

6. Evaluation

Purpose:

Measure the success of an implementation project for the purpose of tracking to expected outcomes.

Activities:

- Implement data collection and reporting methods (e.g., track suicide rates) to measure outcomes.
- Compare outcomes to expectations.
- Analyze outcomes.
- Identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- Report outcomes, strengths, and opportunities to stakeholders.
- Bring stakeholders together to create an action plan based on evaluation findings.
- Share findings with other communities.
- Consider applying for inclusion in Best or Evidence-Based Practices Registries.

Resources/Input:

- Completed community actions and goals
- Evaluation instruments and methods
- Data collection and reporting processes
- Existing evidence-based and best-practice models and measures of fidelity

Results/Output:

- Outcome measures
- Evaluation report
- Identified strengths and opportunities
- Stakeholder action plan
- Measure of the level of implementation of Florida's Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Measure of project effectiveness
- Additional best and/or evidence-based practices for suicide prevention

Description:

The objective of the 2005 Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy is to reduce suicide rates by a third by the year 2010. When your coalition began to implement the Strategy, you likely set goals for suicide rate reduction. In step 6, you will see how the actions you've taken have affected the suicide rates in your community. Based on your findings, your

coalition will identify what is working well and what can be improved. You may share your findings with others so as to create a “community of learning” where coalitions and communities learn from each others’ experiences.

Begin by comparing your actual outcomes to the goals in the Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy. Has your community met the three goals of the Strategy? How successful have you been in addressing the ten objectives the Strategy? What have you learned that could help other communities with their implementations?

In step 1, you identified suicide-related statistics that were important to you, your coalition, and/or your community. Check the statistics again. Are they higher or lower than you expected? If the outcomes are unacceptable to your coalition, find out what might have influenced the numbers, such as a large number of veterans recently returning from a war zone. Even if suicide rates have decreased, continue to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. Even one lost life is too many.

Through your chosen social marketing methods, continue to let your stakeholders know about the progress and outcomes of suicide prevention actions. Let them know about opportunities to further decrease the suicide rates. Bring stakeholders together to create an action plan based on evaluation findings.

You may be able to relate a decrease in the number of suicides to specific action taken by your coalition. If you believe this action has potential for becoming a best practice, consider applying for inclusion in Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)/American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA’s) Best Practices Registries.