Making sense of student suicide: Prevention and response

Jesselyn Klein, Ph.D.
Counseling & Psychological Services
Psychologist & Suicide Prevention Coordinator
Making sense of student suicide

Agenda

- Scope
- Risk Factors
- Protective Factors
- Warning Signs
- Responding
Making sense of student suicide

U.S. 10th leading cause of death$^1$
- 2nd for youth*$^*$
College student suicide$^2$
~ 7 per 100,000
~ half the rate for age-matched, non-students

Scope
Making sense of student suicide

National College Health Assessment – UNC Charlotte

- 7% seriously considered suicide
- 1.5% attempted
- 85% felt overwhelmed by all they had to do
- 37% felt so depressed it was difficult to function
- 62% felt overwhelming anxiety

Scope Cont’d
Making sense of student suicide

Risk Factors

Behavioral & Biopsychosocial
- Mental health disorders
- Substance abuse
- Trauma
- Family history
- Chronic illness

Environmental
- Loss
- Lethal means
- Exposure to violence
- Victimization

Sociocultural
- Isolation
- Marginalization
- Limited help-seeking
- Barriers to treatment access
- Exposure to suicidal behavior
Making sense of student suicide

Protective Factors

- Resilience
- Coping/life skills
- Self-esteem
- Purpose
- Hope

Personal

- Connectedness
- Accessible health care
- Exposure to violence
- Victimization

Environmental

- Belief system discouraging suicide
- Community
- Responsibility & caretaking role

Sociocultural
Making sense of student suicide

- Ideation
- Substance abuse
- Purposelessness
- Anxiety
- Trapped
- Hopelessness
- Withdrawal
- Anger
- Recklessness
- Mood changes

Warning Signs

6
Making sense of student suicide

- **Primary**
  - Prevent disease/injury before it occurs
    - Education
    - Environmental safety
- **Secondary**
  - Reduce impact of existing disease/injury
    - Self-care
    - Early intervention
- **Tertiary**
  - Decrease impact of ongoing illness
    - Ongoing treatment
Making sense of student suicide

**Campus Wide**
- Decrease the impact of risk factors
- Build up protective factors
- Public health approach

**Responding:**
Primary Prevention
Making sense of student suicide

**Risk Factors**

- Behavioral & Biopsychosocial
  - Mental health disorders
  - Substance abuse
  - Trauma
  - Family history
  - Chronic illness

- Environmental
  - Loss
  - Lethal means
  - Exposure to violence
  - Victimization

- Sociocultural
  - Isolation
  - Marginalization
  - Limited help-seeking
  - Barriers to treatment access
  - Exposure to suicidal behavior
Making sense of student suicide

Protective Factors

- Resilience
- Coping/life skills
- Self-esteem
- Purpose
- Hope

Personal

- Connectedness
- Accessible health care

Environmental

- Belief system discouraging suicide
- Community
- Responsibility & caretaking role

Sociocultural

5
Making sense of student suicide

Responding: Secondary & Tertiary Prevention

Your Role

- Spot warning signs
- Share your concern directly
- Encourage them to talk
- Don’t keep secrets
- Provide resources:
  - National Suicide Prevention LIFELINE
  - Referral to CAPS
    - 80% of those who complete not seen by a counselor³
Responding: Secondary & Tertiary Prevention

Making sense of student suicide

Your Role

- Share concerns with a supervisor
- Consult CAPS
  - Mary Alexandar Rd & Cameron Blvd.
    (704) 687-0311
caps.uncc.edu
Tips when concerned about a student
- On-call counselor business days, 8-5
- After-hours emergencies
  - Campus Police: (704) 687-2200
  - CAPS ProtoCall
Making sense of student suicide

- Faculty/Staff in ideal positions to notice signs and be “gatekeepers”
- Get prepared to notice and refer
- Gatekeeper trainings save time in the long run
  - Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) [QPR Trailer]
  - Kognito At-Risk for Faculty & Staff [Kognito Trailer]

Responding: Gatekeeper Training
Accessing the Simulations

URL: https://kognitocampus.com

Create Your Account

Also, access “Tips & Resources” to help promote and implement programs within schools.
Questions & Comments