
Juneau Community Suicide Prevention

September 21, 2008

Task Force NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 2

FUTURE MEETINGS

OVERSIGHT

Thursday, Oct. 30th
4:00 PM, VTRC

HIGH-RISK

Thursday, October 9th,
Love Inc. Conf. Room
9741 Mendenhall Loop

MENTAL HEALTH With PUBLIC AWARENESS

Thursday, Oct. 23rd
4:00 PM, JPD

CHILDREN/ADOL.

Thursday, Oct 16th
3:00 PM, TMHS
David Newton's Office

TRAINING

Ready to Train.
Waiting for your call!

NEW TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Public Awareness
Norene Otnes

High-Risk
Rose Piper, Dixie Hood,

Training
Diane Grieser, Alice
Walters

Children/Adolescents
Kathleen Rhea, Sally
Donaldson

YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

With a wet, chilly summer coming to a close last weekend, vacations done and school back in full swing, the majority of our Task Force (over sixty members) are now back in town. Over the summer the five committees of The Juneau Community Suicide Prevention Task Force continued to make steady headway toward implementation of the strategies and goals each committee has set out to achieve in the immediate future. A great big "Thank You" goes out to those who have been consistently attending meetings, and putting in the time and energy to develop and now implement Suicide Prevention strategies for Juneau. Certainly a Task Force is only truly effective if it does make change through action. **Our First Year Action Plans Include;**

PUBLIC AWARENESS: Suicide awareness and prevention strategies for everyone in the Juneau Community, with additional individual strategies for; Students, Educators, Parents, Elders, Veterans and the 18 to 25 year old high risk population. Additional strategies include; identification of mental health resources, and safe storage of firearms and medications.

TRAINING; Counselors, Educators, Parents and those Agencies that request it. The Training committee is ready to provide these services for those who desire training!

MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING: for a large sample of High School Students.

I ask for a renewed commitment and level of enthusiastic energy of each Task Force member. If you find you have not been very active lately please pick at least one strategy to work on with your Co-chair and committee members. By contacting your Co-chair and reading this Newsletter, more specifically the specific strategies your committee is working on, you will be able to jump right in there to help implement the strategy your committee is ready to implement or begin the planning and implementation stages of the next strategy. Thank you again for helping save the lives of members of our community who needlessly die by the very often, desperate impulsive act of suicide. ***Suicide Prevention Works!***

The Majority of Suicides (70%) Are By Firearms !!!

Wanted; Two or three task force members, particularly members who have not quite found their niche with their Committees yet, who can help promote Fire Arm Public Awareness Safety. Please contact Brendan at 780-2057. He is going to lead you to the Alaska State Fish and Game, Region I Supervisor; Mr. Dale Rabe @ 465-4369, to discuss how the Task Force can work with Fish and Game on this vital preventative topic. Over 70% of completed suicides, are by firearms. Suicide is often an impulsive act that can be prevented if the means to commit suicide is not available.

What To Do

Here are some ways to be helpful to someone who is dealing with suicidal ideation

~Get help by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

~Take action. Remove means, such as guns or pills

~Don't dare him or her to do it. Don't be sworn to secrecy.

~Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.

~Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.

~Get involved. Become available. Show interest and seek support.

~Don't act shocked or judgmental. This will put distance between you.

~Offer hope that alternatives are available.

American Association of Suicidology.

KTOO and The Juneau Empire

On October 6th, from 7:00 – 8:00 PM several Task Force Members will present on **KTOO**. They will speak about the development and structure of the Task Force, its' strategies and suicide prevention in general. This KTOO program was organized through the efforts of Aaron Hozid, NAMI-Juneau in honor of Mental Illness Awareness Week (Oct. 5-11). **Kim Marquis, of the Juneau Empire**, is currently writing a story on the Task Force's efforts to promote suicide awareness and prevention in Juneau

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

The Public Awareness and Mental Health committee's will now be meeting and working together as one group. It is the major function of the Public Awareness committee to identify suicide prevention public awareness needs, and design and distribute materials. It is the major function of the mental health committee to develop the content and or text for those materials, thus the need for the committees to collaborate their resources. We are very pleased to announce Gayle Trivette will now Co-chair the Public Awareness committee with Rosemary Hagevig. Gayle brings a great deal of insight, passion and common sense to the Task Force. Susan Wylie, a very active Co-chair for Public Awareness this summer, has just too many job responsibilities at UAS this year and recognized her need to step down as Co-chair.

The Juneau Community Suicide Prevention Web Page is now in it's final stages of development. Gayle was able to connect with professional Web Page designer, Colleen Norman, and through the Juneau School District, DHSS Behavioral Health Grant, Colleen has been contracted to be the Web Page designer and to maintain it for the next several years. The Web Page will be developed in two stages. On the Homepage two questions will be presented in big bold type at the center, "Are you suicidal?" or "Are you concerned about someone who is suicidal?" By clicking the links you are immediately presented with four options with an explanation of what happens when you call the following numbers. ~ Calling 911, ~ Calling and going to the Emergency Room at Bartlett Regional Hospital (796-8427), ~ Calling the Alaska Careline Crisis line (1-877-266-4357) or National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255), or ~Presented with a list of empirically research based recommendations and strategies to do with an individual who is not in imminent danger but is having suicidal ideation. The second phase of the Web Page will be the development of the menu links with a special emphasis on the development of a user-friendly link providing an organized list of "**Mental Health Resources in Juneau**". A special thanks to; Kris Sell, Ann Turner-Olsen, Mim Jensen, Rose Piper and Gayle for their professional work and contributions to stage one of the Web Page.

Additional strategies in the very near future from Public Awareness and Mental Health include suicide prevention pamphlets and posters for various populations, with additional public service announcements via newspaper and radio.

Alarming rise in the national rate of suicide for 10-19 year olds

Last week, a new study conducted at The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital revealed an 18 percent increase in the suicide rates of youth 10 to 19, following a decade of steady decline. Researchers said the increase represents the largest single-year change in the pediatric suicide rate over the past 15 years.

Fortunately, the emotional crises that so often precede suicide are both recognizable and treatable, and good prevention programs can teach youth how to recognize the symptoms of depression

CHILDREN/ADOLESCENTS COMMITTEE

Much is happening with the Children and Adolescent Committee. First of all Mary Tonsmeire, the dynamic Director of the Teen Health Centers at both Juneau Douglas High School and the new Thunder Mountain High School, has agreed to Co-chair this committee with Dave Newton. Wayne Hixon the previous Co-chair, has left JYS and now supervises all Rally programs. We thank Wayne for his past and continued contributions to children and adolescents in Juneau.

The Signs of Suicide (SOS) program, which involves school based mental health curriculum about depression and suicide prevention, as well as mental health screenings for High School Students, is moving forward in the Juneau School District. Through the DHSS Suicide Prevention Grant, a team of JSD educators will go up to Palmer, AK. September 29th, and be on site at Colony High School in Palmer, September 30^h and October 1st, 2008. The group includes; Brendan Kiernan, Project Coordinator, Mary Tonsmeire, Teen Health Center; Dale Staley, Asst. Principal at JDHS; Nancy Seamount, Health Teacher at JDHS; and James Gallanos, DHSS State Coordinator of Suicide Prevention. During those dates Colony High will be implementing the SOS program to all their 9th graders. The Mat-Su School District has been using the SOS program for over five years with excellent success and results.

The Juneau team will have an opportunity to observe, participate, ask a multitude of questions and receive many recommendations about all the procedural and logistical issues the Juneau School District and Community should consider in the preparation, implementation and mental health intervention stages of the SOS program. Those findings and recommendations will be reported back to the High School Principals within several days of those site visits. The findings will also be shared with Superintendent Cowan, the Children and Adolescent Committee on October 16th, and all Juneau School District Counselors on October 21st. Once the Juneau School District has internally developed a clear vision and implementation plan, presentations to the Community will begin. A presentation on the SOS program will be given to the Oversight Committee on October 30th, and in the very near future to the School Board

Additional basic procedural steps that will occur before the SOS implementation phase includes, but is not limited to; ~ Identification of the target population of Juneau Students to go through the SOS program~ Building Principals at each High School needs to pick the week to implement SOS in their building~ Identify school implementation teams and then train through lectures, video and discussion ~ Mental health community readiness, in order to absorb students in mental health emergency situations and/or be able to provide services for those at very high risk. ~ Building-wide SOS explanation and Gatekeeper training to all building staff, with an explanation of what the SOS week will look like ~ An after school Parent meeting/training with explanation of SOS program, with additional training on teen depression, suicidal ideation, signs of suicide, where to get mental health support etc ~And finally literature to be sent home to all students who will be participating in the SOS program, with permission slips for Parents to "Opt-out" of screenings for their teens, if they so chose.

ASIST TRAINING WORKSHOP

If you or your agency is interested, Alaska ASIST Trainers has scheduled an ASIST workshop from; 8:30-4:30; Friday and Saturday November 7th-8th, on the Alaska Pacific Campus in Anchorage

The Trainers
Iva GreyWolf
and
Susan Soule

ASIST is a two-day interactive workshop for those wanting to improve skills to help prevent the immediate risk of suicide

CONTACT:
Susan Soule
at
345-7767

or

Iva Greywolf at
738-7604

TRAINING COMMITTEE UPDATES

The training committee met on 9-11-08. Destiny Sargeant and Ann Turner Olsen, along with the Training Committee members have really got their act together with respect to Suicide Prevention Training readiness. Destiny and Ann are just waiting for your call. A summary of the Training Committees goals and plans include;

- Plans for quarterly public presentations that could include both informal talks as well as specific training. They will be exploring who can assist with these presentations
- Identify what mental health and other agencies are currently doing for staff training in suicide awareness and prevention – who is doing the training? Do agencies have any certified trainers? What models? Are the trainers able to help with community presentations? What curricula are being used? How often is training occurring?
- Check with governmental agencies – federal, state, city – and other large private sector employers to advocate for agencies using their employee assistance programs to present suicide awareness information, perhaps as part of their “wellness programs” efforts
- Learn what training needs other committees have identified and what ideas committees’ have for training
- Once yearly, provide a 2-day training with CEUs targeted toward clinicians
- Identify and request funding to conduct this training
- Identify appropriate models and trainers

The training committee continues to review different suicide awareness and prevention models and their appropriateness of each for the training needs in the community. Several individuals have expressed interest in joining the training committee, including Alice Walters, who works as a liaison between Providence Hospital and SE Alaska communities and, Diana Grieser, who works as the psychiatric nurse with the Office of Children’s Services. The training committee would benefit from their combined knowledge and experience!

Sally Donaldson, counselor at DZ Middle School and Brendan report the Children/Adolescent Committee is planning to present training in suicide awareness for Parents of High School Students, with separate training for High School Teachers and more in-depth training for District-wide Counselors. Sally is also investigating suicide awareness training for her staff at DZ Middle School. Suicide prevention curriculum programs for all school-aged children, is being investigated by the District Counselors.

Suicide and the Elderly

The rate of suicide for the elderly for 2005 was 14.7 per 100,000.

Nationally, males over the age of 65 have the highest rate of completed suicide, and as they get older the rates go consistently higher

Males use firearms over 72% of the time, and alcohol plays less of a role with this population.

One of the leading causes of suicide among the elderly is depression, and it is often undiagnosed and/or untreated.

Common Risk

Factors include:

- The recent death of a loved one;
- Physical illness, uncontrollable pain or the fear of a prolonged illness;
- Perceived poor health;
- Social isolation and loneliness;
- Major changes in social roles (e.g. retirement) **Source:** National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

HIGH-RISK COMMITTEE

UPDATES

The Elderly

The High-Risk committee met on 9-11-08. The sub-committee focusing on the elderly includes Jeri Museth, Don Phelps, Lucy Gifford and Dixie Hood. They are investigating strategies to help elders who might be experiencing depression by identifying four significant groups of people who might have frequent contact with Elders. These include; Family members, Caretakers, Physicians and Nurses and those that provide Meals-on-Wheels delivery services. They are also investigating educational training for these individuals who might have close contact with the elderly, so they would be more aware of the signs and symptoms of depression and, perhaps, screen their clients. This sub-committee might also develop some pamphlets to be left in strategic places and with these individuals/professionals highlighting this at risk group for depression and their need for close support.

This sub-committee also discussed the effect of pets on people and talked about a visiting pets program. Jeri noted that some institutions would only allow therapeutic-trained pets. Jeri agreed to contact Marian Mills, Catholic Community Services, Elders Programs, to discover if any program exists in the Juneau area. Don Phelps agreed to contact a friend of his who is involved in the Meals on Wheels Program.

High-Risk 18 to 25 Year Olds

This sub-committee, includes but is not limited to; Coleen Felkl, Jordan Nigro, Ati Nasiah, and Joe Parrish, They recognize these young adults maybe disconnected from Family and the Community since they no longer are supported by their Parents or Caregivers, and do not have many of the educational, social services and mental health supports afforded to them when they were 18 or younger. The Committee is strategizing ways to support them during this often difficult life transition by providing information on how to obtain and get more information on the following; affordable housing, vocational training, GED options, college options, affordable ways to have fun in Juneau, job options, affordable eating in Juneau, and where to go if your tired of abusing drugs and/or alcohol.

For this high-risk population ages 18-25, this sub-committee also recognizes Substance Abuse among high-risk population a major problem in our community. They would like to provide this high-risk group information on; How do you get clean and sober, how to replace “using behaviors” with “healthy non-using behaviors”, and how to develop healthy coping skills and a healthy network of support. Colleen Felkl will work on starting a young peoples Narcotics Anonymous group for ages 16-29 The High-Risk Committee recognizes they will need to start to work closer together with the Public Awareness Committee, as many of their strategies does involve Public Awareness.