

Box Butte County Suicide Task Force

June 23, 2010

The task force met at the BBGH in the Sandhills room at the Medical Arts Plaza. Present: Brenda McDonald, Donna and Aaron Jones, Kathy Chuston, Kim Engel, Shawna Rischling, Mia Knotts and Mary Wernke.

The minutes were reviewed and the assessment for the Panhandle (to date) was reviewed. Donna shared additional information of current names of mental health practitioners in Alliance to be added to the list from Panhandle Mental Health Center. Kim is also getting a list from Boy's Town to be consolidated into the same resource list.

Someone also suggested we try to get information about local referrals to the RWMC 5th floor psych unit. A suggestion was to survey local medical providers a very short survey regarding referrals, training, policies and procedures, etc. Kim will check with Dr. Narjes how this might be accomplished. Mia also suggested we contact Mary Armstrong, director of behavioral health at RWMC, for additional local data regarding referrals from Box Butte County.

Following a discussion of the three top priority areas from the previous minutes, the group chose to concentrate their work on community awareness of the problem of suicide, suicide prevention training and education and visible accessible assistance. Next the group reviewed partially completed assessment and offered additional resources for the included resource list.

Kathy presented the statistics for Box Butte County suicides since 2003, when the current county attorney took office. They include 25 suicides, 12 for people under age 30. The following stats are thru today's date in 2010.

Year	Total	Under age 30
2003	3	2
2004	2	0
2005	2	1
2006	3	1
2007	4	2
2008	3	0
2009	3	3
2010	5	3

The group spent some time discussing the Out of Darkness Walks for September 18. The walk is planned for Laing Lake, with the main goal of awareness. A secondary goal is to raise money, but the funds will go to a national organization – American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Donna has created some posters and begun distribution. PPHD will help with the poster to make contact info more visible at Donna's request. Both PPHD and BBGH have offered to create color copies of the poster and help to distribute them throughout the community. PPHD will also send a copy of the flyer to local ministers to include in church bulletins in August. Contact information for persons wishing to get sponsors for the walk are to call Donna at 760-4188.

As additional publicity, Mary will create a news release and Maria will ask Bev Twogood to put the info on public access TV. Various social media avenues will also be used and possibly a radio talk show. Mary will check with Bonnie Wallace at BBGH about a live broadcast on KCOW. She will also create talking points for people to use at the interviews, broadcast and talk show and in case anyone asks. She will also coordinate with Cassie Zurn to do an article about the Brock Mai horseshoe tournament this coming weekend in Alliance.

The group also decided to purchase more "Out of the Darkness" bracelets from the AFSP website to give to participants. Some people may choose to have personalized T-shirts in memory of their loved ones lost to suicide, but some may choose to receive an Out of Darkness T-shirt for raising money for AFSP.

Lastly, the QPR training for June 30 in Alliance and July 9 in Hemingford was discussed. A news release has already gone to the media and copies were available for those present to share with others. Mary can also email copies of the release to anyone who requests it to share with others via email.

The group chose the name Suicide Task Force to encompass both prevention and support for survivors and to include both youth and adults in their mission.

The next meeting is July 21 at the Alliance Library, Room C from 6-8 p.m.