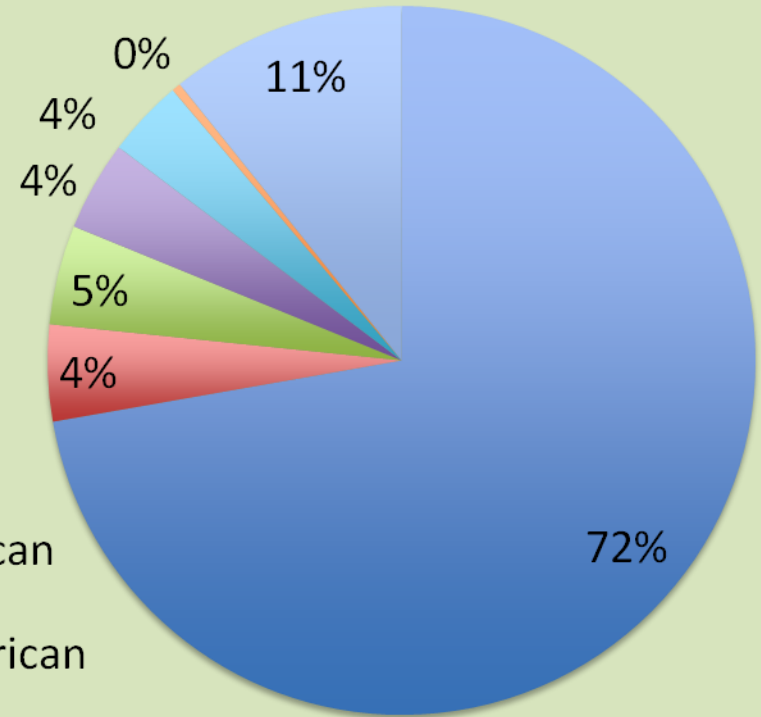
	Undergrad	Graduate	Totals
Surveys Sent	62,000	46,536	108,536
Surveys Returned	15,010	11,441	26,451
Response Rate	24%	25%	24%

Demographics: Race / Ethnicity

Undergraduate



Graduate



- Caucasian
- Asian American
- Latino/a
- African American
- Multiracial
- Alaska Native/American Indian
- International

Demographics: Sex, Age, Sexual Orientation

Undergraduate n=15,010	Graduate n=11,441
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Female	62%	60%
Male	38%	40%

Mean Age	21.5 years	29.7 years
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Bisexual	2%	1%
Gay/Lesbian	2%	1%
Heterosexual	95%	98%
Questioning	1%	1%

Lifetime History of Suicidality

Which phrase best describes you:	Undergrad n=15,010	Graduate n=11,441
I have never had suicidal thoughts	45%	49%

Have you ever seriously considered attempting suicide ?	18%	15%
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Lifetime number of suicide attempts		Undergrad n=15,010	Graduate n=11,441
Undergrad 8% Graduate 5%	0	92%	95%
	1	5%	4%
	2	2%	1%
	3 or more	1%	1%

Suicidality in the Past 12 Months

In the past 12 months...	Undergrad n=15,010	Graduate n=11,441
I thought, "I wish this all would just end"	37%	30%
I thought, "I wish I was dead"	11%	8%

I have seriously considered attempting suicide	6%	4%
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I have attempted suicide	0.9%	0.3%
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Frequency and Duration of Suicidal Ideation

Answered by those who have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months	Undergrad n=910	Graduate n=411
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# of periods (past 12 mos.) considered attempting	1	31%	37%
	2	26%	25%
	3	16%	12%
	4-6	14%	12%
	7 or more	11%	10%

On average, how long did these periods of SI last ?	1 hour or less	31%	32%
	Several hrs/day – 1 day	25%	26%
	Many days – 1 week	28%	26%
	Many weeks – 1 month	11%	11%
	Many months or more	5%	5%

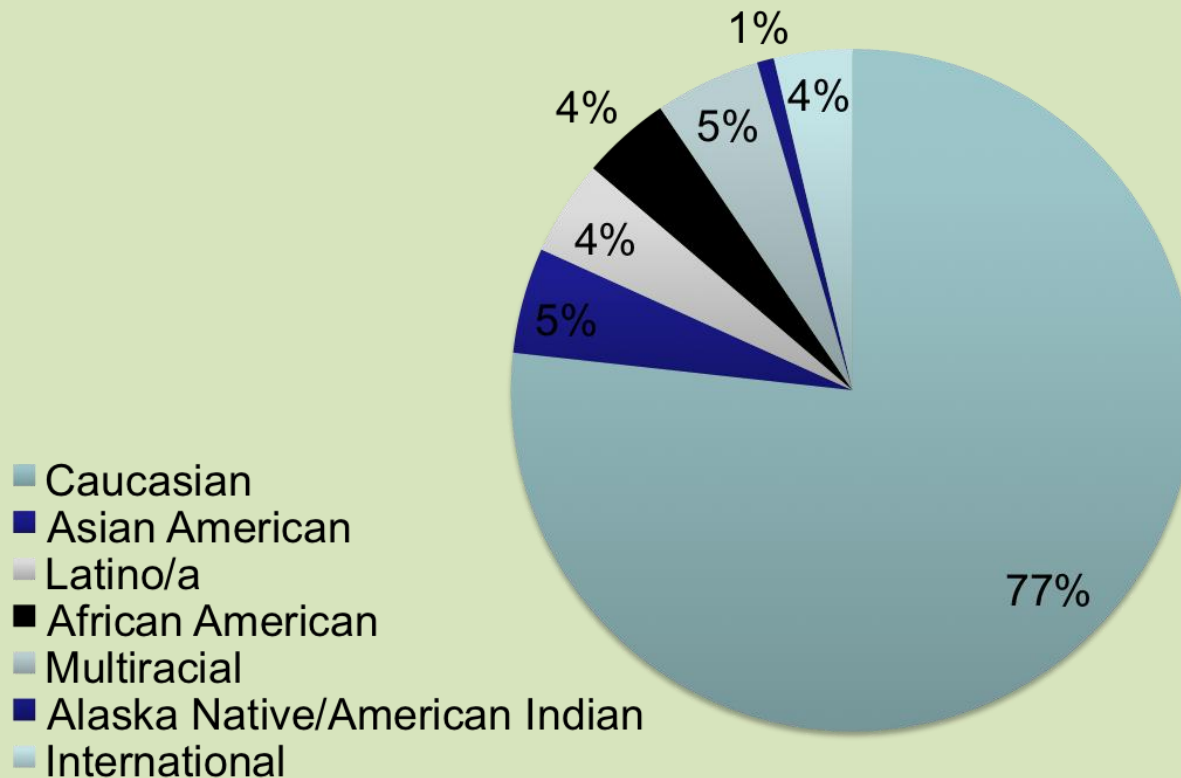
Ideator Demographics: Sex and Sexual Orientation

n = 1,321

	Ideator Sample %	Total Sample %
Female	66%	61%
Male	34%	39%
Bisexual	7%	2%
Gay/Lesbian	4%	2%
Heterosexual	86%	95%
Questioning	3%	1%

Ideator Demographics: Racial / Ethnic Identity

n = 1,321



Students Receiving Formal Help

n = 1,287

Received formal help	48%
Women	51%
Men	41%
Ethnic Minority and International Students	38%
Caucasian	51%
GLBQ	61%
Heterosexual	46%

Students Advised To Seek Professional Help

	n = 596
Caucasians	61%
Multi-Ethnic	52%
Latino/a	45%
Asian American	40%
Alaska Native / American Indian	40%
International Student	29%
African American	27%
Average	56%

Students Receiving Professional Help

	n = 1,287
Alaska Native / American Indian	60%
Caucasian	51%
African American	45%
Latino/a	38%
Multi-Ethnic	36%
Asian American	35%
International Students	29%
Average	48%

Students Advised To Get Help Who Did Receive Help

	Undergraduate and Graduate n = 331
Asian American	80%
Caucasian	72%
Latino/a	50%
International Student	50%
Alaska Native / American Indian	50%
African American	43%
Multi-Ethnic	36%
Average	69%

Where was help received?

- Psychologist, social worker, counselor
 - Recent ideators = 36%
 - Rated as helpful = 55%; On-campus = 49%
- Psychiatrist
 - Recent ideators = 18%
 - Rated as helpful = 41%; On-campus = 28%
- Medical provider
 - Recent ideators = 9%
 - Rated as helpful = 42%; On-campus = 25%

Characteristics of Concealers

- No racial/ethnic differences; no differences between undergraduate and graduate students
- Men are more likely to conceal than women
 - Male: 54%
 - Female: 42%
- Differences by sexual orientation
 - Questioning: 69%
 - Gay/Lesbian: 49%
 - Heterosexual: 46%
 - Bisexual: 34%

Who is Told?

- Family: 16%
- **Romantic Interest: 34%**
- **Peer: 33%**
- Professional: 14%
- Other (clergy, professor, RA): 3%

Special Thanks To

- The 26,000 student research participants
- The 70 Research Consortium Participating Institutions and Counseling Center Directors
- David Drum, PhD, ABPP; Chris Brownson, PhD; Shanna Smith, PhD

THE NATIONAL RESEARCH CONSORTIUM
OF COUNSELING CENTERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

<http://cmhc.utexas.edu/researchconsortium.html>

National Coordinator: Chris Brownson, PhD

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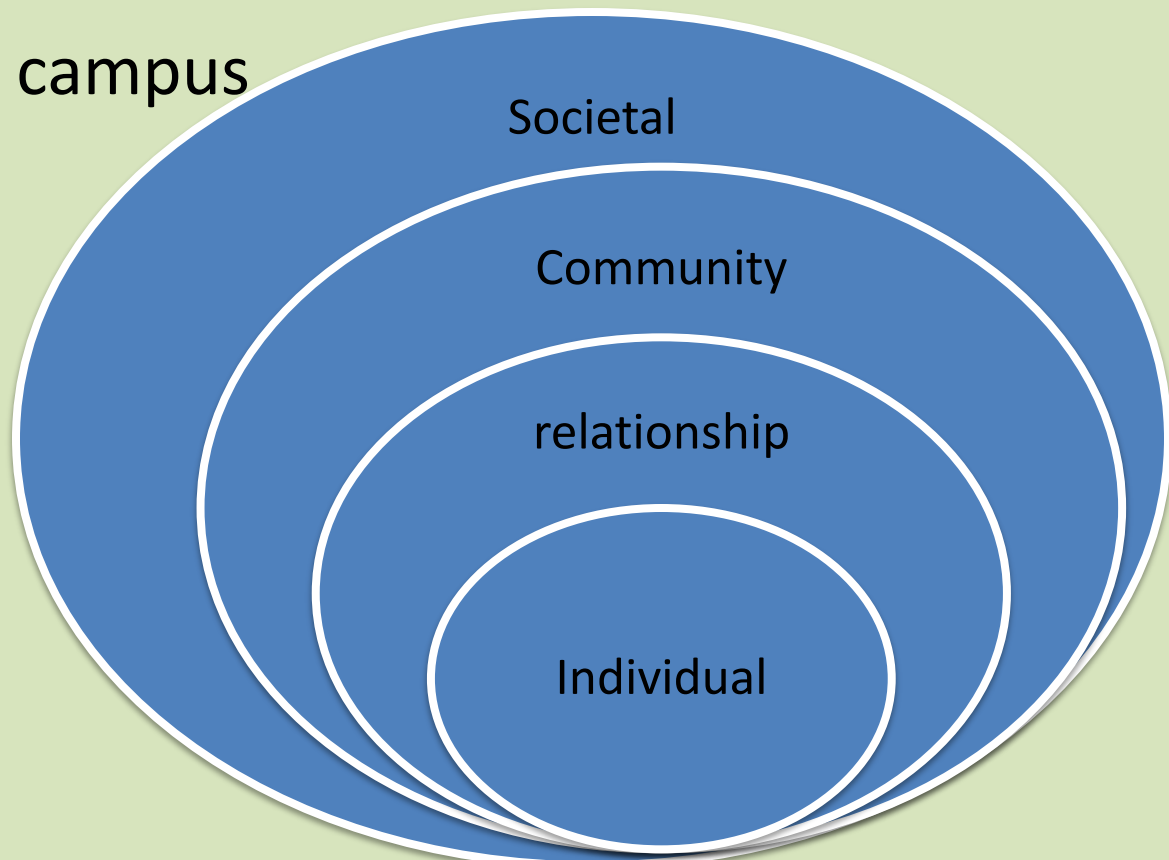
PART II: THE PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

Implications for Interventions

- Suicidality is widespread and difficult to identify and treat
 - Brief, intense, recurrent
 - Students avoid help & conceal their ideation
 - Peers are a primary source of support
 - Student sub-groups experience suicidality and help seeking differently
- Requires a comprehensive approach and an Expanded Intervention Paradigm

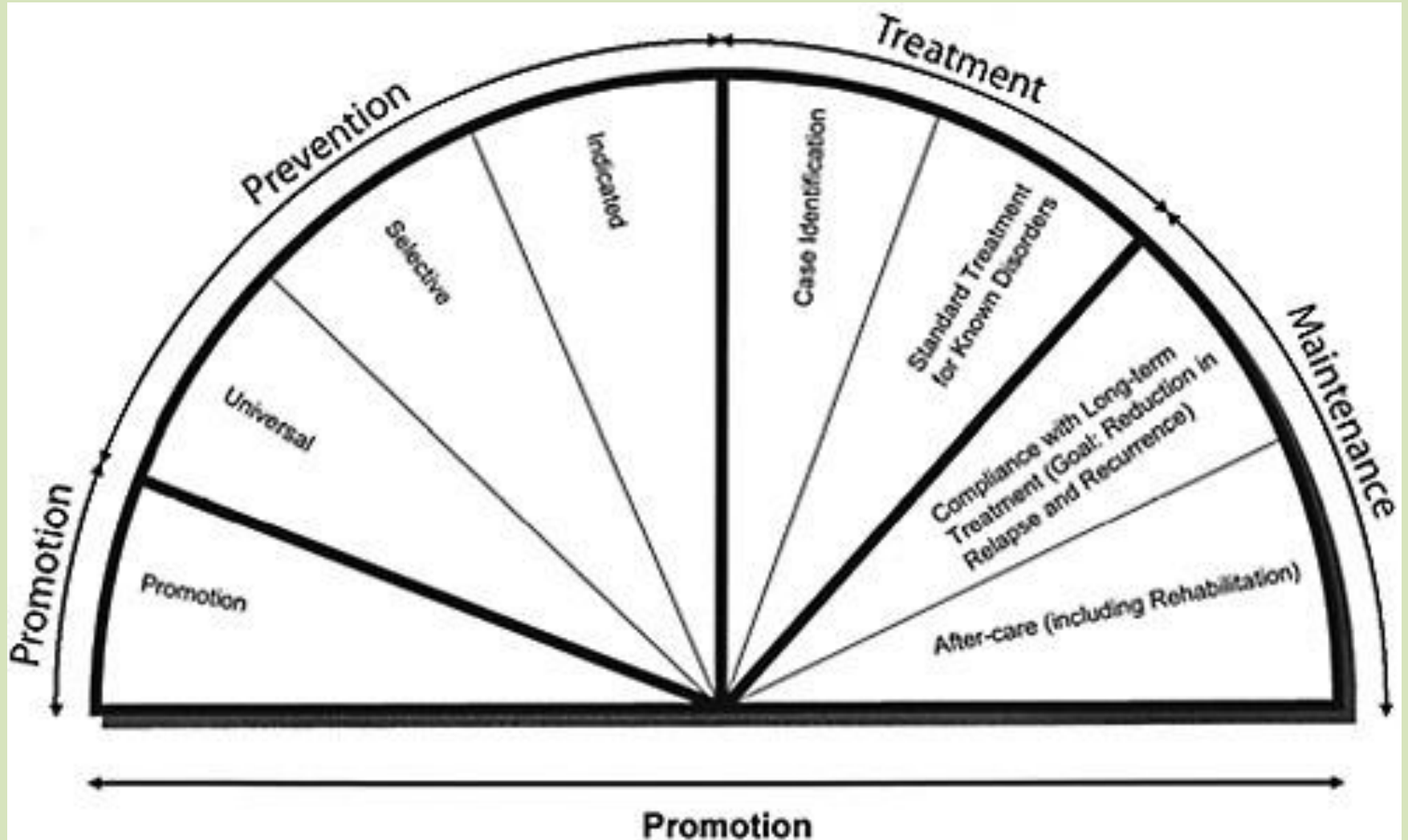
Why a Public Health Approach?

- Comprehensive suicide prevention
 - Requires a paradigm shift
 - Education must be ongoing
 - Involves the entire campus



(Dahlberg & Krug 2002)

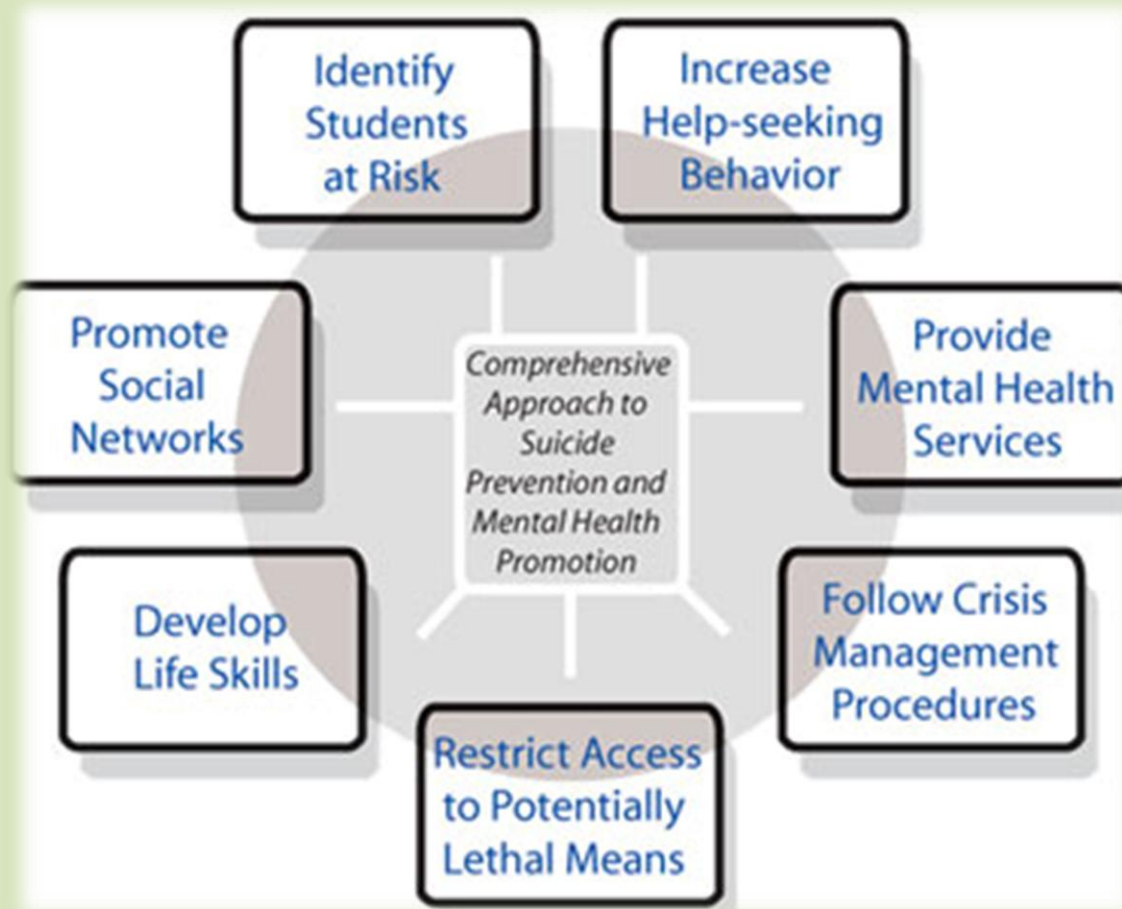
Continuum of Care



Public Health Approach: Fundamentals

- Intervene at multiple levels
 - Use best practices
- Think and plan strategically
 - Understand the problem
 - Set goals
 - Evaluate

SPRC/Jed Foundation Comprehensive Plan



PART III: CAMPUS CASE STUDIES

UTPA Counseling and Psychological Services

- Therapist to Student Ratio is 1:3,742
- IACS recommends 1:1,000 or 1:1,500 depending on other services available
- 78% of our student population is uninsured

The University of Texas at Austin

- Overview
- History
- Reporting structure



Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant – Cohort 2

- Grant began September 2006
- Funded for \$75,000 in year 1 and \$48,216 for years 2 and 3
- Main goals of our grant are:
 - Raise significant awareness of risk of suicide
 - Link students at-risk to immediate and appropriate services

Be That One. Suicide Prevention Program

Year One

- Describe the problem
 - Review relevant research
 - Gather campus data
- Identify strategies
 - consult with campus experts
- Select interventions
 - Brand the program
 - Gatekeeper training

Be That One. Suicide Prevention Program Year Two and Beyond

- Set goals
 - Long process
- Create action plan
 - UT Suicide Prevention Comprehensive Plan
- Implement, evaluate, and improve
 - Current projects:
 - Outreach to parents
 - Environmental scan
 - Develop evaluation plan

Grant Activities

- QPR Training
- Fall Conference October 4-5, 2007
 - Keynote Speaker – M. David Rudd
 - Film Screening – *jumping off bridges*
 - Mask Art Therapy Project

Challenges

- Coalition building
- Life gets in the way
- Funding
- Navigating your way through the maze

Challenges

- Gatekeeper Trainings Not Fulfilled
 - Required freshman course
 - Sophomore Mentoring Program
- Awareness Presentations at all New Student and Parent Orientation Not Fulfilled
- Creation of a Safety Plan and subsequent training Is Still In Progress

Lessons Learned

- Critical Needs
 - Position to Oversee Suicide Prevention
 - Data to Garner Support From Upper Administration
 - Creativity To Get Student Safety Information Into the Hands of the Incoming Students and Their Parents

Lessons Learned

- Data is your new best friend.
- Find allies
- It's ok to get lost.
- Plan. Plan. And then plan some more.
- Passion. Persistence. Patience.

References

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Wrap up

- Questions?

- Contact Information

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