

Pediatric Suicide Prevention



A community approach to decreasing suicide risk for school-age children

Introductions

Jan Williams is an RN with over 15 years of experience in pediatric nursing. She has been the Executive Director of the Youth Services Bureau since 1995. She is involved in various local, regional and state efforts. She is an QPR instructor and was instrumental in the development of the Teen Suicide Prevention Task Force in Huntington County in 2009. She also serves on the Indiana Suicide Prevention Coalition. She is the Indiana Youth Services Association (IYSA) membership committee chairperson and a member of the IYSA Board of Directors. She is a trainer in the adult and youth human trafficking curriculum.

Introductions

Meg Friesen is an RN with Huntington County Community School Corporation. Meg Also works at her local community hospital as a nurse in the emergency department. Meg noticed a concern for pediatric patients that were seen in the ED for mental health concerns or suicide attempt or ideation and then would return to school without any communication to school staff. Meg is passionate about making sure schools value physical, mental and social-emotional health equally and believes that school nurses in partnership with counselors and teachers and community organizations can make this a reality.

Historical Context

What is the importance of first knowing the history of suicide prevention work in your community?

Who are the key players to communicate with in your community?

Is there an existing group of concerned individuals in your community or might you be the person to start a task force of your own?

The Suicide Prevention Task Force in Huntington County was started in 2009.

Indiana Department of Education

What does the law say?

SEA 230

In 2017 the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation requiring all school corporations to adopt a policy intended to increase child suicide awareness and prevention. The statute sets forth specific items that must be addressed in this policy. Additionally, beginning after June 30, 2018, each school corporation, charter school, and accredited nonpublic school shall require all teachers (as defined in IC 20-18-2-22) and other appropriate school employees in schools with grades 5-12 to attend or participate in at least two hours of research-based in-service youth suicide awareness and prevention training every three school years. The statute sets forth specific training requirements, which were revised by SEA 230 during the 2018 legislative session.

QPR- Question, Persuade, Respond

Why QPR?

- 1) What is already available in your community?
- 1) What are the choices that are evidence-based?
- 1) Who do you have available for training?

Policy vs. Protocol vs. Procedure

Policy- similar to a law for a school corporation, approved by the school board

Protocol- a step by step guide to completing a task

Procedure- generalized description on how to perform a task

Policy

Each school needs to have a school board policy regarding suicide. Our policy is called Student Suicide Awareness and Prevention.

By reading your policy you can gain insight into what your school is already doing and what needs to be done related to suicide awareness.

Protocol

The Huntington County Suicide Protocol was created in 2009.

Procedure

After two suicide attempts at school we were able to identify some missed opportunities that led to the rough draft of a procedure for the clinic staff.

Prevention

- Lifelines education for all seventh grade students in the district.
- Suicide prevention class period for all tenth grade students in health.
- Classroom presentations for JAG students and FACS classes.
- Sources of Strength

Emergency Room

In 2019 the Suicide Prevention Task Force discovered a weak spot in keeping youth in Huntington safe. If a student is seen at the Emergency Department after hours they will be assessed by a behavior health staff but may go home that evening with a safety plan.

If the student is seen and discharged it is possible they will return to school the next day. It is also possible they will return with no paperwork to alert any school staff about the events of the previous evening.

Re-Entry

In 2020 Riley Children's Hospital presented their re-entry plan and our school district has taken the plan and adapted it and are in the process of seeing how it works with our school population. Counselors K-12 have been trained on how to use this re-entry plan.

Next Steps

The Suicide Prevention Task Force is meeting to continually improve the plans in place and wants to begin making sure the work of postvention is in place.

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