



Region 2 Suicide Advisory Board Minutes

Time: Tuesday October 4, 2022 at 10:30 am via Zoom

Welcome & Introductions

Attendees: Taylor Gainey, APW; John Saccu (Derby YSB), Lorena Mitchell (Community Mental Health Initiatives with the City of New Haven); Michael Wynne (BHcare), Gerry Baird (Clifford Beers), Kara Sepulveda (Quinnipiack Valley Health District & Co-chair of the Walk to Fight Suicide New Haven County), Ann Irr Dagle (Brian Dagle Foundation, CTSAB Tri -chair, CT AFSP), Courtney Widrick Fitzkee (Town of East Hampton), Kiernan O'Herlihy (Old Saybrook Youth and Family Services), Karolin Regan (Guilford Youth & Family Services), Dena Miccinello (Durham Middlefield Youth & Family Services), Melissa Keilty (Tri-Town Youth Services Bureau), Melvin Wells (New Haven Prevention Council), Drew Lavallee (Beacon Health Options), Cristal A DePietro (Durham Middlefield Youth & Family Services), Daniela Giordano (Beacon Health Options)

Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA):

Taylor gave an overview of new teen Mental Health First Aid trainings for teens of ages 15-18, grades 10th-12th. Lorrie McFarland (APW) has completed training last week as the trainer for this pilot. It will be offered as in-person or a blended (online & live sessions) curriculum, consisting of six 45-minute sessions or three 90-minute sessions. The teen MHFA training will include lectures, films, group activities, creative expression through writing and drawing, and skill building practice.

Taylor asked for any suggestions for high schools that may be interested in tMHFA. A discussion began surrounding the great outcome this training will bring, and the barriers. Some suggested that tMHFA be offered for teens as both academic and community service credits. Melvin suggested that if offered after school for students, to consider transportation and getting the buy in from the school and other stakeholders.

Taylor will follow up about tMHFA costs and if it's a requirement to have an entire grade level trained in tMHFA.

Suicide Prevention Month Recap:

Taylor gave an update and showed pictures of the events APW were part of in honor of suicide prevention month. On September 9th, APW collaborated with Occupational Therapist, Ralph Soldano for the 1000 Cranes of HOPE event at Milford Hospital. This year Ralph worked with Sacred Heart University OT students and Nathan Hale Middle School students to make 1000 paper cranes, each representing a wish to reduce suicide in the community. He's looking to expand to more schools next year and showcase the cranes at more hospital campuses throughout the region.

Taylor showed pictures from the state of Connecticut suicide prevention conference on September 22nd. The five regional suicide advisory boards collaborated to have speakers talk about suicide prevention from a cultural lens. The speakers from the event were: Shelby Rowe, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, Jessica Atunes, Instilling Hope Counseling LLC, Timothy Schmutte, Yale School of Medicine, Jeremy Brewer, Hamden Police Dept., and Scott Barton, Good Medicine Project. It was a great turnout and received a lot of great feedback from the attendees who enjoyed the in-person conference.

Next event was the AFSP fundraiser on September 23rd at Off the Tracks, which is a protein shake and tea shop in New Haven. Taylor stopped by with suicide prevention “Spin the Wheel” trivia and 1 Word 1 Voice 1 Life campaign materials to engage customers and encourage conversations about suicide.

Lastly, APW had a table at the AFSP Out of the Darkness in Hamden, serving the New Haven County. Despite the rainy weather, there was a great amount of people who came out and supported the cause. Taylor showed pictures of Gizmo at the APW table, Mayor Lauren Garrett speaking during the opening ceremony and all of those who joined the walk.

Success & Challenges in our Communities:

John announced that Signs of Suicide (SOS) will be taught in the next upcoming weeks to the high schoolers and middle schoolers in Derby. He highlighted that 9th grade is a critical grade for students due to transition from middle school to high school.

Daniela mentioned that she was able to drop of some mental health brochures to New Haven Reads. She noticed when there are resources available at any event, that the mental health resources are the pamphlets/brochures people grab the most.

Taylor suggested that we all find time in our schedules to do “pop-up” events like at Off the Tracks with local shops and restaurants in our community. It will allow more people to learn about suicide prevention and casually engage them in conversations. Kara liked the idea as one person cannot be in several places at once especially in region 2, so it divides the work among all of us and lets us share suicide/mental health resources across different communities.

Honest Community Discussions:

David Melillo joined the meeting and spoke about “Clinton’s Community Conversations: Suicide- An Honest Discussion”, an in-person event they had on September 21st of 110 attendees to address the signs of suicide and the available resources. There was a lot of promotion and publicity for this event: post cards, social media, and ministers who talked about the event and included information in church bulletins. He explained there has been losses over the past years impacting the community, and that there wasn’t much opposition to have this event. David is planning to have another event sometime this month (October) to continue with the conversation about suicide with a focus in male adults.

Taylor thanked David for sharing and thought the honest conversation was great for the residents to ask questions and a safe space to express any concerns they had.

Next meeting: Tuesday, December 4th at 10:30 am via zoom