
Juneau Community Suicide Prevention

February 18, 2009

Task Force NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 3

FUTURE FUTURE MEETINGS

OVERSIGHT

Thursday, March 12th
4:00 PM,
JAMHI upstairs

HIGH-RISK

Thursday, March 12th,
8:15 AM
Love Inc. Conf. Room
9741 Mendenhall Loop

MENTAL HEALTH With PUBLIC AWARENESS

Thursday, March 12th
3:00 PM
JAMHI upstairs

TRAINING

Tuesday, March 10th
12:00 PM
Destiny Sargeant's office
SEARCH

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

SOS Ya Koos

Planning Meeting

Monday, Feb. 23rd

9:00 AM, Ya Koos

SOS implementation at Ya Koos;

Tue. -Wed. Feb 24-25

Tue. -Wed. March 3-4

Task Force In Full Swing as it Implements Suicide Prevention Strategies!

The community of Juneau continues to demonstrate it's passion for the promotion of quality of life for all it community members. That passion cannot be more clearly illustrated in the commitment and volunteer efforts of so many individuals who consistently drive the energy behind The Juneau Community Suicide Task Force. A great deal of recognition has to go out to all those individual Parents, Physicians, Counselors, Alaska Native Leaders, Nurses, Educators, Psychiatrists, Social Workers, Clergy, Police Officers, Juneau Media, or other community members who work along side the Task Force to make this process work. We want to also welcome the Juneau Coalition for Youth who will work with us to prevent suicide in Alaska. In a very short period of time this Task Force and additional community members have developed what could be considered the basic foundation of a model community suicide prevention plan for the State of Alaska. Thanks to your efforts we are developing plans and putting into action very sound and thoughtful suicide awareness and prevention strategies that truly are about improving the quality of life for all of us. Thank you again for helping save the lives of members of our community who needlessly die by the very often, desperate impulsive act of suicide. ***Suicide Prevention Works!***

TASK FORCE MEMBERS INVITED TO ATTEND GRANT AWARD CEREMONY WITH SENATOR MURKOWSKI, COMMISSIONER HOGAN AND DR. BRODERICK, DIRECTOR OF SAMHSA

After reading newspaper articles about the "Juneau Community Suicide Prevention Task Force and "SOS", in a local Fairbanks Newspaper this past November, Senator Lisa Murkowski developed an interest in meeting with the "Task Force" this winter. This past Fall the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services was awarded a large grant from the U.S. Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), to address suicide prevention across the State. Dr. Broderick, Acting Director of SAMHSA will present the grant award to Commissioner Hogan, of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, at Juneau Douglas High School Library, on February 19th, at 3:00PM. Commissioner Hogan and James Gallanos, Alaska State Coordinator of Suicide Prevention has invited the Task Force to attend the ceremony and would also like to recognize us for our efforts and partnerships. Since Senator Murkowski wanted to attend the Grant award ceremony and also had interest in meeting with the "Task Force" when she came to Juneau, all members of Juneau Community Suicide Prevention Task Force are encouraged to attend this grant award event.

What To Do

Here are some ways to be helpful to someone who is dealing with suicidal ideation



~Get help by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or Careline 1-877-266-4357

~Go to the Juneau Community Suicide Prevention Web Page and seek mental health support from the Mental Health Directory;

~Take action. Remove means, such as guns or pills

~Don't dare him or her to do it. Don't be sworn to secrecy.

~Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.

~Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.

~Get involved. Become available. Show interest and seek support.

~Don't act shocked or judgmental. This will put distance between you.

~Offer hope that alternatives are available.

The Juneau Community Suicide Prevention Web Page

The Juneau Community Suicide Prevention Web Page is now complete and available to the general public thanks to the efforts of the Public Awareness and Mental Health Committees and Web Page designer, **Colleen Norman**. Please visit the web page at;

www.juneausuicideprevention.org

As previously planned the Web Page will be developed in two stages. Now that the first phase is complete, the planning and implementation stages of the second phase of the Web Page should be complete within several weeks. Many individuals in Juneau feel it is very difficult to obtain access to mental health services in Juneau as a result of the multitude of agencies, overlapping services and confusion on what agencies provide what services. Mental Health providers are also often times confused. Through the suicide prevention grant, **Kevin Ritchie** has been hired to survey all non-profit and private mental health providers in Juneau in order to list their services in a **user-friendly link** providing an organized list of **“Mental Health Resources in Juneau”**. If an individual is seeking advice on where or how to obtain mental health services or would like to scroll a directory of mental health providers organized by different mental health subcategories, such as substance abuse, they merely follow the directory to read about what services are available in Juneau, given their mental health concern. The web page will also be going through some other minor changes on the toolbar. Kevin has worked tirelessly on this task for the last two months. A special thanks also goes to **Gus Marx**, with JYS, for his technological assistance with survey data collection.

Additional strategies in the very near future from Public Awareness and Mental Health include the development of **bus signs for the city buses addressing suicide prevention and awareness**. The Careline number and address for the Juneau Community Suicide Prevention Web Page will be incorporated into this sign. **Ron King** is providing a generous donation for this endeavor through funds he has raised for suicide awareness and prevention. We want to thank Gus again for his assistance in developing and editing the bus signs. The Public Awareness Committee is also working with the High-Risk Committee to assist them as they plan on the final stages of printing and distributing suicide awareness and prevention information for the Elderly. This committee will also be involved in future public service announcements via newspaper and radio, regarding suicide awareness and prevention in Juneau.

U.S. Army desperately needs Mental Health Providers

The U. S. Army revealed last week the number of suicides occurring in 2008 is at its highest rate since Vietnam. The current number of suicides reported could go even higher as many of soldiers deaths are still under investigation, and it would appear some of the deaths may have been self-inflicted. At a recent news conference at the Pentagon, Army officials noted a drastic shortage and desperate need for more mental health providers to provide services to the armed forces.

Alarming rise in the national rate of suicide for 10-19 year olds

A new study conducted at The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital revealed an 18 percent increase in the suicide rates of youth 10 to 19, following a decade of steady decline. Researchers said the increase represents the largest single-year change in the pediatric suicide rate over the past 15 years.

Fortunately, the emotional crises that so often precede suicide are both recognizable and treatable, and good prevention programs can teach youth how to recognize the symptoms of depression

“Signs of Suicide”

High School Curriculum in Juneau; A Great Success

The Signs of Suicide (SOS) program, which involves school based mental health curriculum about depression and suicide prevention, as well as mental health screenings for High School Students, has been a great success thus far in the Juneau School District. So far the program has been presented to all Freshman students. The SOS program was conducted at **Thunder Mountain High School**, December 9th and 10th, 2008, and then again at **Juneau Douglas High School** January 27th and 28th, 2009. Of the 345 Freshman students at TMHS and JDHS, who received the SOS curriculum, 13 Opted-out (4%) which meant 332 screens were administered. Seventy-Eight of those students, or **23% of the Freshman class met the diagnostic criteria of Major Depression in the last six months and/or experienced suicidal ideation or suicidal behaviors in the last year.** All 78 students were called in individually for more in-depth mental health interviews. Clinicians then formulated mental health recommendations based on the information that was provided, called Parents and made these recommendations to the Parents. They also provided them resources on where to get mental health support. Without question there was overwhelming support, and thanks and appreciation from the Parents that were contacted. We did not have any kids that were at imminent risk of suicide but we did refer a few to JYS for a risk assessment to occur within three days. This process set in motion a healthy, proactive process, for the highest risk mental health population of Freshman in Juneau and that process is in full swing today and will continue. The process gave very young adolescents valuable life long messages regarding the “do’s” and “don’ts” if they or their friends are dealing with depression and/or suicidal thinking/behaviors.

Special Thanks go to;

The Teen Health Center, JAMHI, JYS, Bartlett Emergency Room and Mental Health Unit, Bartlett Out-Patient Psychiatric Services, JPD, and OCS, for their tremendous Juneau Community Mental Health Support!

A first year mental health project like this takes a great deal of cooperation, communication, planning organizing, and training due to all the procedural and logistical issues the Juneau School District and Juneau Mental Health Community must consider in the preparation, implementation and potential mental health intervention stages of the SOS program. We have a unique situation in Juneau in that we do not have inpatient psychiatric services available for those 18 and younger. It is an issue we all need to advocate for. Given this challenge, the Juneau mental health community problem solved how we are going to make this process work in Juneau, **to keep our kids safe.**

Ya Koos SOS days; Tue-Wed. Feb 24 and 25, then again the next week; Tue-Wed. March 3 and 4th. We will present the SOS program to 30 kids a day at Ya Koos. Over 120 students will go through the program.

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

“How to be a Better Trainer” workshop will be held in Juneau at Catholic Community Services, on Thursday, April 2nd.

“GATEKEEPER SUICIDE AWARENESS” taught by James Gallanos assisted by others who are Trained Trainers in the Gatekeeper model, will be held in Juneau at Catholic Community Services, on Friday April 3rd, 2009.

Training
Committee needs
committed
members to join
their group

CONTACT:
Destiny Sargeant at
463-4087 or
Ann Turner Olson
723-5219
About these trainings
and/or joining their
Committee!

TRAINING COMMITTEE UPDATES

. Upcoming Training!

Dates; April 2nd and April 3rd

Location; Catholic Community Services

The training Committee will offer two courses which will be taught back to back and **may be taken separately as stand alone courses or taken together**. A one-day “How to be a Better Trainer” workshop will be held in Juneau, on **Thursday, April 2nd**. The training goal is to increase the skill sets of persons who currently provide any type of training within their social service agency, or plan to do so in the future. **Draft agenda:** train-the-trainers in skills facilitation development for any training, any model. Staff from Juneau human service agencies who do, or could do, training in suicide awareness and prevention will be invited. This will be a unique opportunity for trainers to receive specific skill development doing any type of training in any model. Persons who will be invited will include all the individuals previously trained in the Gatekeeper suicide prevention model, staff from Juneau human service agencies (JYS, JAMHI, NAMO, Polaris House, CSS, BRH, RRC, DOC, T&H, AWARE, JDSD JPD, DJJ, OCS, USCG, VA and more) who do, or could do, training in suicide awareness and prevention.

A one-day course “GATEKEEPER SUICIDE AWARENESS” and will be taught by **James Gallanos** assisted by others who are Trained Trainers in the Gatekeeper model, Friday April 3rd, 2009. This course can stand alone by itself and/or may include the same persons attending the “How to be a Better Training Course. The trainers will be persons previously trained in this model. This course is targeted for para-professionals and professional staff from Juneau human service agencies (JYS, JAMHI, NAMO, Polaris House, CSS, BRH, RRC, DOC, T&H, AWARE, JDSD JPD, DJJ, OCS, USCG, VA and more).

Future Trainings

Fall 2009 – The Training Committee anticipates an Annual 2-day training with CEUs targeted toward clinicians and other professionals. The Fall training will likely be a two- day ICSF (**International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.**) training is planned for Juneau and will be presented by **Destiny Sargeant, PhD**. This will be targeted toward clinical and other professional staff and **CEUs will be available**. The training for this course is also included as one of ICISF’s basic certificate courses for specialization.

In 2010, the training committee plans to offer the two-day **ASIST** (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and invite **Iva GreyWolf Ph.D.**, a clinical psychologist from Sitka and nationally recognized trainer in many areas of behavioral health including suicide. **In 2011**, We would like to invite Iva GreyWolf Ph.D., a clinical psychologist from Sitka to consider doing training. She is trained in several models.

Suicide and the Elderly

The rate of suicide for the elderly for 2005 was 14.7 per 100,000.

Nationally, males over the age of 65 have the highest rate of completed suicide, and as they get older the rates go consistently higher

One of the leading causes of suicide among the elderly is depression, and it is often undiagnosed and/or untreated.

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## *Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals High Risk For suicide:*

It is difficult to research Gays Lesbians and Bisexual youth suicide because many young gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, have not "come out." But it has been estimated that as many as 30 percent of all youth suicides are completed by gays, lesbians, or bisexuals.

## HIGH-RISK COMMITTEE UPDATES

### The Elderly

The sub-committee focusing on the elderly includes Jeri Museth, Don Phelps, and Lucy Gifford. They have developed wonderful brochures to be left in strategic places and with these individuals/professionals highlighting this at risk group for depression and or risk of suicide and their need for close support. They are investigating strategies to help elders who might be experiencing mental health concerns by identifying four significant groups of people who might have frequent contact with Elders. These include; Family members, Caretakers, Physicians and Nurses and those that provide Meals-on-Wheels delivery services. This sub-committee is now going to address suicide prevention awareness strategies with the homeless population, gay and lesbian population and veterans.

### High-Risk 18 to 25 Year Olds

This sub-committee, recognize these young adults maybe disconnected from Family and the Community since they no longer are supported by their Parents or Caregivers, and do not have many of the educational, social services and mental health supports afforded to them when they were 18 or younger. Given the high risk of suicide for those that struggle with this life transition, and potentially face problems related to substance abuse, unemployment, economic hardship, and mental health problems, the committee will be producing suicide prevention and mental health awareness materials in the very near future. They will rely on the support of the Public Awareness Committee, for printing and distribution of these materials

### NAMI –Juneau Family to Family Program

**Those with mental illness are at a particularly higher risk for suicide.** Programs like Family-to-Family that can help maintain strong family and community support for those with mental illness and for their families. This is an essential ingredient for promoting health and wellness

NAMI-Juneau will be offering two evening Family to Family Classes beginning in early February. One class will be offered at Parkshore Condominiums. Each class is a free 12-week course taught by trained NAMI Instructors who have lived with this experience and offers education, support and advocacy skills for families, friends and associates of those with mental illness.

Sadly, left unattended, the stresses associated with mental illness can destroy family ties, friendships and positive working relationships. The results can be devastating for families and for the person with the mental illness. This course teaches the knowledge and skills that family members, friends and associates need to cope more effectively. This course has a clear and proven track record nationally and here in Juneau. For more information contact Aaron Hozid, Executive Director NAMI-Juneau, phone; 463-4251 [ahozid@alaska.net](mailto:ahozid@alaska.net)