



HOWARD
CENTER
Help is here.

Suicide Risk & Prevention For All Ages: What You Need to Know

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Introduction

- Background
- Howard Center's commitment
- Vermont Suicide Prevention Center
- Zero Suicide pilot



ZERO Suicide
IN HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

Introduction

- Objectives:
 - Increase understanding about the problem of suicide and available resources
 - Identify risk factors, protective factors and warning signs
 - Learn 3 step intervention and self-care strategies



Introduction

The “S” word



Language

Terms to Use:

- Took his/her own life
- Died as a result of a self-inflicted injury
- Died by suicide

Terms to Avoid:

- Successful suicide
- Committed suicide
- Chose to kill himself
- Completed suicide

Context

**The Surgeon General's
Call To Action
To Prevent Suicide
1999**



Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Public Health Service

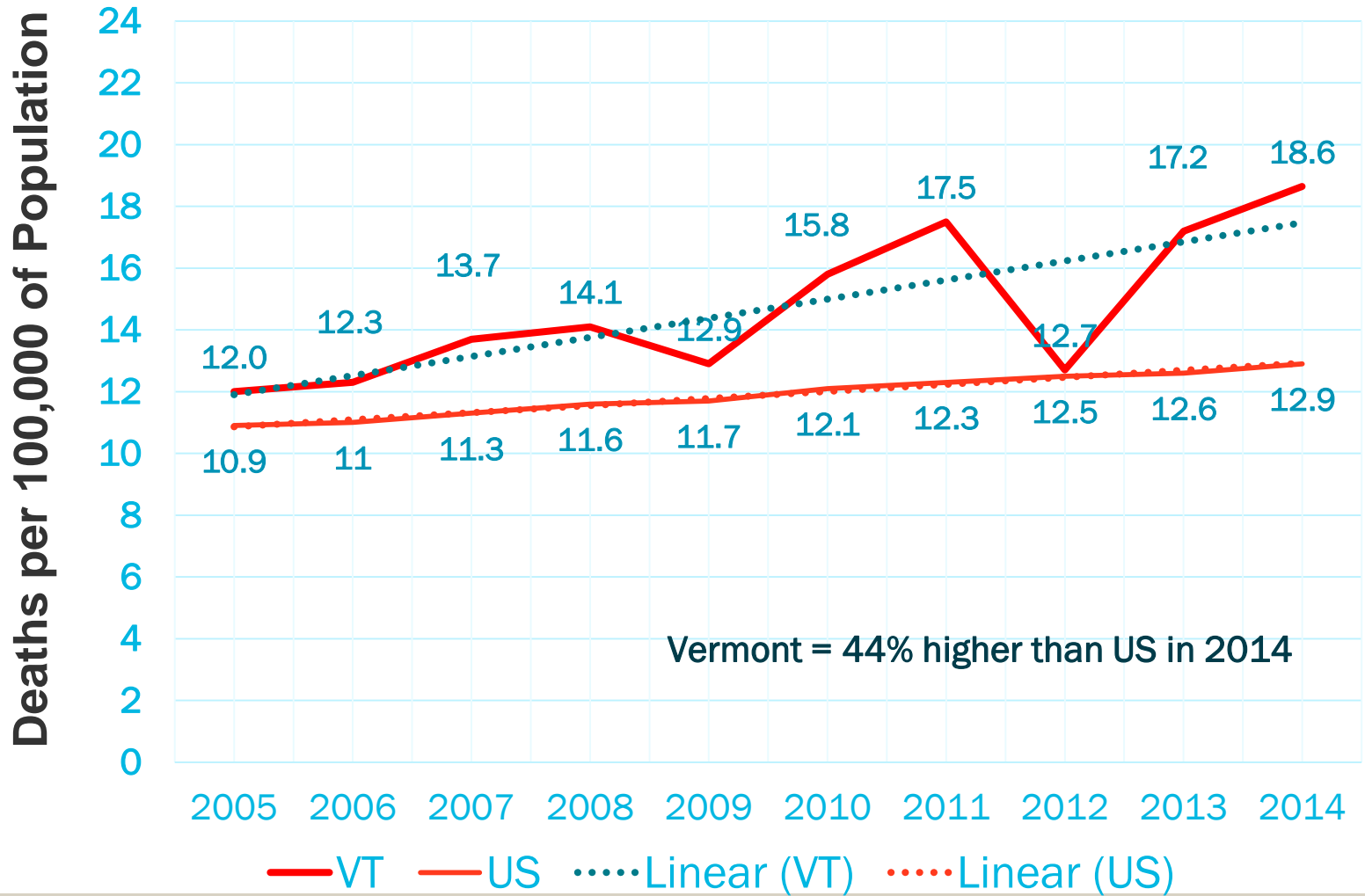
Context

- Nationally, more than 42,000 take their own lives each year
- Vermont has the highest suicide *rate* in the Northeast, 7th highest in the country
 - This is higher than the number of deaths from motor vehicle accidents, homicide and drowning *combined*
- More males die by suicide, more females attempt suicide
- 90% of people who die by suicide have a mental health diagnosis (most frequently depression)

Context

- 90% of people who have serious suicide attempts and survive do not have additional attempts
 - Golden Gate Bridge studies
- 50% of people who die by suicide saw their primary care doctor within 30 days
- 30% of people who die by suicide saw a mental health professional within 30 days
- There are an estimated 25-32 attempts for every suicide death

Vermont and US Suicide Death Rates (per 100,000): 2005-2014



Risk Factors

- Definition: standing conditions, stressful events or situations that may increase the likelihood of a suicide attempt or death.
- Family Risk Factors
- Personal/Behavioral Risk
- Environmental/Social Risk Factors
- There is no particular set of risk factors that accurately predict imminent danger.
- There is no “typical” suicidal person

Increased Risk

- LGBTQ youth
 - 4x greater risk of attempting suicide
- Military veterans
 - PTSD
 - Access to firearms
- Adults over age 65
 - Isolation
 - Health concerns
- Refugees and New Americans
 - Displacement, trauma
 - Isolation, misunderstanding

Protective Factors

- Definition: positive resources and conditions that promote resilience and reduce the potential for suicide.
- Skills
- Purpose and value
- Personal characteristics
- Safe environment
- Supports

Warning Signs

- Definition: the earliest observable signs that indicate the risk of suicide for an individual in the near-term (within minutes, hours or days.)
- Threatening suicide or expressing a strong wish to die
- Seeking access to lethal means: guns, medications, poisons; acquiring means
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- Using social media, instant messaging or phone to drop hints
- Making a plan for suicide how/when/where
- Giving away favorite things, writes a will
- Showing SUDDEN improvement in mood

Warning Signs

Do not leave the person with these warning signs alone

Get help immediately

Don't keep it a secret

The “Why” Behind Suicide

- Thomas Joiner
 - Perceived burdensomeness
 - Thwarted belongingness
 - Acquired capacity
- Voices of survivors
 - Hopeless
 - Lost
 - “They’d be better off without me”
 - Out of the blue
 - I didn’t know it could get better

Three-Step Intervention

- 1. Show You Care—Listen carefully—Be genuine**
“I’m concerned about how you are feeling.”
- 2. Ask the Question—Be direct but caring & non-confrontational**
“Are you thinking about suicide?”
- 3. Get Help—Do not leave him/her alone**
“You’re not alone. Let me help you.”

Three-Step Intervention

1. Show You Care—Listen carefully—Be genuine

“I’m concerned about how you are feeling.”

- I’m concerned about you
- I can see you’re really upset
- I can understand why you might be feeling bad
- You must feel really frustrated, right?
- You’re important to me and I want to help if I can
- No matter what you’re thinking or feeling, you mean a lot to me
- I don’t want you to kill yourself

Three-Step Intervention

2. Ask the Question—Be direct but caring & non-confrontational “Are you thinking about suicide?”

- Are you thinking about hurting or killing yourself?
- Are you thinking you don't matter?
- Are you thinking everyone would be better off without you?
- How long have you been thinking about killing yourself?
- Who else have you told about these ideas of suicide?
How did they react?

Three-Step Intervention

3. Get Help—Do not leave him/her alone

“You’re not alone. Let me help you.”

- Who do you know that might be able to help you?
- Who are some other adults you trust?
- Let’s call _____ and get some help. We can do it together.
- It’s not unusual to feel down or depressed and it’s also okay to get help
- Can I go with you to meet with _____?

Offer Hope

- I'm sure there are some solutions to your problem that we haven't thought of yet
- Sometimes it's hard to see but there ARE people who care about you
- Even if you don't feel it right now, there are people who count on you
- There's a place for you in the big picture
- There are ways that you can make a difference for other people
- You do matter



Facts

- Talking about suicide will NOT cause it.
- Almost all who die by suicide DO talk about it to at least one other person.
- There are almost always warning signs.
- We must pay attention EVERY time.
- Suicide can often be prevented.
- Anyone can learn to intervene.

Help in Vermont



Means Restriction



- Removing access to guns or other weapons
- Safe storage of ALL medications
- Restrict access to alcohol
- Other lethal items – as needed





ZERO Suicide
IN HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE



Impact



Self-Care

- Use healthy coping skills
 - Exercise
 - Time outdoors
 - Listen to music
 - Meditate
 - Play
 - Distract
- Reach out
- Nurture yourself
- Follow a routine
- Know your limits



Questions?



This training includes information from:

Vermont Suicide Prevention Center: www.vtspc.org

Suicide Prevention Resource Center: www.sprc.org

SAMHSA: www.samhsa.gov

Lifelines:

<http://www.hazelden.org/web/public/lifelines.page>

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/suicide.htm>

VT Department of Health:

http://healthvermont.gov/family/injury/suicide_prevention.aspx

Maine: <http://maine.gov/suicide/>

AFSP: <https://afsp.org/about-suicide/suicide-statistics>

WHO: http://www.who.int/mental_health/suicide-prevention/world_report_2014/en/