

Resource Sheet #7-1: Forming a Suicide Prevention Partnership

Part 1: SWOT Analysis



By answering the following questions you will begin the process of conducting a SWOT analysis to help decide what type(s) of partnership you would like to create in your community for suicide prevention.

You may answer the questions individually; however, by working together with others, you will discover greater depth and breadth in your answers.

1. What are our **strengths**?
2. What are our **weaknesses**?
3. What **opportunities** exist?
4. What **threats** do we face?



Think About Strengths

For example:

- What suicide prevention activities are being conducted?
- Who is interested in suicide prevention?
- Is there a mandate to form a suicide prevention partnership?
- What partnerships currently exist?

Look at your list of responses to the above questions. What are the implications for working together and building suicide prevention partnerships?



Think About Weaknesses

For example:

- What resources are missing?
- Are organizations used to working in a collaborative fashion?
- Do you have time restraints?

Look at your list of responses to the above questions. What are the implications for working together and building suicide prevention partnerships?



Think About Opportunities

For example, do you have:

- A favorable political climate in your area?
- A federal or state mandate to address suicide prevention?
- A recent event which has made the community receptive to collaboration?
- A lawmaker (or other official) who has influence and a good reason to support your initiative?
- Well established programs into which suicide prevention could be integrated?
- An existing partnership that would be interested in suicide prevention?
- Goodwill you have generated through other activities?

Look at your list of responses to the above questions. What are the implications for working together and building suicide prevention partnerships?



Think About Threats

For example, do you face:

- An unsupportive political climate in your area?
- Supportive official media contact who is about to come up for re-election, or is about to retire or relocate?
- Budget cuts and down-sizing?
- Lack of support from key players (e.g., staff, stake-holders, end-users, community members)?
- Unintended negative consequences of your initiative?

Look at your list of responses to the above questions. What are the implications for working together and building suicide prevention partnerships?



Overall Considerations

After brain-storming strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats consider what type of partnership(s) you think will work best in your community.

What are the pros and cons of each form of partnership?

Advisory: Advisory groups are created to provide suggestions and assistance to programs or organizations.

Networking: Networking refers to loose linkages among participants that facilitate the exchange of communication and other nonmaterial resources.

Coordination: Coordination involves two or more agencies that operate in such a way as not to duplicate services nor fail to provide necessary services to a given population.

Cooperation: Cooperation is aimed at some integration between two or more agencies rather than just parallel operation.

Task oriented. Task forces usually consist of individuals (sometimes representing organizations) who come together to accomplish a specific task or series of activities.

Collaboration. Collaboration is a process which involves people from different agencies joining together to work toward a common goal. Collaboration among agencies is a highly shared endeavor with members having high contact with each other. Collaboration is a mutually beneficial relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards.

Which type of partnership will you form?

Will working within the existing coalition meet your needs?

Part 2

It is helpful for individuals and organizations to give thought to their agency commitment and individual commitment to suicide prevention when strategizing about approaches to take.

Agency Commitment



Think about the commitment your agency has to suicide prevention.

1. What are the "next steps" my agency needs to take to work together with others in suicide prevention?
2. What potential barriers may interfere with the implementation of these steps?
3. What proactive measures can be taken to address these barriers or at least lessen their influence?

Individual Commitment



Think about your own personal commitment to suicide prevention.

What are you personally committed to do that would enhance suicide prevention?

1. What specific actions will you take?
2. Who will you talk with?