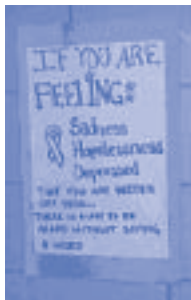


Reporter

Reporting on Suicide PREVENTION Efforts in Southeastern PA

County Collaboration: Chester County Juvenile Detention Center

Last August Gary Blair, Director of the Chester County Juvenile Detention Center (CCJDC) approached Heidi Bryan, Director of Feeling Blue to discuss his concerns about suicide at the Detention Center. (See the "Testimonial Section" for more information). Together they developed a prevention effort to supplement the intervention plan already in place at the center. This prevention effort consisted of QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention training for the entire staff, followed by a modification of the Yellow Ribbon (YR) Suicide Prevention Program to suit the needs of the rapidly changing population. People trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. Yellow Ribbon teaches youth "It's OK to ask 4 Help!" and utilizes cards that instruct the person receiving them what to do or when someone needs to use them. Upon admission, each child is given a description of the YR program, a film describing the program is viewed each week by the detainees, and Yellow Ribbon cards are distributed to the youth and placed in strategic places within the center. The cards are also counted periodically to determine whether or not they are being used.



The students have positively participated in the program by developing posters around the Detention Center promoting suicide prevention and awareness. Ms. Bryan was also added to CCJDC's roster of monthly speakers to share her experience in losing a loved one to suicide, her battle with depression, and to review the signs and symptoms of suicide and depression. As Mr. Blair said, "We work with this (suicide) every day and if there is anything we can do in addition to what we're already doing it, we'll do it...we can't do enough to prevent suicide."



Each year, over 100,000 youths are placed in juvenile justice facilities.¹ Although exact numbers of youths with mental disorders among those entering this system are not available, the proportion is considerably higher than in the general population. Not surprisingly, problems of suicide, self-injurious behavior, and other disorders are significant among youths in the juvenile justice system.^{2,3}



1. Otto, R.K. Prevalence of mental disorders among youth in the juvenile justice system. In: Responding to the Mental Health Needs of Youth in the Juvenile Justice System. Washington, DC: The National Coalition for the Mentally Ill in the Criminal Justice System, 1992.

2. Blazer, D., and Williams, C.D. Epidemiology of dysphoria and depression in an elderly population. American Journal of Psychiatry 137:439-444, 1980.

3. Cocozza, J.J. Identifying the needs of juveniles with co-occurring disorders. Corrections Today, December 1997.

Calendar

Peter's Place and Feeling Blue are conducting a pilot Survivor of Suicide Closed Support Group. The program will be a six week, closed educational support group for people who have lost a loved one to suicide. Topics include: grief, depression, suicide, traumatic grief, self-care, & surviving after a suicide. The program will be **Sept. 12, 26, October 3, 10, 24, and 31.** For more information call **Carol Smith at Peter's Place @ 610-889-7400 or Heidi Bryan @ 610-715-0076.**

Survivors of Suicide and the Delaware County Suicide Prevention and Awareness Task Force will hold the **4th Annual Candlelight Memorial Service** for all who care about those lost to suicide in the Delaware Valley on **Wednesday, September 7 at Rose Tree Park, Media, PA in the amphitheater.** For information call **215-545-2242.**

Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA) is holding their **10th annual National Awareness Event September 8 – 10, 2005 in Washington, D.C.** For more information, visit their website, www.spanusa.org, or call (202) 449-3600.

Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Task Force will hold their **3rd annual Awareness Fun Run, Walk and Wheelchair Wheel** on **Saturday, October 9 at Norristown Farm Park.** For more information call: **Tony Salvatore at 610-279-6100.**

The First National Conference for Survivors of Suicide Attempts and Health Care Professionals will be held **October 19-21, 2005 in Memphis Tennessee.** This event is sponsored by the Organization for Attempters and Survivors of Suicide in Interfaith Services; you may visit their website for more information: www.oassis.org. More details to follow in the next issue.

Recovery Walks! 2005 4th Annual Walk for Recovery from Alcohol & Other Drug Addictions held Sunday, September 18th, from 1:00pm-4:00pm, Boathouse Row, Philadelphia (Lloyd Hall at Waterworks & Kelly Drives).

3rd Annual Recovery Expo, Saturday, September 24th, United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, 181 Sharp Lane, Exton. For more information, contact: **Wendy Beck at wendy.beck@umcr.org or visit: www.umcr.org.**

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Letter from the Director

Welcome to our first issue of Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council's newsletter. We hope you will enjoy this issue and the ones to come. We welcome feedback and ideas for stories or any suggestions. As Feeling Blue SPC continues to grow and evolve, we're sure the changes will be reflected in our newsletter also, so please be patient with us. We plan to provide you with pertinent information about suicide prevention, depression, legislation, and what's going on in our region. Each issue will feature an organization or theme, such as surviving after suicide. Again, please bear with us as we're sure to experience growing pains and thanks for reading!



Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council is entering an exciting time of growth and development; the events of 2005 demonstrate that. We established new collaborations, with the CCJDC and Peter's Place, to name two. Our trainings have grown in number and we are becoming more visible and established within our community, Southeastern Pennsylvania and throughout the state.

This past spring we were invited to so many events that it was impossible for one person to attend them all. Fortunately Bill Bryan, Caroline Unger, and Dolores Toews were able to represent Feeling Blue at these events. They included the PA Child Death Review Team's Annual Business meeting in Harrisburg, Delaware County's Suicide Awareness and Prevention Task Force's steering committee meeting, Montgomery County's suicide prevention networking session where, Jerry Reed, Director of SPAN USA, spoke on suicide prevention at the national level and the Delaware County Public Safety Fair June 4th at the Delaware county campus of Penn State University. I also participated in the Survivors of Suicide Conference May 14th at the Crozer Chester Medical Center, an event I always look forward to attending. In addition, we held our first annual Open House at BolingBroke, which was a big success. Thanks to all the volunteers who worked so hard to make that happen.



I was grateful to be invited to attend a pilot test training in Schuylkill County that was developed by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC). It was a week long training designed to teach

communities how to introduce and implement evidence based suicide prevention programs. It was extremely informative and I was lucky to be part of it.

I was also honored not only to be invited to be a member of the planning team for SPRC's Region 3 and Region 5 conference held in Pittsburgh May 18 – 20, but to be one of the presenters. The other two members of PA's planning team were Myrna Delgado from the Department of Education, Sherry Peters from the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, who initiated our State Youth Suicide Prevention Plan, Monitoring Committee and Advisory Workgroup. The states participating in the conference

were from Region 3 which consisted of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, District of Columbia and Region 5 represented by members from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Over 110 people attended the various workshops



and panels presented by the 52 guest speakers. The speakers included leading suicide prevention experts in fields such as research, education, and the development of public policy, health officials, legislative assistants, plus survivors and advocates, whose experiences assist in the development of local and national prevention activities and plans. I served on a panel with Dr. Richard McKeon, Special Advisor for SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), Michael Ogden, from the Schuylkill County Suicide Prevention Task Force and Eagleville Hospital and the topic was Co-Morbidity: Substance Abuse and Suicide. Mercifully it was held in the afternoon of the first day so I could enjoy the rest of the conference.

We're pleased to begin a new postvention project with Peter's Place, A Center for Grieving Children and Families, with whom we're developing a closed educational support group for those who lost a loved one to suicide to be held this fall (see our Get Involved section). While we are currently in the planning stage of this project, Feeling Blue's goals are to initiate a public awareness campaign, coordinate trainings and host a conference on college suicide and prevention efforts.

This is an exciting time and I'm confident that Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council will continue to tackle challenges and pursue opportunities with the same energy and enthusiasm as we have for the last 6 years— especially with your help! Thank you.

A state 5 year plan has already been developed and being implemented across the state. To see this plan or learn more about it, please visit the Department of Public Welfare's website, or <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/Child/BehavHealthServChildren/003670733.htm>.

Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council is a member of the New Beginnings Nonprofit incubator at Resources for Human Development, Inc. (RHD). RHD is a large, diversified nonprofit organization, based in Philadelphia that oversees roughly 150 programs. The New Beginnings incubator provides small and startup nonprofit programs with a range of services and support designed to help them grow to achieve their missions.

Currently, Feeling Blue is a volunteer community service organization.

Our officers are:

Heidi Bryan, *President & Director*
Bill Bryan, *Vice President*
Laura Bodendger, *Secretary*
Tony Lynch, *Treasurer*

Our volunteers & board members are:

Happy Shipley
Mary Jane Rhodes
Caroline Unger
George Bodenger, Esq.
Dr. Bob Schwarz
Zara Danshvar
Shannon Good, *Good Graphics LLC*

*Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council is made possible by the dedicated work of these people and through foundation support and individual donations. We are a tax-exempt agency, therefore your donations are **tax deductible**. Please consider supporting our cause – the cost of materials for one QPR training of 25 people averages \$100, but the knowledge gained is invaluable. You can make a difference!*

What's Happening

FEDERAL:

FEDERAL CONTINUED:

SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH FOR THE ELDERLY

Ask your Representative to Co-Sponsor the Positive Aging Act of 2005. The Positive Aging Act of 2005, introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Patrick Kennedy, seeks to amend the Older Americans Act and the Public Health Services Act to increase screening and mental health services for older adults. Please take a moment to write your Representative today and ask him/her to co-sponsor the Positive Aging Act (H.R. 2629).

PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH FOR THE ELDERLY

Ask your Senators to co-sponsor the Positive Aging Act of 2005. The Positive Aging Act of 2005, introduced by Senator Clinton, seeks to amend the Older Americans Act and the Public Health Services Act to increase screening and mental health services for older adults. Please take a moment to write your senators today and ask them to co-sponsor the Positive Aging Act (S. 1116).

HELP KIDS ACCESS CARE

Support the Family Opportunity Act (S. 183). On January 26, 2005, Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA) reintroduced the Family Opportunity Act (S. 183). The bill would provide states the option to allow families with disabled children to buy into the Medicaid program.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Ask your Representative to Co-sponsor the Senator Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act of 2005. Do your part to end the discrimination and ensure that those who need treatment can get it. Please write your Representative today and ask him/her to co-sponsor the Senator Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act of 2005 (H.R. 1402).

STATE:

HR119.

This is a resolution recognizing mental illness and suicide as a State public health crisis and encourages evidence-based initiatives such as screening to identify illness and prevent suicide in youth.

SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Using CADCA's CapWiz system, fax your Senators before July 4th, if they are members of the LHHSE Appropriations Subcommittee, to ensure they make restoring the funding for the SDFSC program a priority. It is being recommended that \$400 million be restored to the State Grants portion of the SDFSC.

Get Involved!

Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council is currently planning a training for Lifelines, an evidence based school suicide prevention program to be held later in Fall. If you are interested in attending, please let us know now as attendance is limited.

We are beginning to put a Lifekeeper Memory quilt, which helps put a face to suicide and raise awareness. If you lost a loved one to suicide and would like them to be added to this quilt, either call us at 610-715-0076 or e-mail at feelingbluespc@aol.com.

We are now able to 'train the trainer' in QPR so if your organization is interested in having some of your personnel become certified QPR Gatekeeper trainers, please contact us at 610-715-0076 or feelingbluespc@aol.com.

Our QPR Gatekeeper training sessions can be modified to fit your needs! If you would like a training focused on youth, or the elderly, or law enforcement, we can tailor our presentations to meet your needs. We can also expand the sessions to include more information on suicidality or self-mutilation, etc. Please contact us to schedule a training now.

On the Scene – Responding to a Suicide is a brief half hour presentation on helpful suggestions and tips on dealing with families when called to the scene of a suicide. They also include resource materials to help the surviving family members when you leave. The presentation is especially useful for Emergency Responder, Law Enforcement, Crime Victim Advocates and even funeral directors. Contact us at 610-715-0076 to learn more about it or schedule a presentation.

Warning Signs

- Talking about suicide
- Statements such as:
 - “Soon you won't have to worry about me,”
 - “I just want to go to sleep and never wake up,”
 - “I just want out.”
- Sense of worthlessness, hopelessness, or helplessness
- Suddenly happier and calmer
- Giving away prized possessions
- Getting affairs in order, making arrangements
- Visiting or calling people one cares about
- Preoccupation with death
- Loss of interest in things one cares about
- Increased alcohol or drug use

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among 10-19 year olds in the U.S. More than 90% of youth who commit suicide have at least one major psychiatric disorder.

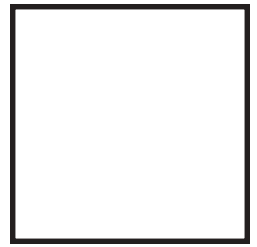
A third of all male youth who commit suicide have had Conduct Disorder.

Having a substance use disorder and access to firearms substantially increases suicide risk.¹

1. Gould, M.S. Greenberg T, Velting DM, Shaffer D (2003). Youth suicide risk and preventative interventions: A review of the past 10 years. *Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 42: 386-405.



Feeling Blue
Suicide Prevention Council
P.O. Box 7193
Radnor, PA 19087



Testimonials

As an Administrator in a juvenile correctional facility, the health and well being of the youth in our care is a top priority. The mental health and drug and alcohol issues that we observe on a daily basis within our resident population are much more dynamic in nature. These issues have manifested themselves in many of our residents through attempts of physical self harm.

My major concern, and this will never change, is that a young person will feel so bad about themselves that they will attempt suicide while in our care.

Having said all of this, I believe that we are very fortunate to have Heidi Bryan from Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council as an advocate, trainer and consultant. Heidi has helped us in developing the Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program in our facility. This initiative is the first of its kind in a Juvenile Detention setting. Heidi, also provides training in suicide awareness to our staff and residents.

The adolescent population in a Detention Center setting is often not a priority when regarding therapeutic resources, however, organizations such as Feeling Blue, and Heidi Bryan in particular, have helped to educate our staff and residents about suicide awareness in a professional yet compassionate manner. We could not do what we do without her.

Respectfully,

Gary L. Blair

From a study done in Utah: 63% of youth suicide completers had contact with the Juvenile Court System.

Got Stress?

Dr Bob's Tips for reducing stress:



1) Remember that stress is not from "out there". Stress comes from our internal reactions to things. So the bad news is that we are responsible for our own stress. The good news is that we have the power to do something about it.

2) When you feel stressed take slow deep easy breaths. Remember to blow all of the stale air out of the bottom of your lungs. As you are exhaling imagine that you are letting go of tension, anxiety, anger or upset. As you inhale imagine you are breathing in calmness, centeredness and love.

3) One of the biggest sources of stress is our expectations. We wanted and expected things to turn out one way and they end up turning out quite differently. Let go of expectations. Let go of "shoulds" and "oughts". Try thinking to yourself, I am upset because my expectations are not met. I choose to let go of my expectations and be more accepting of whatever is turning up. (Entire books are written about this, so this is just a little hint.)

Dr. Schwarz is a licensed psychologist and family therapist who specializes in working with mind body problems and post traumatic stress disorder. You can learn more about him at www.doctor-bob.net