

## CT Suicide Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** January 8, 2026

**Location:** Zoom Virtual Meeting

**Present:** Einstein Albert (Wheeler), Dani Amaral (SERAC), Gillian Anderson (My Friend Abby), Megan Avery (DMHAS), Jeanette Baker (United Way CT), Rebekah Behan (CHDI), Nicole Bengtson (Amplify), Amery Bernhardt (CT Ctr For School Safety), Donna Biel, Romeo Blackmar (GHYMCA), Kevin Borrup (CT Children’s), Dana Bossio (CES), Stephanie Bozak (DCF), Bill Brassard (NSSF), Haley Brown (DMHAS), Brendan Burke (OCA), Kevin Burns (CT DOT), Kali Cavannaugh (JBCSSD), Kathleen Chapman (CT Psychological Assn.), Heather Clinger (Wheeler), Adele Cyr (DMHAS), Ann Irr Dagle (Brian Dagle Foundation), Alice DeMeo (DCF), Anastasiya Domnich-Kovalevsky (Torrington Area Health District), Andrea Duarte (DMHAS), Cara During (CT Children’s), Kelley Edwards (DMHAS), Taylor Gainey (APW), Lisa Girard (DCF), Grace Grinnell (NAMI Farmington Valley), Katherine Haley (DMHAS), Eve Hein (Alliance for Prevention & Wellness), Brianna Herrera (Norwalk Health Dept.), Mark Irons (SERAC), Aaron Jackson (Join Rise Be), Angela Jimenez (DPH), Caitlyn Koripsky (Catalyst CT), Amanda Kriz (Carelton Behavioral Health), Michelle Leibovitz (Rich Wright Productions), Valerie Lepoutre (NAMI CT), Elisha Logan (HAS Wellness Consultant), Gabriel Lomas (CT CTR for School Safety), Cathy Ludlum (Second Thoughts CT), Nicole MacHattie, Steve MacHattie (Charter Oak Family Ctr), Mike Makowski (DPH), Abby Wood Maldonado (Western CT Coalition), Lesley Mara (CSCU), Stacey Mayer (CAGV), Michelle McCarty (CTNG), Molly McDonald, Lorrie McFarland (APW), Krystal Medley (New Haven Health Dept), Amanda Mihaly (UConnSSW/DMHAS), Michael Monterosso (DPH), Giovanna Mozzo (Catalyst CT/The Hub), Kristen Mulhearn, Allyson Nadeau (Amplify), Katie O’Neil Lucy Orellano (OCA), Michael Pepe (Windsor Health Dept), Alexander Perkins, Donna Plen, Natasha Randolph (VA CT), Steve Rogers (CT’s Children), Paulette Schwartz (Hartford Healthcare), Kara Sepulveda-Fonseca (Alliance for Prevention & Wellness), Richard Siddall (SMART Recovery), Tamara Tarrant, Alyeska Tilly (United Way CT), Nadine Tulloch (DPH), Laura Vandermeulen (DMHAS), Jennifer Vinci (DPH), Kristen Volz-Spessard (CT’s Children), Sara Wakai (UConn Health), Jennifer Waldo (Windsor Health Dept.), Emmalyn Walenda (SERAC), Shebrikea Warburton (CCPG), Marissa White (CHQIS), Tyshaunda Wiley (DPH), LoriBeth Young (DSS), and Omar Ziyadeh.

AGENDA ITEM/TOPIC	SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION	OUTCOME/ACTION /RESPONSIBLE
<b>I. Welcome and Introductions</b>	CTSAB Tri Chairs Andrea Duarte, Stephanie Bozak, an Ann Irr Dagle introduced themselves and welcomed attendees at 9:02 am.	
<b>II. Presentation : Nicole MacHattie Lived Experience Story: <i>Overcoming Trauma and the Strength to Keep Going</i></b>	<p>Nicole shared her lived experience and journey forward.</p> <p>Nicole’s main message: d not give up and your fight and drive is stronger than the pain in this world.</p> <p><b>To view the presentation, visit: <a href="#">CTSAB Jan 2026 Speaker Suicide Prevention.pdf</a></b></p> <p><b>Nicole’s Bio - <a href="https://www.ctclearinghouse.org/Customer-Content/www/files/PDFs/Jan_2026_CTSAB_Presenter_Bio.pdf">https://www.ctclearinghouse.org/Customer-Content/www/files/PDFs/Jan_2026_CTSAB_Presenter_Bio.pdf</a></b></p>	

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<p><b>III. CTSAB Business Reports (Minutes approval)</b></p>	<p>Leslie Mara moved to approve the December 11, 2025 minutes. Alyeska Tilly seconded. Minutes approved.</p> <p><b>Statewide News/Updates from Tri-Chairs - State Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking to a vendor to pursue the format of the plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Suicide-related Grant Initiative Updates – Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Grant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CT DPH Sara Moriarty, Health Program Associate               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Welcomed Alysia Robinson as program manager of CT CSP grant project</li> <li>o CSP Grant NOFO – implement and evaluate the approach to suicide prevention, with attention to disproportionately affected populations (veterans, LGBTQ, homeless, etc.)</li> <li>o CDC expects to give 42 awards with funds ranging from \$650,000 and \$1.2 million                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anticipated for FY26-FY31 and to be posted on Grants.gov</li> </ul> </li> <li>o DPH compiled data of Suicide Attempts (SA) and Suicidal Ideations (SI) separated by age and race/ethnicity                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This is preliminary data, therefore may have false positives and false negatives</li> <li>▪ CT rate of 1,051.44/100,000 population of SI and rate of 177.30/100,000 population of SA</li> <li>▪ The Non-Hispanic Black population have higher rates of SI and SA compared to the CT full population and by each race/ethnicity</li> <li>▪ Ages 10-17 and 25-34 have higher rates of SI and SA compared to CT total rates and compared to other age groups</li> <li>▪ 2024 Suicide data – actual rates and counts by age, race/ethnicity and occupations; active corrections, active law enforcement, and veterans                       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher rates in ages 35-64, non-Hispanic White males, Hispanic males, veterans, and active duty compared to the CT rate</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>o Comment from Kevin Borrup – ages 35-64 is a huge span, so this may be an artificially high count.</li> <li>o Answer - Susan Logan – When looking at the CSP disproportionate populations the decision was to look at the middle ages for grant purposes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>When looking at the curve, it is still higher in these ages and still would have the highest rates among the larger group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Many forecasted grants related to suicide prevention - <a href="https://simpler.grants.gov/search?utm_source=Grants.gov&amp;query=suicide">https://simpler.grants.gov/search?utm_source=Grants.gov&amp;query=suicide</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Garrett Lee Smith Campus Grant – Any campus can apply - March 16<sup>th</sup></li> <li>o Zero Suicide healthcare for adults grant - Feb 16<sup>th</sup></li> <li>o 988 and Tribe Grants - April 15<sup>th</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Statewide Announcements of Upcoming Events/Trainings to highlight from Regional Suicide Advisory Boards (RSABs), Committees and Foundations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was a conference in Boston related to support animals used during crisis support response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Police have taken on support animals for public and their own staff</li> </ul> </li> <li>- If anyone has something to be considered for the listserv, please share it with one of the tri-chairs who will review and forward to Heather Clinger to send via the CTSAB listserv</li> </ul>	
<p><b>IV. Review of Activities since last report out</b></p>	<p><b><u>Committees</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Armed Forces – Governor’s Challenge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Priority area 1 met on 12/29 and are working on CE trainings for clinicians for DMHAS learning system</li> <li>o Priority area 2 – developed many videos to support veterans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="https://www.preventsuicidect.org/get-materials/videos-smvf/">https://www.preventsuicidect.org/get-materials/videos-smvf/</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>o Priority area 3 – working on decreasing access to lethal means</li> <li>o From the technical assistance center – hosting a meeting of leadership for Governor’s Challenge on February 12<sup>th</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>- <b>Data to Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Next meeting is January 21, 2026</li> <li>o Looking at trying to apply what is articulated in goal 5 of the state plan and how to implement in coming years</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>RSABs</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Southern Region 1 – Catalyst   The Hub</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o November – partnered with Norwalk prevention council and trained 556 high school and middle school public school teachers in QPR. Trained certified and non-certified staff.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Working with Local Prevention Councils for youth mental health first aid training in region 1</li> <li>○ Partnering with Norwalk for three Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings in the region (Norwalk, Bridgeport, Wilton) from January through June</li> <li>○ First CALM community training in early December – only 6 registered but 12 showed up</li> <li>- <b>South Central – Region 2 – BHCare   Alliance for Prevention and Wellness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Had conversation about what are the top three risk and protective factors to focus on</li> <li>○ Next meeting February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:30am</li> <li>○ Engaging media partners with sharing reporting on suicide guidelines on safe messaging; including 988 and warning signs to bridge gaps with untimely deaths in communities</li> <li>○ Support project child safe initiatives providing free gun locks - <a href="https://projectchildsafe.org/">https://projectchildsafe.org/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Partnered with New Haven Police Department</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Support Hope signage initiative and expanding locations for 988 signs for residential areas - expanding to residential and shopping plazas                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Distributed 40 metal signs across 10 towns</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ QPR training Jan 28<sup>th</sup> at 12pm</li> <li>○ Let's Save Lives – intro to suicide prevention in Black and African American communities in Feb 19<sup>th</sup> at 12pm                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="https://www.apw-ct.org/events">https://www.apw-ct.org/events</a> for sign ups</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>V. Updates from Awareness Campaign / Website / Outreach efforts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Web statistics for December: over 5,000 views to website pages with the top four being the 988 page, about suicide page, warning signs, and facts and figures</li> <li>- Campaign – in process of working on in-store audio message to be played over intercoms at pharmacies and grocery stores</li> <li>- If you have a suggestion for a page for the website, reach out to Jeanette Baker</li> <li>- Transforming Children’s Behavioral Health Committee is looking at how they can continue to promote the crisis continuum - how we can support and enhance work being done to promote the resources CTSAB shares</li> </ul>	

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<b>VI. Close of Coalition Meeting</b>	Coalition meeting ended at 10:13am																																																													
<b>VII. Board Meeting</b>	<p>Board meeting began at 10:14am with the following voting members in attendance:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 33%;">Amery</td><td style="width: 33%;">Bernhardt</td><td style="width: 34%;">CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation</td></tr> <tr><td>Kate</td><td>Bohannan</td><td>CT State Dept. of Education</td></tr> <tr><td>Kevin</td><td>Borrupt</td><td>Connecticut Children’s</td></tr> <tr><td>Dana</td><td>Bossio</td><td>Cooperative Educational Services</td></tr> <tr><td>Stephanie</td><td>Bozak</td><td>CT Dept. of Children and Families</td></tr> <tr><td>Bill</td><td>Brassard</td><td>National Shooting Sports Foundation</td></tr> <tr><td>Kevin</td><td>Burns</td><td>CT Dept. of Transportation</td></tr> <tr><td>Kathleen</td><td>Chapman</td><td>CT Psychological Association</td></tr> <tr><td>Ann</td><td>Dagle</td><td>Brian Dagle Foundation</td></tr> <tr><td>Andrea</td><td>Duarte</td><td>CT Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services</td></tr> <tr><td>Valerie</td><td>Lepoutre</td><td>National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) CT</td></tr> <tr><td>Susan</td><td>Logan</td><td>CT Dept. of Public Health</td></tr> <tr><td>Cathy</td><td>Ludlum</td><td>Second Thoughts Connecticut</td></tr> <tr><td>Steve</td><td>MacHattie</td><td>Charter Oak Family Center</td></tr> <tr><td>Abby</td><td>Maldonado</td><td>Western CT Coalition</td></tr> <tr><td>Lesley</td><td>Mara</td><td>CT State Colleges and Universities</td></tr> <tr><td>Allyson</td><td>Nadeau</td><td>Amplify, Inc.</td></tr> <tr><td>Sara</td><td>Wakai</td><td>UConn Health</td></tr> <tr><td>Marissa</td><td>White</td><td>Correctional Healthcare Quality Improvement Solutions</td></tr> <tr><td>LoriBeth</td><td>Young</td><td>CT Dept. of Social Services</td></tr> </table> <p>Coalition members in attendance (non-voting):            Alice DeMeo (DCF), Elisha Logan (HAS Wellness Consultants), Alyeska Tilly (United Way of CT), Jennifer Vinci, Omar Ziyaden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Been a year since voting on bylaws and voting on structure. Need feedback on how things are going:</li> <li>- Structure of CTSAB agenda</li> </ul>	Amery	Bernhardt	CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation	Kate	Bohannan	CT State Dept. of Education	Kevin	Borrupt	Connecticut Children’s	Dana	Bossio	Cooperative Educational Services	Stephanie	Bozak	CT Dept. of Children and Families	Bill	Brassard	National Shooting Sports Foundation	Kevin	Burns	CT Dept. of Transportation	Kathleen	Chapman	CT Psychological Association	Ann	Dagle	Brian Dagle Foundation	Andrea	Duarte	CT Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services	Valerie	Lepoutre	National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) CT	Susan	Logan	CT Dept. of Public Health	Cathy	Ludlum	Second Thoughts Connecticut	Steve	MacHattie	Charter Oak Family Center	Abby	Maldonado	Western CT Coalition	Lesley	Mara	CT State Colleges and Universities	Allyson	Nadeau	Amplify, Inc.	Sara	Wakai	UConn Health	Marissa	White	Correctional Healthcare Quality Improvement Solutions	LoriBeth	Young	CT Dept. of Social Services	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Abby Maldonado – Suggested adding time frames to the agenda to ensure everyone gets their time. Put if anyone else has general updates at end of conversation. Also, would love to see more opportunities for people to know how they can get involved. As a member, what we have is great for information dissemination, but not for the public to know what they can do with the information.</li> <li>○ Move CT business reports, or federal and mandatory things to the end of meeting so the presentation and ways to get involved are at the beginning. Suggestion to use a catch-up e-mail of what has happened in the past so meeting can be for what is coming up.</li> <li>○ Ann Irr Dagle – suggested to have a social media page for each region to post for community focus updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will send survey out to get feedback</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Susan Logan – How are presentation times determined? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plan to keep within a 30 minute period, including Q&amp;A</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ If anyone has other ideas, please send to Stephanie, Andrea or Ann</li> <li>- Structure of committees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If people can't come to CTSAB meetings, do they have to step away from board?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- As of March 1, 2026, Ann Irr Dagle is stepping away as tri-chair, but will still be on the board and postvention committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Seeking a third tri-chair –hope is someone with lived experience or someone with differing experience than Andrea and Stephanie to ensure various viewpoints and inclusion</li> <li>○ Application process – don't have formal application – official appointments come from DCF Commissioner. We have board membership development form, but generally anyone on board could be candidate for chair. If those beyond board want to, should they be able to? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All were in agreement that the board is open to coalition for someone from the coalition to be on board as well as show how people can become voting members.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Lesley Mara moved to empower the tri-chairs to develop an interest form and disseminate on the board's behalf. Cathy Ludlum seconded. No opposition. Motion passed unanimously.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jessie Casella is co-chair of lethal means committee and priority area 3 of Governor’s challenge. She is leaving the VA hospital to work in the DMHAS forensic division. Lethal means committee notified at the January meeting. There is now an opening for a co-chair.</li> <li>- Bylaws do not indicate the process for if someone on the committee level steps away. Board will look at this when reviewing the bylaws.</li> <li>- Currently looking at the welcome message when someone joins listserv for coalition. Hopefully can embed an orientation slide deck for new members in the message.</li> <li>- May conference update provided by Alice DeMeo: there is a planning meeting in the next few weeks where they will confirm location and date. Tentative keynote speaker and outline of speakers to be discussed at the next meeting.</li> <li>- No February meeting because of state holiday.</li> </ul>	
	Board meeting adjourned at 10:55am	
<p><b>2025-2026 Meeting Schedule</b></p> <p>Meetings are the second Thursday of the month</p> <p>Coalition meeting: 9:00am—10:30am</p> <p>Board meeting: 10:30am-11:00am</p> <p><b>Meetings are currently scheduled virtually. Please refer to the monthly meeting announcement for meeting information.</b></p>	<p><b>2026 Meeting Dates/Presentations (2nd Thursday monthly):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2/12: (state holiday, no meeting)</li> <li>- 3/12: Dena Miccinello-Barbarula, The Intersectionality of Suicide Prevention and Problem Gambling</li> <li>- 4/9: Megan Avery and Laura Vandermeulen, DMHAS MSW Interns, Research on AI and Youth Mental Health</li> <li>- 5/14: State Conference (<i>Registration required</i>)</li> <li>- 6/11: Christine Cha, Ph.D., JG Consulting, Joiner Theory and New Research</li> <li>- 7/9: TBD</li> <li>- 8/13: James Geisler, Ph.D., Yale Child Study Center, New Research in the Field of Suicide and Capturing the Youth Perspective</li> <li>- 9/10: (World Suicide Prevention Day) Paula Gill-Lopez, Self Care and Wellness Practices for Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Specialists</li> <li>- 10/8: Lisette Rimer, Author, Back From Suicide: Personal Story of Suicide Loss</li> <li>- 11/12: Elisha Logan, Suicide prevention and the use of the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) in the veteran population</li> <li>- 12/10: Year End Committee Summaries</li> </ul>	

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	<b>Subcommittee meetings are listed in the monthly meeting announcement sent on the CTSAB listserv.</b>	