

## CT Suicide Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** November 9, 2023

**Location:** Zoom Virtual Meeting

**Present:** Starley Arias (McCall Ctr Behavioral), Natasha Austin-Randolph (VA CT), Jeanette Baker (United Way CT), Torry Bernard, Donna Bielefield (McCall Ctr Behavioral Health) Kevin Borrup (CT’s Children), Dana Bossio (CEC), Stephanie Bozak (DCF), Bill Brassard (NSSF), Heather Clinger (Wheeler), Don Coffin, Laura Coffin, Ann Irr Dagle (Brian Dagle Foundation), Melissa Demma, Alice DeMeo (DCF), Anastasiya Dominch-Kovalevsky (Torrington Area Health District), Peter Doria (CTNG), Andrea Duarte (DMHAS), Julie Ebin (SPRC), Jennifer Esposito (Judicial Branch), Amy Evison (CHR), Todd Fellegly (Alt2Su Facilitator), Jillian Fiddler, Michelle Forella (Veterinarians for Intervention & Prevention of Suicide – VIPS), Yesenia Fuentes (Mustard Seed Outreach Center), Taylor Gainey (APW), Maris Giarnella-Porco (Jordan Porco Foundation), Lisa Girard (FAVOR), Darian Graells (McCall Ctr Behavioral Health), Grace Grinnell (NAMI Farmington Valley), Brian Hembrook (New Milford Youth Agency), Kevin Iglesias (McCall Ctr Behavioral Health), Mark Irons (SERAC), Mike Ivy, Neena Jacob (DPH), Angela Jimenez (DPH), Robert Kanehl (CT Poison Control), Karen Kiley (CTBHP), Joanna Keyes (TAHD), Valerie Lepoutre (NAMI CT), Zenae Lewis (CCSU), Jodi Lott (Gaggle), Susan Logan (DPH), Cathy Ludlum (Second Thoughts CT), Andrew Lyon (McCall Ctr Behavioral Health), Mollie Machado (DMHAS), Steve Machattie (Charter Oak Family Ctr), Abby Wood Maldonado (Western CT Coalition), Mike Makowski (DPH), Crystallee Martel, Aiden Matthews (Somers Youth Svcs), Jim Matthews (CTNG), Laila McGeorge (DMHAS), Krystal Medley, Monica Messenger (Winchester Public Schools), Allyson Nadeau (Amplify), Lucy Orellano (OCA), Victoria O’Neill (The Hub), Brian Pasquarell (DMHAS), Jonathan Perloe, Michael Pepe (Windsor Health Dept), Michelle Peters (AFSP-CT), Erica Previti (DPH), Sarju Shah (DMHAS), Cathy Sisco (Wheeler), Richard Siddall (SMART Recovery), Laura Stamatien (Amplify), Alyeska Tilly (DMHAS), Kasey Timberlake (CTNG), Jennifer Tirado (Advocacy Unlimited), Sara Wakai (UCONN), Marissa White (CHQIS), Colleen Violette (DPH), Kristen Volz (CT’s Children) and Susan Yurasevecz (DPH)

AGENDA ITEM/TOPIC	SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION	OUTCOME/ACTION /RESPONSIBLE
<b>I. Welcome and Introductions</b>	Andrea Duarte, Ann Irr Dagle, and Stephanie Bozak welcomed attendees	
<b>Review of Minutes</b>	August and October Minutes were reviewed and approved	
<b>II. Presentation</b>  <i>Surviving suicidality; Shifting Prevention Paradigms with Insights from the Journey</i>  CTSAB Lived Experience Committee	<p>Trauma Informed Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stressed the need for trauma informed care</li> <li>- Must come from a place of empathy and understanding when engaging with individuals experiencing suicidality</li> </ul> <p>Some things to keep in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suicidality journey can start early in life</li> <li>- Suicidality can last an entire lifetime</li> </ul> <p>What is one word that describes the journey with suicidal thoughts or urges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exhausting</li> <li>- Traumatizing</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overwhelming</li> </ul> <p>What are some activators? (Stressors that activate urges and make it challenging to cope)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling the fear of rejection/abandonment</li> <li>- Focusing on regrets</li> <li>- Feeling disconnected</li> </ul> <p>Reclaiming your narrative (Jennifer Tirado)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mental health struggles, labels, and diagnosis did not have to define her</li> <li>- Not one way of viewing an individual experiencing suicidality</li> </ul> <p>Was there any support you wanted but did not get?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encouragement for open discussion</li> <li>- Proper diagnosis</li> <li>- More effective therapies</li> <li>- Support for self-care</li> </ul> <p>Were there any strategies that did not help?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relying too much on medications</li> <li>- Not being seen, heard, or validated</li> <li>- Feeling isolated</li> </ul> <p>Stories become survival guides (Alyeska Tilly)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changing the way we engage               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Connection with peers – find people who can relate to you, who you can trust</li> <li>o Holistic systems – healthcare must be designed for mental health; peer support and mental health specialists are needed and should treat people with dignity and kindness</li> <li>o Finding purpose, passion, and hope</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>It is hard to ask for help (Michael Ivy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognize one needs and deserves help</li> <li>- Critical that one speak with a friend first</li> <li>- Make and keep an appointment</li> <li>- It may help to have a friend bring you</li> </ul>	

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	<p>Stigmas and Suicide (Christopher Holvenstot)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can impact social status, self-worth, foster isolation, and can contribute to increased risks by death from suicide</li> <li>- Where do stigmas come from?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Families and communities can inadvertently foster shame by stigmatizing needing help or receiving services</li> </ul> </li> <li>- How do we end the stigma?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Talk about the stigma and normalize it</li> <li>o Share your truth and provide a safe space to share feelings</li> <li>o Use your voice to call out the stigmas on needing to be supported</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Changing the paradigm (Susan Yurasevecz)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speak up about what chronic adversity does to the human nervous system and change our responses to those who are in pain</li> <li>- Embrace a culture of trauma-informed care</li> </ul> <p>What can CT offer to help improve quality of life for those experiencing a suicide related crisis?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less shame and judgement</li> <li>- More education about what supports mental wellness</li> <li>- More humanistic response to interventions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Rethink of intervening what created that crisis</li> <li>o Need more options and varieties of addressing crises</li> <li>o Not a lot of resources for parents in the workforce (Paid Leave, FMLA, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Better connection to resources</li> </ul> <p>Call to action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What can we do today?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Have people lead their own recovery</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>To view this presentation, visit:</b> <a href="https://www.ctclearinghouse.org/Customer-Content/www/files/PDFs/LEC_-_Insights_From_the_Journey_CTSAB_11_9_23.pdf">https://www.ctclearinghouse.org/Customer-Content/www/files/PDFs/LEC - Insights From the Journey_CTSAB 11_9_23.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Attempt Survivors/Lived Experience Committee contacts:</b>            Steve MacHattie, Charter Oak Family Center, <a href="mailto:smachattie47@gmail.com">smachattie47@gmail.com</a>            Valerie Lepoutre, NAMI-CT, <a href="mailto:vlepoutre@namict.org">vlepoutre@namict.org</a></p>	

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<b>III. Reports</b>	<p><b><u>Grant Initiatives</u></b></p> <p><b>Tribal Update</b> – No updates</p> <p><b><u>Regional Suicide Advisory Boards</u></b>  <a href="https://www.preventsuicidect.org/about-us/regional-sab-business/">https://www.preventsuicidect.org/about-us/regional-sab-business/</a></p> <p><b>Region 1/Southwestern</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offering Narcan and QPR trainings twice a month – will pause trainings in the month of December.</li> <li>- Offered YMHFA trainings for Social Emotional Learning staff in Bridgeport Schools and the Boys and Girls Club in Bridgeport.</li> <li>- Presented at Fairfield University for Mater of Psychology Students on suicide prevention.</li> <li>- Working on venues to host screenings of My Ascension film.</li> <li>- Working on creating increased awareness on postvention efforts – translate resources into other languages.</li> <li>- Tabling – last week offered naloxone training.</li> <li>- Rolling out Ok to Talk About It a public awareness campaigns to illuminate seeking treatment and encourage conversations about mental health – includes billboards and train ads (include 988).</li> <li>- Email to contact: <a href="mailto:voneill@ryasap.org">voneill@ryasap.org</a></li> <li>- Next meeting: Dec. 14, 12:00 PM-2:00 PM, virtual</li> </ul> <p><b>Region 2/South Central</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offered QPR and Narcan trainings twice a month</li> <li>- Hosted session two of postvention training</li> <li>- Running 1 Word bus campaign through month of December on ten buses</li> <li>- Communicating with mobile crisis so community has resources for funeral services from untimely deaths in the area</li> <li>- Email to contact: <a href="mailto:tgainey@bhcare.org">tgainey@bhcare.org</a></li> <li>- Next meeting: Dec 5, 10:30 AM, virtual</li> </ul> <p><b>Region 3/Eastern</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held a presentation called Vets for Warriors which provides crisis resources for veterans</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- QPR and Narcan trainings twice a month</li> <li>- Overview of postvention with City of New London and Norwich Free Academy</li> <li>- Responded to untimely deaths and suicides.</li> <li>- Shared resources and work with mobile crisis</li> <li>- Offered the NAMI training- Understanding Mental Illness</li> <li>- Provided information session on safe messaging</li> <li>- Email to contact: <a href="mailto:mirons@seracct.org">mirons@seracct.org</a></li> <li>- Next meeting: Dec 5</li> </ul> <p><b>Region 4/North Central</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- QPR and Narcan trainings twice a month.</li> <li>- Provided secondary support for untimely deaths</li> <li>- Casey Timberlake presented on Governor’s Challenge</li> <li>- Hosting next Governor’s Challenge meeting at Amplify</li> <li>- Quarterly meetings will become in person</li> <li>- Learning meetings will be held in between quarterly meetings (meetings will include resources and training)</li> <li>- Supporting ASIST with CT National Guard in the beginning of December</li> <li>- Email to contact: <a href="mailto:lstamatien@amplifyct.org">lstamatien@amplifyct.org</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Region 5 /Western</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- November’s meeting included a presentation from Wellmore on Urgent Crisis Centers</li> <li>- Meeting every other month starting January</li> <li>- Held Postvention 101 training with school counselors from Waterbury schools</li> <li>- QPR and Narcan trainings continue</li> <li>- Will hold Postvention 101 training in person at Middlebury Police Department</li> <li>- Email to contact: <a href="mailto:awood@wctcoalition.org">awood@wctcoalition.org</a></li> <li>- Next meeting: Dec. 20, 10:00 AM</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Foundations</u></b></p> <p><b>American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) <a href="https://afsp.org/chapter/connecticut">https://afsp.org/chapter/connecticut</a></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tabled at Darien CT Day of Hope</li> <li>- Wed. Nov. 15 at 7:00 PM - Talk Saves Lives – Train the Trainer</li> <li>- Survivors of Suicide Loss Day – Survivors of suicide loss come together to form connections and community</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Three in person locations: Noroton Presbyterian Church in Darien, Brian Dagle Foundation in Niantic, Institute of Living in Hartford</li> <li>○ Two virtual opportunities on 11/19 and sign language on 11/18</li> <li>- Campus (high school and college) walks occurring in April through June</li> <li>- Jan. 2024 start Out of the Darkness Community Planning</li> <li>- Email: <a href="mailto:mpeters@afsp.org">mpeters@afsp.org</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Brian Dagle Foundation</b> <a href="https://brianshealinghearts.org/">https://brianshealinghearts.org/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Holding a holiday grief program from Nov. 21 through early Jan. virtually to guide and connect people through their grief during the holidays</li> <li>- Holiday remembrance service – open to anybody</li> <li>- New program coordinator starting in early December</li> <li>- Niantic Jingle Bell 5k – Registration is strong hoping to get 5000 people</li> <li>- Email: <a href="mailto:Ann@brianshealinghearts.org">Ann@brianshealinghearts.org</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Jordan Porco Foundation</b> <a href="https://www.rememberingjordan.org/">https://www.rememberingjordan.org/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Executive Director at Jordon Porco</li> <li>- Fred Kaylin will start 11/28</li> <li>- Programming: over 150 schools signed up for Fresh Check Day</li> <li>- Receiving more licenses for What’s Next program</li> </ul> <p><b>My Friend Abby</b> <a href="https://www.myfriendabby.org/">https://www.myfriendabby.org/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held largest fundraising event of the year at Two Roads Brewery in Stratford on Oct 20: featuring Olympic Gold Medalist Samantha Livingstone.</li> <li>- Featured three recent high school and college aged Peer Project Grant Recipients. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Projects include QPR training for college students and pizza party; candle making with softball team for “when life throws you curve balls” and a “tie dye mental health retreat”</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Tabling at several school forums</li> <li>- Survivor of suicide support group meetings continue once a month.</li> <li>- Email: <a href="mailto:gillian@myfriendabby.org">gillian@myfriendabby.org</a></li> </ul>	

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	<p><b><u>Committees</u></b></p> <p><b>Governor’s Challenge for Suicide Prevention of Service Members, Veterans, and Families</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- \$50,000 contract has been executed; Governor’s Challenge will work with United Way of CT for a landing page on the 211 website for veterans and families</li> <li>- \$6,000 was donated to Governor’s Challenge during Touch a truck event</li> <li>- Payflex willing to donate up to \$10,000</li> <li>- Efforts are split into three areas.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Area 3 – reducing access to lethal means – currently focusing on caregiver and loved ones of service members and veterans</li> <li>o Developing a toolkit so caregivers can have prevention conversations and know the steps they can take in their home to keep everyone safe.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Technical assistance contract renewed still supported by SAMHSA and VA</li> <li>- Next meeting Dec. 5 at Amplify.</li> </ul> <p><b>Attempt Survivors/Lived Experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presented “Why We Didn’t Tell You” for three different organizations</li> <li>- Had success with Out of the Darkness Walks.</li> <li>- More slots left for Alternatives to Suicide Training on Nov. 11-15</li> </ul> <p><b>Data to Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working on developing a charter</li> <li>- Next meeting: Dec 13, 9:00 AM</li> </ul> <p><b>Education &amp; Advocacy Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focused on figuring out goals and identity as a committee</li> <li>- Email and meeting link has changed</li> <li>- Meet on the first Thursday of the month at 1:00 PM</li> <li>- New email: <a href="mailto:alveskamtilly@gmail.com">alveskamtilly@gmail.com</a></li> <li>- Next meeting: Dec. 7, 1:00 PM</li> </ul> <p><b>Intervention-Postvention Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss support has an opportunity to hear from state partners</li> <li>- Spoke about the responses that have occurred in the state, and the steps that have been taken, lessons learned in postvention.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Email: <a href="mailto:mirons@seracct.org">mirons@seracct.org</a></li> <li>- Next meeting: Nov 16, 9:00 AM</li> </ul> <p><b>Lethal Means</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jessica Casella to co-chair lethal means</li> <li>- Working on updating work plan</li> <li>- Determining priorities for 2024</li> <li>- Created instruction around preventing firearm suicide for those that do firearm education.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Want to reach out to instructors and contact State Police department that gives out firearm permits</li> <li>o Instruction is available in hardcopy and electronic forms</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Zero suicide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation next meeting with Ann Dagle, Melissa Deasy, and Janet Member (Engaging systems to support survivors)</li> <li>- Next meeting: Nov 22, 9:00 AM-10:30 AM</li> </ul> <p><b>Awareness Campaign:</b> <a href="https://www.preventsuicidect.org/">https://www.preventsuicidect.org/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Over 3500 page views                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o First most visited page is landing page</li> <li>o Second is materials page</li> <li>o Third is 988 page</li> <li>o Fourth is resources for healthcare page</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Nov. through Dec. - audio ad being run using script from DPH and CDC about reaching out and getting help during the holidays.</li> </ul>	
<b>IV. Member Updates</b>	- None	
	Meeting adjourned 10:47 AM	
<p><b>2021-2022 Meeting Schedule</b></p> <p>Meetings are the second Thursday of the month, 9:00am—11:00am</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Let the tri-chairs know if you have any ideas for meeting presenters.</li> <li>- <a href="mailto:Andrea.Duarte@ct.gov">Andrea.Duarte@ct.gov</a> <a href="mailto:Stephanie.Bozak@ct.gov">Stephanie.Bozak@ct.gov</a> <a href="mailto:Ann@brianshealinghearts.org">Ann@brianshealinghearts.org</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Dates/Presentations</b></p>	



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<p>Meetings are currently scheduled virtually. Please refer to the monthly meeting announcement for meeting information.</p>	<p>III. <u>2023 Meeting Dates/Presentations (2<sup>nd</sup> Th. monthly):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12/14: Marissa Sicely-Rogers, Melissa Morgera, Sara Jones, Erica Moura, Hartford Healthcare/Institute of Living, <i>Suicide Postvention: Providing Care for the Caregivers</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Save the 2024 Meeting Dates (2<sup>nd</sup> Th. monthly):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/11: Cheryl Weinstock, SAVE-Awarded Journalist, <i>Responsible Reporting on Suicide</i></li> <li>• 2/8: Alexis May, Wesleyan University, <i>Suicide Risk Detection and Intervention in Romantic Relationships</i></li> <li>• 5/2: <i>Statewide Conference</i></li> <li>• 6/13: Jessica Casella, VACT Suicide Prevention and Compact Act</li> <li>• 9/12: <i>Special National Suicide Prevention Week Event</i></li> <li>• TBD: 3/14, 4/11, 7/11, 8/8, 10/10, 11/14, 12/12</li> </ul>	