

# Mayor's Taskforce on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health

September 25, 2008

3:30-5:00pm

VNA 159 Lowell

**Facilitators:** Dr. Karen Hacker  
Patty Contente

**Note taker:** Patty Contente

**Attendees:** Leni Gross Young; Tim O'Keefe (Somerville Public Schools); Dr. Karen Hacker (Institute for Community Health/Cambridge Health Alliance); Teresa Forestall (Cambridge Health Alliance); Regina Bertholdo (Parent Information Center); Frank DiChiappari (District Administrator, Somerville Public Schools); Nancy Bacci (Youth Program, City of Somerville); Amanda Holm (Teen Empowerment); Marlon Ramdehaz (Teen Empowerment); Cory Krestenberg (Immigrant Service Providers Group); David Todtfeld (Cambridge Health Alliance, Teen Connection); Danny McLaughlin (Teen Empowerment & Save Our Somerville); Lisa Brukilacchio (Health Agenda, Cambridge Health Alliance); Patty Contente (Health Dept., City of Somerville)

**Regrets:** Alice Comack (Somerville Mediation Program, Somerville High School); Cory Mashburn (Somerville Cares About Prevention) Dana Gordon (Somerville Mental Health)

## Minutes

**Agenda item:** *Introductions – group and new members* **Presenter:** Patty Contente

### Discussion

New Members: Patty Contente (Health Dept., City of Somerville); Nancy Bacci (Youth Program, City of Somerville); Amanda Holm (Teen Empowerment); Marlon Ramdehaz (Teen Empowerment); Cory Krestenberg (Immigrant Service Providers Group); David Todtfeld (Cambridge Health Alliance, Teen Connection); Lisa Brukilacchio (Health Agenda, Cambridge Health Alliance)

**Agenda item:** *Review of Meeting Goals* **Presenter:** Patty Contente

### Discussion:

- Share information on the activities of the Trauma Response Network and Community Work on Suicide and Mental Health Resources and Prevention.
- Update members about current grants;
- Discuss the future of the Mayor's Task Force on Suicide and Mental Health;
- Invite members to upcoming events and conferences

**Conclusions:** Not applicable

**Agenda item:** *Trauma Response Network Update* **Presenter:** Patty Contente

### Discussion:

- ✓ Clinical Youth Specialist – Patty Contente began work as the Clinical Youth Specialist for the Health Department of the City of Somerville. This is a 20-hr./wk position. Patty is a resource for mental health information and referral, prevention programming and is also the coordinator of the Trauma Response Network (TRN). Activity has continued to be low since her arrival. The following out lines activity of the TRN since 2/2008
- ✓ Current Activity
  - 11 reconnaissance calls
  - 2 activations one follow-up with 2<sup>nd</sup> graders after a shooting in East Somerville and one for sudden loss of a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at East Somerville, which was primarily handled by Somerville Mental Health.

- ✓ Surveillance Data
  - A review of the data shows that suicide statistics remain low, there have been a couple of suicides and at least one attempt but individuals have been well out of our age bracket of 0 – 24 years. There has also been a # of deaths due to long-term substance abuse, also occurring well beyond the age parameters.
- ✓ Prevention Efforts
  - A concern is the need for support to siblings of the previous suicide cluster as they are at higher risk.
  - Depression, resources, reducing the stigma

- Conclusions:**
- ✓ Task Force will focus their efforts on addressing issues related to depression, group agrees to meet monthly to plan strategies to disseminate information and plan activities.
  - ✓ Next meeting will be to strategize on offering information and resources to help people during the upcoming holiday season.

<b>Action items</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
✓ Identify existing materials/educational videos and groups that might want a presentation on issues of depression for the October Task Force Meeting	Everyone	October 17, 2008

**Agenda item:** *ISPG/Health & Youth Overdose Paper*      **Presenter:** Karen Hacker

**Discussion:**

Immigrant Service Providers Group on Health

- ICH is entering the third year of the Parent Navigator Program. This is a program designed to address access and utilization of mental health services to immigrant populations. There has been an overwhelmingly positive response for parents and a significant area of concern for parents is not only mental health issues but also general parenting issues on adapting and parenting in a different culture. Understanding the landscape and expectations of service providers. Stigma has certainly been an issue and also cultural variations in how one defines or identifies a problem.

Youth Overdose Paper

- “Coping with Youth Suicide and Overdose” authored by Karen Hacker, Jessica Collins, Leni Gross-Young, Stephanie Almeida and Noreen Burke was published in September in *Crisis an International Journal* that focuses on research and prevention efforts related to suicide. This is an opportunity to share with other communities what we learned with other communities.
- This paper can be used to promote sharing this information with other communities. Karen Hacker, Patty Contente and Lisa Brukilacchio and others will work on developing a press release to begin this process.

**Conclusions:** Important to maintain vigilance around the issue of suicide prevention. There are many factors that contribute to the emergence of suicidal behavior, i.e. economy, immigration/deportation issues, impact on siblings and certainly as a community it is important to take a proactive approach.

<b>Action items</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
✓ Sub-group will meet to develop press release.	Karen/Patty/Lisa	October Meeting

**Agenda item:** *Survivor Support Group Follow-up*      **Presenter:** Leni Gross Young

**Discussion:**

- ✓ The Survivor Support Group Project was a grant-funded initiative to support family members and close members of suicide victims.
- ✓ The group was framed as a “focus group” to learn about the needs of survivors. Their statements were entitled “The Voices of Survivors” and were displayed on a large wall panel. This wall panel was displayed at the Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide Prevention’s annual conference in 2007. Leni has created an electronic version of the “wall of statements” and she will be working with Peter Lenrow from Somerville Mental Health (SMH) on making it available to the public via the SMH web site and possibly the City of Somerville’s web site.
- ✓ Survivors also found that the meetings they participated in were helpful and voiced an interest in participating in an ongoing support group. SMH had applied for a follow-up grant to fund continued support services for survivors, however this grant was not funded. Leni will be working with Peter Lenrow and Patty Contente to discuss what could be offered.

**Conclusions:**

- ✓ Publish the “Wall” electronically through SMH web site and City of Somerville Web site
- ✓ Determine the need for a monthly support groups possibly coordinated by SMH and the Clinical Youth Specialist.

Action Steps                      Leni will meet with SMH Executive Director Peter Lenrow to plan next steps and possible services for Survivors.

**Agenda Item**      *Next Steps for Task Force*    *Presenter*                      *All*

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- ✓ It has been determined by Task Force participants and chair that there is a continued need for the Task Force to meet.
    - This years focus will be on Depression Awareness/ Reducing the Stigma
    - Develop strategies to utilize youth in raising awareness
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<i><b>Action Steps</b></i>	<i><b>Person Responsible</b></i>	<i><b>Deadline</b></i>
✓ Develop regular meeting schedule for the coming year	✓ All	✓ Oct. 17, 2008

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