

2010 Annual Report

Healthy Kent Suicide Prevention Coalition

Bullying & Suicide

Childhood and adolescent bullying is recognized as a major public health problem and it appears to be associated with suicidality. Recently, cyberbullying, bullying using the internet and other technology, has been increasing with recent cases associated with youth suicides. Victims of bullying consistently exhibit more depressive symptoms than non-victims; they have high levels of suicidal ideation and are more likely to attempt suicide than non-victims. Studies among middle school and high school students show an increased risk of suicidal behavior among those who bully as well.

Researchers at Yale School of Medicine have found signs of a connection between bullying, being bullied and suicide in children.

There is no definitive evidence that bullying makes kids more likely to kill themselves, but we now can see there's a likely association and we can act on it and try to prevent it.

The existing research should encourage adults to pay more attention to bullying and signs of suicidal behavior in children. "When we see kids who are targets of bullying, we should ask them if they're thinking about hurting themselves," Researcher Young-Shin Kim, M.D. said. "We should evaluate and prevent these things from happening." The School Subcommittee of the Coalition is planning an anti-bullying event in 2011.

Being Bullied

- 32 percent, students who reported being bullied (33 percent of girls and 30 percent of boys)
- 7 percent, U.S. students who reported being bullied daily
- 36 percent, bullied students who told a teacher or other adult at school about it
- 4 percent, students who reported being cyber-bullied (5 percent of girls and 2 percent of boys)

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2007 survey of US students ages 12-18.



Reaching Out to Funeral Directors



Funeral Directors and the funeral services industry serve as a vital line of first response to those impacted by the profound effects of suicide loss. Funeral Directors can play a vital and powerful role to lessen the blow that families are dealt when they lose a

loved one to suicide. The Suicide Prevention Coalition initiated an outreach to 20 local funeral homes to give them a guide on supporting survivors of suicide loss and to provide local resources for them to have available for families surviving suicide.

Contact Persons

- Sue Hood—hoodhome@att.net
- Laura Evans—Laura_Evans@comcast.net
- Barb Hawkins Palmer—barb.hawkins-palmer@kentcountymi.gov

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Supporters of the Kent Co. Suicide Prevention Plan

- Arbor Circle
- Area Agency on Aging
- Bethany Christian Services
- Catholic Charities West Michigan
- Cherry Street Health Services
- Child & Family Resource Council
- City of Grand Rapids
- D.A. Blodgett/St. John's
- Forest View Hospital
- Grand Rapids African American Health Institute
- Grand Valley Health Plan
- Healthy Kent Leadership Board
- Healthy Kent Suicide Prevention Coalition
- Healthy Kent Infant Health Implementation Team
- Healthy Kent Perinatal Mood Disorders Coalition
- Hope Network
- Kent Co. Community Health Advisory Committee
- Kent Co. Family & Children's Coordinating Council
- Kent Co. Sheriff's Department
- Life Guidance Services
- Mental Health Foundation of West Michigan
- NAMI of Kent County
- Network180
- Our Hope Association
- Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services
- Priority Health
- Proaction Behavioral Health Alliance
- Saint Mary's Health Care
- Strong Beginnings
- Survivors of Suicide of West Michigan
- Touchstone *innovare*
- U.S. Dept. of Veteran's Affairs
- Wedgwood Christian Services

Please view the suicide prevention plan at www.healthykent.org

Suicide Prevention Training

This year, the Healthy Kent Suicide Prevention Coalition held presentations on suicide risk awareness and prevention in various settings:

Train-the-Trainer: The two-hour presentation was presented four times during the year reaching members who may have contact with individuals at risk of suicidal behavior to recognize signs and symptoms and to respond in a helpful way. Two sessions were held with 30 people participating.

Assessing & Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR): This full day training for clinicians working with potentially at-risk clients was offered again in 2010. There were 30 participants who were provided with 6.5 CEUs for Social Work credits.

Live Laugh Love (LLL): This program provided by the Mental Health Foundation educates middle and high school students about mental illness, substance use disorder, stigma and suicide. This year the LLL program was presented in 5 school districts: Grand Rapids Public, Grandville, Forest Hills, Kentwood & Wyoming. The program reached 1700 students.

TeenScreen: TeenScreen is an evidence-based, national mental health and suicide risk screening program. In 2010, it was administered in 4 local schools with 703 participating. Individuals identified at risk of mental health issues were referred to mental health services.

Community Presentations: Members of the Coalition gave 29 presentations to various groups in the community. 19 Neighborhood Associations were contacted and given resources. 4 events were held in local churches, 3 presentations to parents from a school district that experienced a student death by suicide and TV & radio interviews were provided on GRTV, WOOD TV8, WZZM 13, WJRW Radio, and Radio 1340. Presenters are available anytime—Contact the Suicide Prevention Coalition.



Plans for 2011

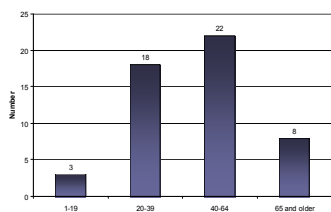
- Expand LLL/Teen Screen to more school districts
- Offer QPR Gatekeeper Training

2010 Suicide Data for Kent County

In 2010, there were 51 suicide deaths in Kent County. This is a decrease from 2009, where there were 72 deaths by suicide. The chart below shows the 51 deaths by age and indicates



Suicides by Age

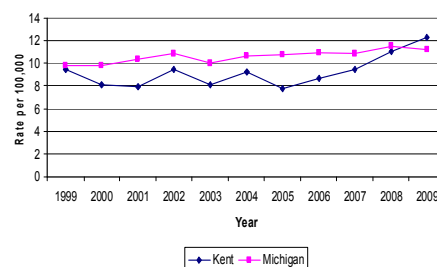


Source: Kent County Medical Examiner

that the highest number of suicides were in the 40-64 age range and the least amount in the 1-19 age group. Of the 51 deaths, 39 (76%) were males and 12 (24%) were females. All the deaths in the 1-19 age group were males.

Over the last 5 years, the number of suicides in Kent County has been increasing. (See the chart on the right). There is speculation that some of the increase is due to the poor economy in Michigan and a general feeling of hopelessness based on unemployment and financial hardship.

Suicide Rates - Kent and Michigan Residents, 1999-2009



Source: 1999 - 2009 Michigan Resident Death Files, Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, Michigan Department of Community Health. Rates are age-adjusted using as the standard population the age distribution of the total population of the United States for the year 2000.

Coalition Sustainability

In 2010, the Coalition secured funding from network 180 and the federal block grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) for ongoing work in Year 3. In addition, the Coalition received a donation from a local organization that raised funds as a result of their worksite “blue jean day”. These dollars were used for promotional materials. The Coalition also wrote a grant proposal for funding to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention to provide the DVD “When Families Grieve” to 30 child & family agencies. A grant was written to the MDCH for funding to address Suicide

Prevention in Adolescents. Our proposal was to expand the Live Laugh Love curriculum into more area school districts. Funding was not received.



Plans for 2011

- Continue to see funding to support coalition activities.