



Decreasing the prevalence of adolescent suicide in Star Valley, Wyoming using a school-based approach

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PURPOSE

This community health plan aims to reduce suicidal gestures, attempts, and successes throughout Star Valley, WY by implementing a high school based suicide prevention strategy. It is hopeful that the positive impact of this program will ripple out into the greater community, beyond the high school.

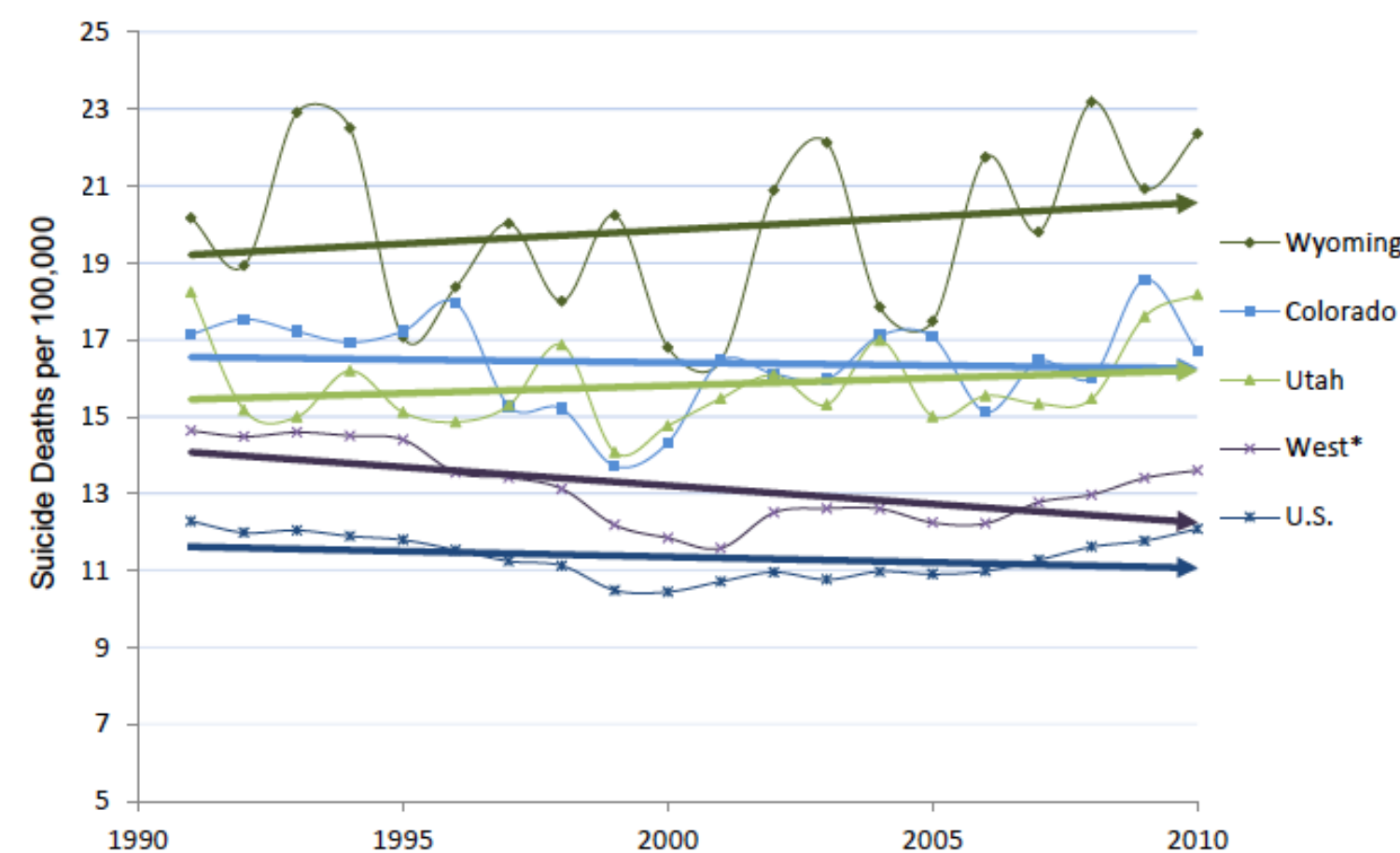
INTRODUCTION

Demographics

- Star Valley, WY is a rural area in Western Wyoming made up of many small towns.
- Population of the Valley is around 7000 and growing.
- Prominent employers include health care, school district, construction.
- Ranching and farming are also prominent in the area.
- Popular place for retired folks to spend their summers.
- The target population of this project is the year-around community members, mainly adolescents.
- With a recent attempted suicide and at least one successful adolescent suicide in the past year, this community appeared to be receptive to a suicide prevention program.

Statistics

Comparison of 20 year trends in suicide deaths per 100,000
WISQARS, 2012



*West includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

This chart compares suicide deaths throughout Wyoming and similar states over the past 20 years.

Average yearly rate of deaths by intentional self harm per 100,000 population
Wyoming Vital Statistics

Data Source	County Name	2007-2009 Average Yearly Rate per 100,000	2008-2010 Average Yearly Rate per 100,000	2009-2011 Average Yearly Rate per 100,000
Wyoming Vital Statistics (Death by intent to harm)	Albany	12.86	13.77	18.37
	Campbell	13.01	20.23	20.23
	Fremont	28.25	20.77	20.77
	Laramie	17.44	20.35	22.89
	Natrona	19.88	21.65	24.74
	Park	17.73	16.55	18.91
	Sheridan	20.61	25.19	25.19
	Sweetwater	21.31	22.83	24.35
	Teton	14.09	17.22	17.22
	Uinta	18.94	29.99	28.41
	Frontier Counties*	19.44	23.02	20.20
Wyoming	18.75	21.23	21.88	
CDC Suicide Data	Wyoming-Suicide Deaths (2008)	23.18	20.92 (2009)	22.36 (2010)
	United States-Suicide Deaths (2008)	11.61	11.77 (2009)	12.08 (2010)

*Includes Big Horn, Carbon, Converse, Crook, Goshen, Hot Springs, Johnson, Lincoln, Niobrara, Platte, Sublette, Washakie, and Weston Counties.

Frontier counties include Lincoln county, where Star Valley is located. The rate of death by suicide is higher in this county than nationally but is comparative to the statewide rate.

METHODS

Finding a Suitable Program

- A literature review revealed a highly effective suicide prevention program- Model Adolescent Suicide Prevention Program (MSAPP).
- The creator of the program chose one portion of the program that would be most successful in the high school setting- the Natural Helpers program.

Implementation:

- Survey the high school to find a good variety of students and teachers in the high school who are already known to be mentors.
- Then participants attend an overnight retreat that would build teamwork and train them to become better mentors.
- Mentors are encouraged to participate in community service and extracurricular activities to be visible to the student body and more available for mentoring.
- Once Natural Helpers become aware of issues affecting students, they will already know of the community resources available and will be able to quickly get them in touch with someone to help.

RESULTS

Anticipated Outcome

- Distressed adolescents would reach out to a Natural Helper who would provide them with immediate support and comfort before referring them to more advanced services for their specific needs.
- Natural Helpers would become known throughout the community, reaching beyond the high school population.
- This new increased support throughout the community would decrease suicidal gestures and outcomes.

Evaluating Outcomes

- Administer a simple survey to the student body and the faculty at the high school
- Examine rates of suicidal gestures and deaths within the community from the point of implementation forward.

DISCUSSION

- The MSAPP program was first introduced 20 years ago and has been spreading through communities across the nation due to its success at reuniting communities in such a way that suicide prevention is a key outcome.
- A research group examined this program's efficacy over the course of 15 years and found that even though suicide deaths neither significantly increased nor decreased, the rate of suicidal gestures dropped.
- According to the Executive Director of a Behavioral Health Center for Lincoln County, this is an important age group to target for suicide prevention, and the Natural Helpers model, from his experience, has a high efficacy.
- A special thank you to my preceptor- Dr. Donald Kirk and my community partners- Jason Horsley and Kip Dana.

