

Box Butte County Suicide Prevention Coalition
May 26, 6:00 pm
Box Butte General Hospital

Present: Mary Wernke, Kim Engel, Ralph Yaeger, Sister Karen McCrory, Bill Reno, Dan Carlson, Maria Swenson, Cyndi Sample, Janet Schwaderer, and Brenda McDonald.

Local Crisis Response Team

A representative from the Local Crisis Response Team, Cindy Raznack, presented on the functions of the LCRT. The team is called upon when someone at risk of suicide presents at the Emergency Room. Health professionals on staff call one of the four mental health care providers in Alliance on the LCRT for a suicidal assessment. Assessments result in an emergency protective custody order, creation of a safety plan, and or referral for follow-up.

Data received from Region 1 for Box Butte County for the last 2 years is:
FY-09 (July 01, 2008 -June 30 2009)

Local Crisis Response Team (LCRT)
51 assessments were done
10 of the 51 were taken into Emergency protective custody

EPC's for Box Butte County in FY-09 18
This will include the 10 that were seen by LCRT

FY-10
July1, 2009 – Current (FY-10 ends June 30, 2010)

Local Crisis Response Team
58 assessments were done
19 of 58 seen were taken into Emergency Protective Custody

EPC's for Box Butte County on FY-10
(This information if up to April 30, 2010) 24
This will include the 19 that were seen by the LCRT

Risk and Protective Factor and Warning Signs of Suicide

Information was distributed about the risk and protective factors of suicide. Risk Factors are:

- Previous suicide act
- Mental disorders-particularly mood disorders
- Co-occurring mental and alcohol and substance abuse disorders
- Family history of suicide
- Hopelessness
- Impulsive and/or aggressive tendencies

- Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- Relational, social, work, or financial loss
- Physical illness
- Easy access to lethal methods, especially guns
- Age, culture, lack of connectedness
- Substance abuse

Protective Factors are:

- Getting help for mental, physical and substance abuse disorders – especially depression
- Restricted access to highly lethal methods of suicide – especially firearms
- Family and community support
- An established relationship with a doctor, clergy, teacher, counselor or other professional who can help
- Connectedness to community, family, friends

Suicide Warning Signs – warning signs go beyond risk factors for suicide. The warning signs are evident in what people say and do. When any of the warning signs listed below are present, it is important to take action immediately – know what to say and do to make a difference and prevent suicide when possible. Warning signs are:

- Talking, reading or writing about suicide or death
- Talking about feeling worthless or helpless
- Saying things like, “I’m going to kill myself,” “I wish I was dead,” or “I shouldn’t have been born”
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving things away or returning borrowed items
- Self destructive or reckless behavior
- Significant change in behavior
- A sense of hopelessness about their situation – Those who feel hopeless may make statements like this:
 - There is no point in going on
 - I can’t take it anymore
 - I have nothing left to live for
 - I can’t stop the pain
 - I can’t seem to make decisions
 - I can’t live without _____
 - My life keeps getting worse and worse
 - I might as well kill myself

Tips for intervening with someone who is suicidal are:

1. Ask the Question, “Are you thinking about suicide?”
2. Listen and look for warning signs and risk factors
3. Ask about reasons for living and plans they have made for dying

4. Take Action – remove lethal means like guns and pills, offer support in seeking professional help, don't leave the person alone, remind the person that seeking help for depression isn't a sign of weakness and that chances for recovery are excellent, and remember that you may have to break a confidence to save a life.

Area wide assessment

Panhandle Public Health District continues to work on the area wide assessment covering the 10 counties in its jurisdiction. Meetings are planned throughout the panhandle as part of the process.

Action Plan

Those present reviewed the strategic plan developed a few months earlier and chose 3 priority areas to begin work. Priority areas chosen are: **Community Awareness of Problem of Suicide, Suicide Prevention Training and Education, and Visible Accessible Assistance**. Also ranking high was Supported Compassionate Response to Suicide.

Community Awareness of Problem of Suicide – The group felt it was important not to reinvent the wheel. There are a lot of materials available that we can use and adapt. The following list was generated as means to disseminate information: create a mental health directory to appear on a regular basis in the newspaper, get information out on the public access TV channels, place ads in papers, include info in utility bills, disseminate through the school system, link to websites (YMCA, PPHD, Q County, Guidance Counselors, BBGH, PMH, Churches) run PSA's, have city council proclamations, have content experts appear on talk shows. There was consensus that we need to highlight September as Suicide Prevention month and to use the Walk out of Darkness as a central point to increase awareness.

Suicide Prevention Training and Education – The group set a goal to have QPR training at least quarterly. There was discussion if some pre-work was necessary to offer support after the QPR training especially if youth were taking the training. Dan Carlson has agreed to complete a certificate course as school suicide prevention professional.

Visible Accessible Assistance – Ideas generated were to create a directory of mental health providers, and increasing our understanding as well as the community's understanding of resources available for help.

Next Steps

The group felt it was important to better define our role and purpose as a coalition. This will be on the next agenda. Kim will contact Region 1, Faith Mills, to find possible QPR training dates. Each member present thought about who they could invite to the training. The next coalition meeting is planned for Wednesday, June 23, at 6:00 at BBGH Sandhills Room. Items currently on the agenda are: Better define our role, plan awareness campaign for September and the Walk out of Darkness, plan quarterly QPR training.