Working Minds:
New Developments in Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

2014 Texas Suicide Prevention Symposium
San Marcos, TX
August 12, 2014

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E = mc^2
I have a dream.
TO BE OR NOT TO
Who is this?
Social Media

@sspencerthomas
@workingmindscjs
#AAS14
#SuicidePrevention
#Passion4Living
#ManTherapy

#SPSM
#MHSM
#MentalHealth
#SHRM
@SHRM
@EAPA
@HRMagazine
@TodayshRNews
@HRActually
@Action_Alliance
@SPRCTweets
@AASuicidology
Overview

- Why Suicide Prevention in the Workplace?
- Comprehensive Approach – New Developments
- Case Study
About CJSF: Vision

“We envision a world where leaders and communities are committed to sustaining a passion for living.”
Carson J Spencer Foundation
Programs

THE FIRE WITHIN
YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS PREVENTING SUICIDE

Working Minds
SUICIDE PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE

THE OFFICE OF MAHOGANY
MAN THERAPIST

iCare Packages
A Gift of Compassion for People Bereaved by Suicide
WHY THE WORKPLACE?
“The workplace is the last crucible of sustained human contact for many of the 30,000 people who kill themselves each year in the U.S. A co-worker’s suicide has a deep, disturbing impact on work mates. For managers, such tragedies pose challenges no one covered in management school.”
Suicide Rates by Age, Race, and Gender
United States

Source:
National Center for Health Statistics
Note: Non-Hispanic Ethnicity
Tipping Point:
Engaging a Wider Circle
Many Ways Suicidal Behavior Affects the Workplace

- Employee suicides occur on site
- Employee suicides occur off site
- Recently terminated employees die by suicide
- Suicides by loved ones of employees occur
- Vendors, Clients, Associates
- Suicidal behavior affects workplaces
Why the Workplace?

- Community-wide prevention
- Belonging
- Effectiveness/Purpose
Why the Workplace?

- Built-in dissemination
- Built-in referral
- Social responsibility
- Holistic movement
- Workplace Violence
Suicides and the Workplace

On average, surviving partners/spouses estimate that the death of their loved one intimately and directly affected an average of 20 co-workers.

Berman (2011)
Workplaces Most at Risk

Male dominated (esp. white males)
Access to lethal means
“Acquired capacity” – fearless, reckless and/or stoic
Exposed to trauma
Culture of substance abuse
Fragmented community/isolation
Humiliation/Shame/Purposelessness
Entrapment
Seek First to Understand

- Executive Roundtable
- Needs and Strengths Assessment/Baseline Data
  - Focus Groups
  - Surveys (attitudes, knowledge, behavior)
  - In Depth Interviews
  - Data Analysis
  - Environmental Scan
  - Literature Review
Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention in the Workplace
Air Force Model: A Comprehensive Approach

COMPREHENSIVE BLUEPRINT FOR WORKPLACE SUICIDE PREVENTION

- SCREENING
- MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND RESOURCES
- SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING
- LIFE SKILLS AND SOCIAL NETWORK PROMOTION
- GOAL: PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION
- CRISIS MANAGEMENT, POLICY & MEANS RESTRICTION
- EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY
- SOCIAL MARKETING
- LEADERSHIP

Comprehensive Blueprint for Workplace Suicide Prevention
adapted from the Air Force Model, the Jed Foundation/Suicide Prevention Resource Center, and Working Minds.
U.S. Air Force Study

Number of Suicides per Year

Rate per 100,000

3 per. Mov. Avg. (Number of Suicides per Year)

Source:
Leadership: Common Thread of Success

“Visible, vocal, visionary” – be bold!

Suicide Prevention = “Health and Safety Priority”

Leaders with Lived Expertise

Hierarchy influence/Peer influence
Yost Zakhary
IACP President
Director, Waco, Texas
Public Safety Department

Breaking the Silence: Suicide Prevention and Law Enforcement
PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH
WHOLE POPULATION

MINIMIZE RISK
AT-RISK POPULATIONS

INCREASE HELP-SEEKING
DISTRESSED INDIVIDUALS

RESTRICT LETHAL MEANS &
TREAT DISORDERS
PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE

MANAGE CRISIS
SUICIDE ATTEMPTS & DEATHS
Upstream Prevention: Promote Protection

- Promoting social networks
- Mental Health Literacy
- Life Skills
Midstream: Early and Effective Intervention

- Gatekeeper Training
- Screening
- Promote help-seeking
- Assure quality mental health services
Downstream: Crisis & Postvention

Restrict means
Dignity and empowerment
Safe and effective grief and trauma support
A MANAGER’S GUIDE TO SUICIDE POSTVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE

10 ACTION STEPS FOR DEALING WITH THE AFTERMATH OF A SUICIDE

http://carsonjspencer.org/ManagersGuidebook.pdf
Manager’s Guide (2013)

- Gives leadership 10 action steps:
  - Immediate trauma response
  - short-term recovery
  - long-term strategies for helping employees cope down the line

- Succinct checklists, communication templates and flow charts

- Goal is to help to reduce the impact of the suicide event by offering a blueprint for action
  - Minimize contagion
  - Honor life lost/space for grieving
  - Help workplace return to functioning
Case Study: Denver Fire Department
History: “Bake it In, Not Bolt it On”

- South Metro Fire
- “Firefighters Coping with the Aftermath of Suicide”
- Grassroots
- Needs and Strengths Assessment
- Strategic Plan: Year One
  - Leadership & Communication
  - Department Survey
  - Train Trainers – train department
  - Health Fairs
  - Online Mental Health Resource
You Just Never Know What is on The Other Side of Your Distress
THANK YOU!