

1. Problem Identification

Purpose:

Using suicide rates and other related data, identify problem areas to be explored.

Activities:

- Select problems and geographic areas or organizations to address via community mobilization.
- Identify a few community stakeholders.
- Obtain suicide related data to encourage participation.
- Define a plan of approach for exploration and engagement.

Resources/Inputs:

- National Strategy for Suicide Prevention
- Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Suicide Related Statistics

Results/Outputs:

- Specific problem areas to be explored.
- Identity of community to be mobilized
- Identity of a few community stakeholders
- Community-specific, suicide related data reports
- Plan of approach for exploration and engagement

Description:

Begin implementation by forming a partnership with a few community stakeholders who are willing to explore taking action to prevent suicide. Either start your own partnership or search for an existing task force or coalition that may be interested in suicide prevention. For example, make contact with drug prevention, mental health, or other suicide prevention coalitions to see if suicide prevention fits within their mission. There are helpful resources on the web to help you form and maintain coalitions.

You and your partners may have come together to address a specific, urgent need arising from a local tragedy or family tragedy and may be tempted to focus only on one area of suicide prevention. Certainly, tragedy close-to-home encourages interest and participation. We encourage you to seek information about suicide and suicide prevention so that you may create action plans that are best for your community. Learn about the warning signs of suicide, risk and protective factors, prevention methods, available resources, and suicide related statistics for your area. This may be accomplished by

checking out major suicide prevention websites, gathering information from other people, and collecting statistics for your community.

1. Websites

Visit the major suicide prevention websites. These sites will give you a general knowledge of suicide prevention and available resources.

2. Information Gathering

Talk to people in your community to learn what has happened in the past relating to suicide and suicide prevention. Ask if there are any activities in progress or planned that might be related to suicide prevention. You may benefit from attending meetings of related coalitions or task forces. The purpose of these discussions is twofold: to learn about your community's history with suicide prevention and to socially market your cause.

3. Data Collection

Learn about your location's demographics by using the American Fact Finder feature of the U.S. Census website. Gather your state and county statistics relating to suicide. Identify the specific problem areas that you and your partners wish to address by examining the statistics to identify significant problem areas and demographic groups.

The following examples show how data may influence the problem areas you choose to address.

- a) If your county has a large elder population and the suicide rate is highest among older males, you may choose to focus on suicide prevention for males over 60.
- b) If the suicide attempt rate for youth has risen steadily for the past three years, you may choose to select from evidence-based suicide prevention practices targeted to youth aged 13-21.
- c) The suicide rate for high school students in your community may point to the need for school-based suicide prevention strategies that include parents, students, and school personnel.
- d) If there is a high correlation between arrests for alcohol and drug abuse and suicide attempts in rural areas, you may choose to focus on suicide prevention in juvenile detention facilities and in adult jails with populations from rural areas.

The information you have identified so far will help you to identify and entice other stakeholders in your community who might be interested in joining your coalition. Consider forming a broad-based coalition consisting of representatives from the following groups:

- Business
- Mental Health
- Juvenile Justice

- Sheriff's Department
- Mental Health Advocates
- Survivor's Groups
- Department of Children and Families
- Migrant/Farm Workers
- Minority Groups
- Colleges/Universities
- Technical Schools
- High Schools
- Elementary Schools
- Related Coalitions (e.g., substance abuse prevention)

Develop a plan for contacting and engaging the people you identify.