



# ICRC-S

## Injury Control Research Center for Suicide Prevention



## Shatter the Silence: Lessons Learned from Mississippi's Suicide Prevention Program

Presenter: Dr. John Bartkowski  
Moderator: Jennifer Allison

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# Meeting Orientation

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- This meeting is being recorded and an archive of this recording will be sent out to all participants after the session.
- We are unable to issue CEUs or certificates for this webinar.

# Polls



# Our Presenter



## **Dr. John Bartkowski**

Professor of Sociology at the  
University of Texas at San Antonio

Evaluator of the Mississippi Youth Suicide  
Prevention Project, Shatter the Silence

# Youth Suicide in Perspective

- In the US and MS, suicide is a leading cause of youth and young adult mortality
- Suicide ideation and attempts are linked to mental health adversities
- Suicide risks in Mississippi
  - Social disadvantage (poverty); natural and technological disasters (Katrina, Gulf oil spill, MS River flood), drug use (alcohol onset)

# MS's Suicide Prevention Initiative

- Garrett Lee Smith state grantee (Cohort 7)
  - Currently in second year of three-year grant
- Shatter the Silence
  - Administered by the MS Department of Mental Health (Kris Jones, Project Director)
  - Dream of Hattiesburg as primary partner (Linda Vasquez, ED; Johnny Hansell, Project Coordinator)

# MS's Suicide Prevention Initiative

- Goals of Shatter the Silence
  - Goal 1. Increase number of persons in youth-serving organizations (e.g., schools, juvenile justice system) trained to identify and refer youth (ages 15-24) at risk for suicide
    - Use Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) to train gatekeepers (e.g., teachers, coaches, foster care workers, probation officers) in suicide risk identification and mental health referral

# MS's Suicide Prevention Initiative

- Goals of Shatter the Silence
  - Goal 2. Increase number of health, mental health, & substance abuse specialists trained to assess, manage, & treat youth at risk for suicide
    - Use Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) to train mental health professionals in suicide assessment, management, and treatment
    - Partner with Mobile Crisis Response Teams to address postvention, emergent threats (clustering)



# MS's Suicide Prevention Initiative

- Goals of Shatter the Silence
  - Goals 3-5. Increase number of youth
    - (3) identified as at risk for suicide
    - (4) referred for mental health services
    - (5) receiving mental health services
  - Gatekeepers in youth-serving organizations identify, refer, and (as able) track receipt of services; report information to project coordinator or state evaluator

# MS's Suicide Prevention Initiative

- Goals of Shatter the Silence
  - Goal 6. Increase promotion of National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
    - Lifeline number now widely circulated through various outlets and all materials
    - Creation of website and social media campaign to promote suicide risk awareness and resource access (nearing completion)

# Evaluation of Shatter the Silence

- Wide range of evaluation data sources
  - State-level and community-level suicide ideation and attempts measured through SmartTrack School Survey (annual N = 125,000)
    - 19.2% of middle and high school students seriously considered suicide in past year (2013)
    - 11.7% of students attempted suicide in past year
    - 5.9% of students attempted suicide multiple times
      - Used for needs assessment, outcomes evaluation

# Evaluation of Shatter the Silence

- Wide range of evaluation data sources
  - QPR and ASIST trainees complete post-training surveys on knowledge transfer, readiness to intervene, resource utilization, etc.
    - Evaluation team created online survey to capture immediate post-training impacts
    - Cross-site captures similar data several months after training to determine knowledge and skill preservation, utilization (identifications tracked)

# Evaluation of Shatter the Silence

- Wide range of evaluation data sources
  - Early identifications, referrals, and follow-up of youth at risk for suicide tracked as EIRF data
    - Federal mandate to collect EIRF data as key impact
    - Gatekeepers are regularly contacted through email blasts to report the number and type of youth they have identified as at risk for suicide, referred for care, and followed-up to ensure receipt of services
      - DMH staff can also follow up with mental provide provider

# Successes and Challenges

- Success
  - SmartTrack data as excellent resource for monitoring suicide ideation & attempt trends;
  - Also pinpoints suicide risk correlates (e.g., depression, drug use, military family)
- Challenge and Remediation Effort
  - LGBT item resisted; MS conservatism
  - We continue to make case based on evidence

# Successes and Challenges

- Success
  - Over 1100 Mississippians have been trained in suicide prevention (QPR and ASIST)
  - Very positive training evaluations
- Challenge and Remediation Effort
  - EIRF data reporting has lagged (email blasts insufficient to establish, maintain rapport)
  - Add school EIRFs, selective screening, summits

# Successes and Challenges

- Success
  - SurveyMonkey post-training portal has worked well (about 40% response rate)
  - Valuable feedback obtained through portal
- Challenge and Remediation Effort
  - Initial response rates for online survey were low
  - Response rates increased with email follow-up and incentive raffle (Amazon gift cards)



# Successes and Challenges

- Success
  - Key element of Shatter the Silence branding, “365 Reasons to Live,” was developed by youth
    - Powerful messages from youth to their at-risk peers
- Challenge and Remediation Effort
  - Completion of website and social media campaign initially slowed by technical problems
  - New software developer moving quickly

# Shatter the Silence: Looking Ahead

- EIRF data collection requires working with targeted youth-serving organizations
  - School-based EIRF protocol to be piloted on MS Gulf Coast for implementation Fall 2014
    - Persistent adverse effects of Hurricane Katrina and Deepwater Horizon oil spill on Gulf Coast
  - Establishing protocol entails cultivating rapport, training school counselors, persistent outreach
    - Also offer to review school mental health policies

# Shatter the Silence: Looking Ahead

- Dissemination of best practices among state grantees has been a tremendous asset
  - MS team has benefited from practices adopted and refined in Kentucky
    - KY has sophisticated school-based EIRF protocol
      - Legislation in KY has aided school-based prevention efforts
  - Vermont also recommended as point of contact
    - MS team establishing contact with VT colleagues, which has been awarded GLS grant several times

# Shatter the Silence: Looking Ahead

- Sustainability as key consideration
  - Focus now broadens from promoting cultural change (e.g., risk awareness, skill diffusion) to fostering durable structural transformation (e.g., policy and procedural changes in schools and youth-serving organizations)
  - Changes also institutionalized at state level (e.g., gatekeeper referral source on CMHC intake form, MCRTs, Lifeline promotion)

# Thanks for your attention!



- Questions, comments, and reactions are welcome

# Our April 14 Webinar

***Youth Suicide Prevention in Indigenous Communities:  
Making a Case for Broader Interventions that Build on Injury  
Prevention Principles***

**April 14, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET**

Webinar 2:00-3:00, Online Forum 3:00-3:30

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