

Developing Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Programs on Campus

ACPA National Convention
March 30, 2009

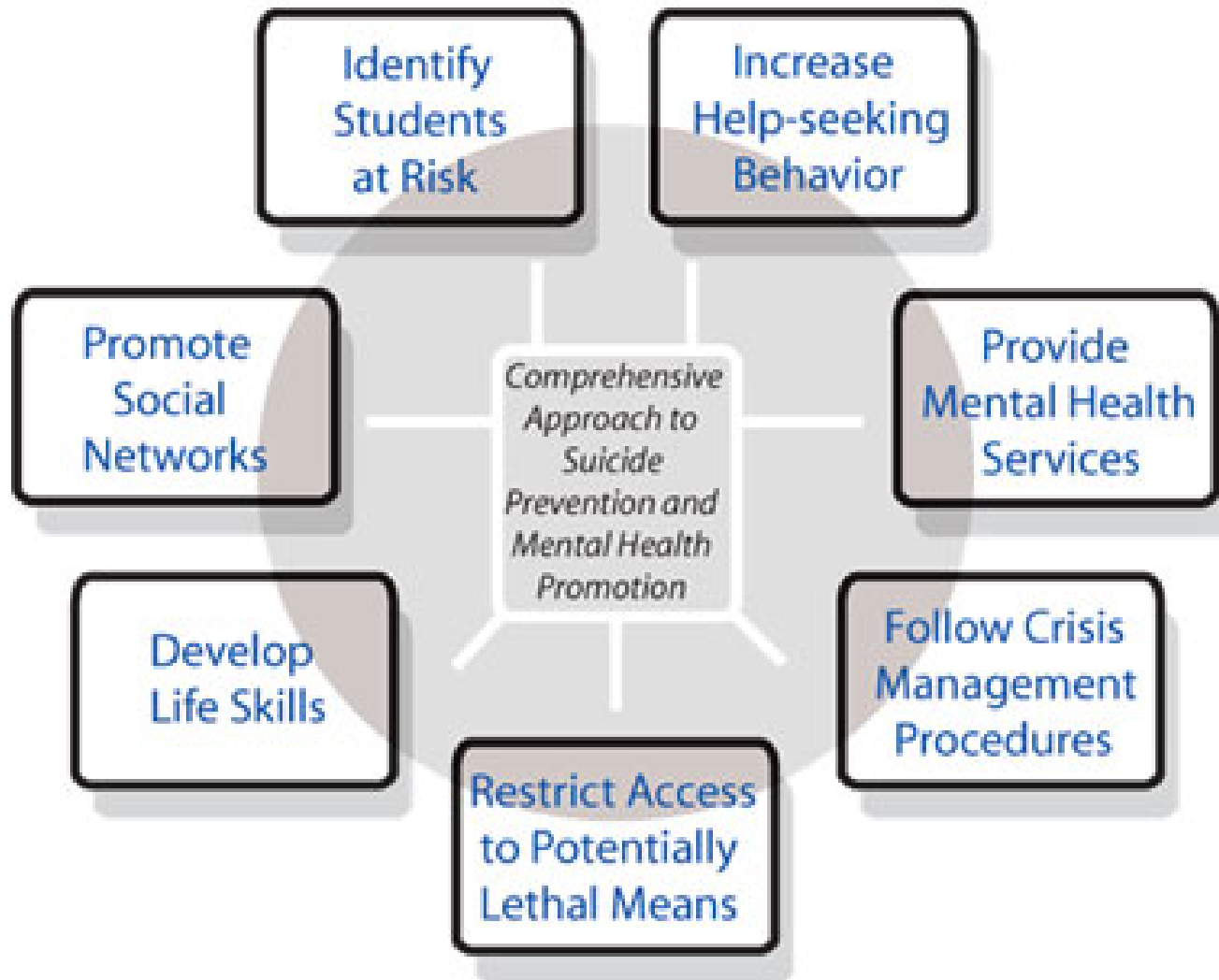
UNIVERSITY *of* PUGET SOUND
Est. 1888

Potential points of resistance to developing suicide prevention programming

- **Denial** – “It doesn’t happen here.”
 - “Media will pick up on it, raising questions.”
 - “If you ask about it, you’ll give students the idea.”
 - “No empirically supported interventions.”
- **Liability** – “If we have a protocol we’ll be held responsible for it.”
- **Other priorities** - for time and dollars.

Potential points of resistance to developing suicide prevention programming

- **Limited staff training** –
 - These students are too risky to be treated in our counseling center.
 - ASIST, QPR, RRSR, AMSR
- Other...



**Model for
Comprehensive Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention
for Colleges and Universities**

Produced by The Jed Foundation & Education Development Center

About Puget Sound

Founded in 1888, Puget Sound is an independent, residential, national liberal arts college with approximately 2,450 undergraduate and 150 graduate students. Students choose from more than 1,200 courses and enjoy a student-faculty ratio of 10.7: 1.

Puget Sound is located in Tacoma, WA. Seventy-five percent of Puget Sound students are from out of state; 47 states and territories and 13 foreign countries are currently represented on campus.



Counseling, Health & Wellness Services



Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment & Sexual Misconduct

Emergencies & After Hours Care

Off-Campus Referrals

Graduate Training & Internships

Health Topics

Insurance & Costs

Substance Abuse Prevention

Student Programs & Services

Suicide Prevention

Suicide Prevention at UPS

MARSSH Protocol

MARSSH FAQ

Forms

Links

Policies & Procedures

Contact CHWS Staff

[Home](#) > [Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services](#) > [Suicide Prevention](#) > [Suicide Prevention at UPS](#)

Suicide Prevention at UPS

No institution can guarantee students will never attempt or complete suicide and no single prevention effort can best serve all students. At the University of Puget Sound we implement many different strategies contributing to our overall suicide prevention program. The following are steps based on current research and best practice approaches.

1. **CHWS services are advertised** to all incoming students via a brochure sent to their homes prior to arrival on campus.
2. **Trained mental health professionals in CHWS** (253.879.1555) are available free of charge to all students enrolled at Puget Sound.
3. **Advanced training and supervision:** Pre-doctoral psychology interns at CHWS receive specific advanced training and supervision in suicide assessment, intervention and documentation.
4. **Experienced medical staff:** CHWS medical staff are experienced working with mental health issues in the college population.
5. **Psychiatric evaluation and treatment** is available on campus via referral from one of the CHWS professional staff.
6. **Referral to professionals in the community** is provided when off-campus treatment is preferred by a student, or when CHWS staff are not able to meet treatment needs.
7. **24-hour CareLine consulting nurse** (800.576.7764).

staff or Tacoma emergency services as needed.

9. **Transportation to local hospitals:** If urgent transportation to a local hospital is needed, but an ambulance is not necessary, staff in Campus Security, CHWS, or the Dean of Students Office can arrange for taxi service.
10. **Paraprofessionals training:** Resident Directors, RAs, RCCs, and GHCs living in campus residence units annually receive training in suicide awareness, prevention and referral skills.
11. **No Weapons Policy:** Reducing access to weapons is a proven approach to reducing suicides. Weapons are not allowed on our campus. See the [UPS Firearms/Weapons Policy](#).
12. **Student Alert Group:** Composed of administrators from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, this committee meets weekly to coordinate individualized responses to support students who are identified as struggling.
13. **Medical Withdrawal Policy:** If a medical or mental health issue makes it impossible for a student to complete a semester, the University of Puget Sound allows students to petition for a Medical Withdrawal. See the [Academic Handbook](#) for information about Medical Withdrawals.
14. **Emergency Administrative Withdrawal Policy:** Emergency Administrative Withdrawal may be an appropriate response to a sudden and catastrophic incident in a student's life that prevents a student from completing the semester's work. See the [Academic Handbook](#) for information about Emergency Administrative Withdrawals.
15. **Faculty availability and training:** Puget Sound faculty have available to them information about mental health issues common in the college population and are frequently reminded about the support services available on campus. Faculty here have a relatively small number of advisees, enabling familiarity with most students.
16. **Mandated Assessment of Risk of Suicidality and Self Harm (MARSSH):** In cases where there is concern that a student might put him/herself at risk, the University may require participation in a psychological assessment. For more information about the MARSSH protocol, check out

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17. **Crisis management plan:** The Dean of Students has a fully-developed crisis management plan in the event of suicide or suicide attempts.

MARSSH

- **M**andated
- **A**ssessment of
- **R**isk of
- **S**uicide or
- **S**elf
- **H**arm

MARSSH rationale

Research support: U of Illinois, Joffe

- Found small % of students completing suicide had been seen in campus counseling center.
- Consistent with other research showing 84% of students with S.I. are not in treatment. (Garlow, et al, 2008).
- In first 20+ years of the mandated assessment protocol **NONE** of the referred students died by suicide.
- Suicides reduced by 50% during this time.

MARSSH at Puget Sound

- Preparation during spring, summer, and fall 2003
- Pilot semester: spring 2004

MARSSH

- In five+ years 97 students written up.
- 71 (73%) students mandated.

Who gets MARSSHed?

- Class rank
 - Frosh 34%
 - Soph 25%
 - Junior 20%
 - Senior 18%
 - Grad 3%

Who gets SIR written?

- GPA semester prior to SIR = 3.04
 - General student population = 3.22
- GPA semester of SIR = 2.77
- GPA semester following SIR = 2.73
- Final GPA = 3.0

Who gets MARSSHed?

- Transfer students? = 21%
 - Transfer students @ Puget Sound = 9.74%
- Race? 75% Caucasian
- Out of state students? = 75%
 - Out of state students @ Puget Sound = ~75

MARSSH & Conduct

- **Prior conduct charge? = 29% (27 of 92 SIRs)***
 - 20% (18) found responsible
- *Based on SP 04 – SP 09 data to 2.20.09

Who gets SIRs written?

- Prior SAG? = 47% (43 of 92)*
- Previously seen in counseling? = 49%**
- ** Based on SP 04 – FA 08 data

When are students MARSSHed?

- By semester
 - Fall
 - SIRs M = 7.8
 - Mandated M = 5.4 (69%)
 - Spring
 - SIRs M = 9.6
 - Mandated M = 7.0 (73%)

MARSSH Outcomes

- Enroll next semester? = 87%
- Persist to graduation? = 69%*
 - Puget Sound 5 year graduation rate = 77%
- *Based on SP 04 – SP 06 data (20/28)

MARSSH Outcomes

- **Staying in treatment**
 - 61% of mandated students stayed in treatment past the required 4 sessions.

MARSSH protocol

- One element of comprehensive suicide prevention program.
- Requires engagement of multiple individuals & departments.

MARSSH Evaluation Summary Tentative:

- **Potentially at higher risk:**
 - Transfer students at higher risk
 - Past history in mental health treatment
 - Involvement in campus conduct system
- **No further identifiable student profile of “at risk”**
 - Home state, GPA, major

MARSSH Evaluation Summary

– Effective EIRF

- This process is identifying “at risk” students not being picked up by other support networks.

– Little increase in drop out rate: MARSSH serves retention

- Given this is “at risk” population, case can be made that MARSSH serves retention.
- NOT a “zero tolerance” policy.

– Staying in treatment past required time

- Once in the process many students see counseling as meaningful and helpful.

MARSSH Outcomes

- Increased interdepartmental collaboration
 - Counseling, res life, faculty (on SPT), CES, Academic Departments, etc.
- Increased contact with, credibility with faculty
 - Having specific program to discuss opens doors, increases confidence of potential referrers.
- Positive responses from parents

Student Affairs departments engaged

- Judicial Affairs
- Residential Programs
- Counseling, Health & Wellness
- Off Campus Student Services
- Multicultural Student Services
- Spirituality, Service & Social Justice
- Community Service
- Orientation
- Student Activities

Other departments engaged

- Academic Dean
- Institutional Research
- Library
- Human Resources/Career & Employment Services
- Security
- Athletics
- International Education
- School of Education
- Music
- Theatre
- English
- Psychology

Contributing to success:

- Importance of collaborative effort.
- Importance of consistent message of “caring.”
- Having *formal* protocol to refer to.
- Importance of evaluation of outcomes.

Next steps

- AFSP Depression & Anxiety On-Line Screening Project
- Awareness/Gatekeeper workshops
- Graduate course

Developing Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Programs on Campus

For more information:

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