

County of Santa Clara Health System



Suicide and Crisis Services (SACS) Intervention Workgroup Meeting Notes 11.08.17

1. **Welcome/introductions** (attendee list below)
2. **SACS shared completed suicides in SCC in 2017 so far**
 - 101 deaths so far this year
 - Reflects suicide deaths that occurred in Santa Clara County (not residents)
 - If suicides are under investigation, reports are given to SACS once determination has been made by police
3. **County death notification and response process**
 - Death notices are emailed to SACS from Coroner's office, usually within a week or two
 - o Demographic information comes, includes gender, DOB, sometimes occupation
 - o Includes blurb of what happened/means of death
 - o Gives next of kin information and address
 - Letter is sent to family including information about Survivors of Suicide Program, and "what to expect"
 - o Less than 10% of people who get letter will come to group
 - SP Program has sent letters to affected community institutions (mainly schools), when possible. Response has been sporadic and mainly with notification through word-of-mouth.
 - Responses are currently for suicide deaths and do not include suicide attempters. A limited pilot program is happening at VMC, where SACS volunteers present packet of some resources at ER.
 - o Another option is doing follow-up calls after person has presented at EPS. Current research exists on follow-up postcards sent by health systems following attempts.
4. **Suicide death responses from other organizations in County – group share/brainstorm**
 - SACS – sends letters to families
 - SP Program –sends letters to community institutions, when possible
 - Notifications – SACS gets majority of notices from Coroner immediately upon classification. **Follow-up action: SACS to share notifications with SP Program**
 - County Coroner sends letter out – at least for youth suicides, possibly for adults too. **Follow-up action: Review sample response letter by Coroner**
 - VA is notified by word-of-mouth through Decedent Affairs or therapist, or through crisis call line. Then call Coroner to verify, followed by call to family.
 - o In calls to families, give grief information, burial arrangements, benefits, County information about grief support

- Wait about one month before making the calls
- Hospital responses vary (Kaiser, El Camino Hospital)
- Catholic churches vary in response to suicide deaths
- Other organizations that may respond: County Office of Education, businesses?, police.
Follow-up action: Gather information about other organizations' responses
- Some community institutions hold events and could benefit from resource on how to conduct this type of event, other available resources/information

5. Grief support services available in County – group share/brainstorm

- Survivors of Suicide Group, run by SACS, every Monday
- Mentors on Discharge – NAMI with El Camino Hospital – peers partnered with people being discharged from hospital
- AFSP will meet with families who have lost a loved one – notified by word-of-mouth
Follow-up action: Vic/Mary can provide more information
- Peer support from County?
- Police? **Follow-up action: Ask Law Enforcement Liaisons**
- Center for Living with Dying/Bill Wilson Center
- Kara services available, with fee
- Hospice of the Valley – fee, person can come only after three months following loss
- Holy Spirit Out of the Wilderness
- TAPS – for veterans' families, including suicide

6. Next steps/ What should County response be? Brainstorm

- Coordinate immediate notifications between Coroner, SACS, SP Program
- Reach out to organizations to co-plan events; support events in a timely fashion
- Put together packet with letter, and information about event planning, media, reminder about follow-up, grief resources (similar to toolkit for schools)
- Grief and healing process is lifelong. County could make follow-up calls to families after 1-3 months
- Someone in hospice to join Workgroup? **Follow-up action: Vic has information and can send to SP Program**
- Need to think through different scenarios and situations. Business community gets left out often. Can go through Employee Assistance Programs. Consider cultural responsiveness
- AFSP Survivor Day to take place 11/18

Attendees

Kris Bifulco, Family and Children Services
 Sabrina Herrera, Santa Clara County
 Mego Lien, Suicide Prevention
 Zinat Mohamed, Suicide Prevention
 Karin Nersesova, Veterans' Administration
 Vic Ojakian, Behavioral Health Board
 Lauren Oliaz, El Camino Hospital
 Evelyn Quintanilla, Suicide Prevention
 Eddie Subega, Suicide and Crisis Hotline
 Barbara Zahner, Diocese of San Jose