



Region 5 Suicide Advisory Board
June 28, 2023 10:00-11:30AM
Minutes

Attendance: Abby Wood, Kathy Hanley, Allison Fulton, Kayla Champagne, Andre Luis Grigorio - WCTC, Alyssa Cole - Newtown HHS, Jeff McKenna - Woodbury/Bethlehem ASAP Coalition, Joanna Keyes, Kelli George, Anastasia Domnich-Kovalevsky- TAHD, Alice DeMeo - DCF, Carrigan Costello- Wolcott CASA, Robyn Hoffman - FCA, Victoria Giordano - Newtown YFS, Jennifer Tirado - Alternatives to Suicide, Sheila Levine - Bethel HS and Bethel CCC, Jules Calabro - Carelon, Chelsea Kapitancek - NHPC

1. Introductions - Welcome new members!
 - a. *What drives you to be a member of the R5SAB?*
 - Connecting to people, lived experience, to learn, to connect to resources, and to help my community were among the many responses shared.
2. Torrington Area Health District - CDC Grant Update
 - No further update. They continue to work the deliverables of the grant.
3. June Suicide Prevention Newsletter- Abby Wood
 - The newsletter goes out through our Constant Contact listserv.
 - It helps us to recruit new members with a link to our webpage.
 - CTSAB is always mentioned with links to their webpage. WCTC staff attended their annual meeting on June 8 in person.
 - June is Pride Month- resources shared. The messaging this year is much more strength- based, highlighting the good things that are happening, action oriented. Linked articles about gender affirming care, how to affirm LGBTQ individual's identity and be their fully authentic selves. The Trevor Project provides data related to mental health and suicide risk, but also includes positive messaging about acceptance of LGBTQ population and what that looks like.
 - CTSAB plan- goal 5 is highlighted in this issue. How we can advocate for up to date and consistent data sharing.

- More data included in the newsletter with 211 counts. Data provided on those who are seeking information and resources.
- Highlighting helplines and resources. New Alternatives to Suicide flyer is included. They have a new group servicing the Danbury area. We continue to offer and promote our monthly QPR trainings.
- Highlight of *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*. Read-alongs at Ability Beyond, New Fairfield Senior Center and with the Southbury Middlebury Local Prevention Council - SMART. The Newtown Library put together a display sponsored by CAC 21.
- Members of the group recommended ideas for upcoming newsletter issues. September- back to school, supporting youth. Quarterly data updates- trends? (Because people ask). Share national or statewide trends. DPH sends out reports monthly. Stacey had to request it- not readily available. She found it confusing to analyze. WCTC gets hospitalization attempt data; we may be able to request it to be delivered on a more consistent basis and in a format that is digestible. Numbers are small so we have to be careful with the way we present it. We also need to consider sharing it in a way that keeps people safe and even protects confidentiality.
- Newsletter ideas or meeting presentation ideas can be submitted to Abby at any time.

4. CTSAB Committee Overview- Abby Wood

- All sub-committees provided brief presentations on what they are doing. Abby shared some slides from the June meeting. All can be found on the CTSAB webpage including contacts for each sub-committee: <https://www.preventsuicidect.org/get-involved/committees/>
 - Lived Experience Committee- telling stories, advocacy work. Abby would like to invite them to present at R5SAB. Involved with NAMI, healthcare, law enforcement.
 - Data to Action Committee- they did an assessment of our statewide objectives.
 - Education and Advocacy Committee- legislation- tracking specific bills. Building up materials and resources in order to advocate for CTSAB. They provide a great elevator speech about the work being done in the state.
 - Intervention/Postvention Response- statewide call. Specific incidents are discussed but also the big picture ideas.
 - Lethal means Committee- focus on older adult population, access to lethal means and safety. Focus on safe storage of firearms, etc.
 - Zero Suicide Committee- clinical focus for providers.

Men's Mental Health Presentation: Kayla Champagne- Prevention Corps Service Member, Public Health Student at Sacred Heart University

- Presentation - slides are attached
- At the conclusion she asked the group to share any regional efforts or comments related to supporting men's mental health:
 - Within program and funding, perhaps we overlook the middle-aged male population. We focus on youth, older adults specifically.
 - Jennifer- As you said, men are expected to be strong and stoic constantly... I think it's worth mentioning that Black men and men of Color deal with stigma and conformity for masculinity to an even greater degree.
 - Andre- As well as the Latino/Hispanic population with mental health being stigmatized and viewed negatively. How do we lower stigma, prevent these issues from looking like a sign of weakness, promote the use of medications that help (SSRIs).
 - Kayla- stigma, selfish behavior, men are not allowed to talk about their pain.
 - Jeff-"Man Up" and "Be A Man" statements need to go away for starters in ALL cultures, especially now since there is more data, more facts, more information...
 - Allison- engage with first responders who are exposed to trauma regularly. We have been told that many calls related to shootings in Waterbury are related to mental health.
 - Regional Suicide Advisory Board Coordinators in the state will be focusing on men's mental health at the annual meeting of the CTSAB. Save the Date – September 14, 9:00-1:00 a.m.
 - Other ideas- QPR trainings in more male-dominated groups, Abby has been training Waterbury PD and she recently did Narcan trainings with security guards.
 - Jules asked if we have data related to college-age males. Concerns about athletes. Kathy shared efforts with WCSU to do a program on problem gambling and mental health for athletes, a population we identified as being at risk. Plans are in the works for a presentation in the fall. We can try to collect data from the counseling offices and with our other college campus partners.

5. September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

What would the group like to do?

- Training ideas - ASSIST or QPR. Training for media about safe messaging- invite the local newspaper staff- can the group share those contacts? Even have those who are doing things right share- i.e. VOICES. Keynote then a panel: Law Enforcement perspective (why information is shared or not shared).
- Toolkit- flood the communities with messaging- breaking down stigma, promoting conversations. Perhaps choose one simple positive message to share.
- TAHD has money to spend on media to spread messaging so they are willing to help with those efforts.

- A film with a panel discussion
- Address self-medicating with substances like cannabis. College campus health fairs or visits about that issue. Include giveaways like a t-shirt with a positive mental health message. We could include a survey to collect data, have anecdotal conversations, and provide education and awareness.

6. Additional member updates and discussion

None at this time.

Next R5SAB Meeting – September 27, 2023

The Region 5 Suicide Advisory Board seeks to:



- Integrate and coordinate suicide prevention, intervention, and response activities across multiple sectors and settings including all 43 communities in Region 5.
- Support the overall vision of the **Statewide Connecticut SAB** and provide the local and regional infrastructure for suicide prevention and postvention response activities.