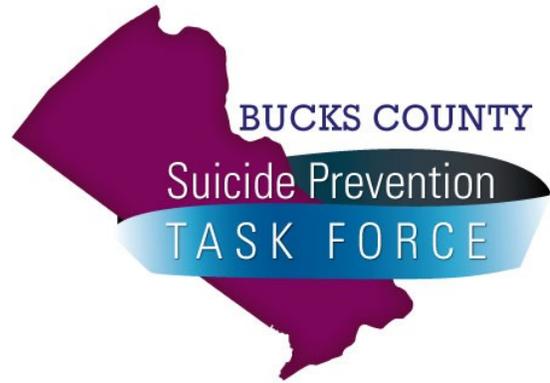


Winter 2015

Mission Statement: Through advocacy, education, prevention, intervention, and postvention we will work to eliminate suicide.



Bucks County Suicide Prevention Task Force

A Message from Commissioner Diane Ellis-Marseglia, LCSW



Although attempts to confront the problem of suicide in Bucks County have occurred, this is the first committee to be sanctioned by the Commissioners with a 3-year requirement for recommendations. Bucks County now joins its sister counties Montgomery, Chester, and Delaware in bringing together educators, behavioral health professionals, medical personnel, clergy, survivors, and

county staff to aggressively assess and confront the issues of suicide.

This combination of stakeholders will harness the energy needed to increase public awareness. The Task Force will work to minimize the stigma associated with mental illness and emotional distress and make sure resources are readily available and easily accessible to all Bucks County residents. Another goal will be to train citizens how to recognize when a family, friend or co-worker is struggling and providing some basic skills in what to say or do.

As the Task Force begins its work, committees were formed to address a plethora of concerns

surrounding suicide assessment, prevention and response. Committees focused on emergency responders, family survivors, children and schools, statistics, intervention and postvention options which will allow the Task Force to pull together a well-researched and successful plan to report to the Commissioners in 2017.

As a clinician who has worried about clients and their safety, a survivor of my own daughter's suicide in 2005, and one who has grieved with those who are the collateral damage from a suicide, I am committed to this Task Force. My colleagues, Commissioner Loughery and Commissioner Martin share my dedication to

the Task Force as we believe it is integral to our maintaining the safety and well-being of more than 600,000 Bucks Countians. Now we begin the challenging work that may lead to the day when no one is at risk of the pain of suicide.



Bucks County Commissioners
Robert G. Loughery, Chairman
Charles H. Martin, Vice-Chairman
Daine M. Ellis-Marseglia, L.C.S.W.

A Message from the Co-Chairs

In 2013, Bucks County Suicide Prevention Task Force was sanctioned by the County Commissioners to accomplish several goals in the next three years regarding suicide prevention. Our overarching goals are to reduce stigma, increase the number of individuals seeking help, support individuals who have lost loved ones to suicide and decrease suicides in our county.

We are happy to report to you that we are well on our way to accomplishing these goals. We have established a dynamic group of professionals and volunteers who are all committed to decreasing suicide rates and stigma through education and public awareness.

This newsletter will update you on the various Task Force subcommittees, the work they are doing and information

should you wish to join us.

Please contact us with any questions:

Wendy Flanigan, Bucks County Department of MH/DP
wflanigan@co.bucks.pa.us
 215-444-2882

Sharon Curran, Lenape Valley Foundation
scurran@lenapevf.org
 267-893-5500

Our Mission: Through advocacy, education, prevention, intervention, and postvention we will work to eliminate suicide. *-The Bucks County Suicide Prevention Task Force*

Suicide Prevention Adult Subcommittee

According to the most recent data released by the American Foundation on Suicide Prevention 2011, the highest suicide rate (18.6) was among people 45 to 64 years old. This information generated collaboration with treatment providers and community resources to form a subcommittee focusing on the needs of the adult population.

Included in this group are specialists in the area of Behavioral Health, Co-Occurring Disorders, Substance Abuse, Gambling Addiction, Mental Health Education/Advocacy, and Homelessness. An area in which we would like to expand includes chronic pain.

Our goal is to provide face-to-face education in the community regarding Suicide Prevention.

The Adult Subcommittee welcomes your input and assistance.

Please contact
 Deb Ryan
 215-453-5165
dryan@pennfoundation.org

Bucks County Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force (BCYSPT)

Nationally, suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth ages 11-21; but in Bucks County, suicide is the second leading cause of death for this age group. In response to this alarming fact, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, Office of Safe & Drug Free Schools, coordinates and facilitates the Bucks County Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force (BCYSPT). Membership in this group includes school represen-

tatives, community mental health professionals and prevention professionals. The mission of the BCYSPT is to reduce the incidence of youth suicide by creating an opportunity for school communities to: 1. Network with other professionals 2. Work on advocacy opportunities 3. Provide professional development opportunities 4. Share resources for suicide prevention, intervention and postvention 5. Collect and share data

regarding suicide related incidents.

For more information, please contact Ronald Rolon, Prevention Program Coordinator; 215-348-2940 ext. 1440; rrolon@bucksiu.org

Families Subcommittee

The Families Subcommittee is made up of individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide. The group is led by County Commissioner Diane Marseglia, who herself is a survivor of suicide, and Family Service Association's CEO Audrey Tucker and Call Center Coordinator

Maria Picciotti. The goal of this group is to provide support for survivors of suicide, help raise awareness and have an active role in suicide prevention. The group hopes to accomplish this by reaching out to family members in the community following the loss of a loved one,

engaging in community education, and advocacy for legislation that supports the improvement of the mental health system and treatment options.

For more information, please contact Maria Picciotti; mpicciotti@fsabc.org or 215-355-6611

Faith-Based Communities Subcommittee

Bucks County is the home of many diverse religious communities, each with its own unique history, core values, and congregational challenges. Our Suicide Prevention Task Force has a committee whose mission is to connect our communities of faith with helpful educational and prevention resources in the areas of mental health and reduce the

incidents of suicides. These resources include the latest behavioral healthcare literature, as well as local speakers who could speak at congregational gatherings. If your religious community would like more information on our work to decrease the stigma of mental illness and suicide and reduce the isolation of people who feel like

they are alone, please give us a call.

Carl R. Yusavitz, D. Min., Director of Pastoral Services at Penn Foundation
cyusavitz@pennfoundation.org
or 215-453-5170

Kathleen Campbell, Board Chair, NAMI Bucks County
campbellkatm@gmail.com or
215-588-5061

Professional/Volunteer Subcommittee

The Professional/Volunteer Subcommittee of the Suicide Prevention Task Force seeks to support medical, mental health, and addiction professionals and volunteers whose work engages them in direct contact with individuals who may experience serious life stressors and illnesses that may lead to suicidal thoughts and behaviors. It is our vision

that all professionals and volunteers in Bucks County will have the necessary skills and knowledge in the areas of suicide assessment, intervention, and postvention care. Since professionals and volunteers are also profoundly affected by suicide, we envision developing provisions for the support and care of professionals who are

connected to individuals who have attempted or completed suicide. The Subcommittee is currently working on widely disseminating a resource card to ensure our target groups have essential referral information. In order to learn more or to join the Subcommittee, please contact Diane Rosati at 215-773-9313, ext. 2703 or dwrosati@co.bucks.pa.us

Older Adult Subcommittee

The Older Adult Subcommittee seeks to provide education and resources to providers and agencies who work with older adults that may experience thoughts of suicide. Area Agency

on Aging staff will be offered QPR training and Mental Health First Aid training. Informational material is being developed that will be sent out with all home delivered meals. Anyone

interested in working with or has questions/concerns for our senior adult population should contact Gail Forth at 267-880-5717.
glforth@co.bucks.pa.us

First Responder Subcommittee

We have three main goals: helping first responders cope with responding to suicides, prevention among first responders, and educating first

responders about helpful things they can do or say when they work with survivors. We are developing a folder of resources, book lists, support group lists websites and the like.

was provided and we look forward to bringing this and the trainings to PA. in the spring. More information to come!



A subcommittee task member met with an organization in St. Petersburg Florida “In Harm’s Way” to get more information about their program and trainings. A lot of information

We are looking for first responders to join our subcommittee. If you are interested, please contact: Corporal Steve Kingsdorf at the Northampton Police Department, skingsdorf@nhtwp.org

Transition-Age Youth Subcommittee

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 15 and 24. Concerned? We are too.

The Transition-Age Youth (TAY) Subcommittee of the Suicide Prevention Task Force is focused on identifying the best ways to prevent suicide among young adults in their late teens and early twenties.

The term Transition-Age Youth, abbreviated as TAY, refers to youth and young adults who are “transitioning” to adulthood and

who belong to demographic groups that are commonly identified as being at risk, such as individuals with mental health diagnoses, addictions, developmental disabilities, and/or experience with the juvenile justice system, foster care, poverty or homelessness. This term can also refer to youth and young adults that are at risk of suicide. The age range associated with the term TAY varies depending upon the system, provider, and population served. Typically, the age range falls between the ages of 14 and

29. The TAY Subcommittee of the Suicide Prevention Task Force is focused on youth and young adults who are no longer in high school.

Please consider joining the Transition-Age Youth Subcommittee of the Bucks County Suicide Prevention Task Force. To learn more and meet other concerned members of our community, please contact:

Emily Ferris
215-504-3960
EFerris@magellanhealth.com

Bucks County Medication Take Back!

WHY?

- 70% of people who abuse prescription pain relievers get them from friends or relatives.
- 1 in 4 high school students have abused prescription drugs.
- Environmental Protection Agency studies have detected pharmaceutical drugs in our water supply.

WHEN?

Saturday April 25, 2015

INFORMATION:

Call: 215-773-9313



Suicide Prevention Conference

On July 29, 2014 Lenape Valley Foundation hosted Dr. Shawn Christopher Shea an international expert in the field of suicide prevention and assessment. Dr. Shea provided an all-day training on "Unlocking Suicidal Secrets: New Thoughts on Old Problems in Suicide Prevention." The event was held at Ann's Choice and had over 175 individuals in attendance.

Dr. Shea is the director of the Training Institute for Suicide Assessment and Clinical Interviewing, an adjunct professor at Dartmouth Medical School and the creator of the Chronological Assessment of Suicidal Events (CASE Approach). During this training, Dr. Shea shared with the audience techniques for interviewing individuals who may be suicidal, but who are unable to

share this information with others. In addition, he discussed his book "Happiness Is.", which explores building resilience and how one can create happiness and joy in life.

An additional day of training was held for Lenape Valley Foundation crisis and intake staff, where Dr. Shea certified 27 employees in level one assessor training in the CASE Approach.

Candle Light Vigil

On September 10, 2014 over 70 community members gathered on the lawn of the Bucks County Court House to reflect on the 68 completed suicides in Bucks County in 2013, to offer support to survivors and to increase awareness of suicide prevention. Speakers for the evening included family members, public officials

and professionals. This event was hosted by Lenape Valley Foundation and coincided with World Wide Suicide Prevention Day. Each participant was given a candle to take home and light, in their front window at 8:00 pm that evening. This candle lighting was part of the larger effort and candles were lit around the world that evening.



The Task Force in Action! HR3717 Conference Call

Representative Tim Murphy has authored the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act (HR 3717), which addresses these issues and more. The Families Subcommittee was intrigued when they learned of this bill, and decided to further explore its content and what they might be able to do to support it. With the help of Subcommittee Co-Chair, Commissioner Diane Marseglia, who herself lost a child to suicide 10 years ago, the Families group was able to host a conference call with Rep. Murphy, and bill co-sponsor, Representative Mike Fitz-

patrick of Bucks County to review the content of the bill, ask questions, and discuss how the group could support the bill. Excited to share the information, the Families Subcommittee invited the larger Suicide Prevention Taskforce and local media to participate as well.

When asked what interested listeners could do to help support the bill, Reps. Murphy and Fitzpatrick urged listeners to contact their local representa-

tives and ask them to support the bill. Following the call, Bucks County Commissioners Robert Loughery, Charles Martin, and Diane Marseglia signed and submitted a letter of support of HR 3717 to the state delegation. The Families Subcommittee continues to look at other avenues for supporting the bill, including the possibility of lobbying in Washington, D.C.

SEPTA Suicide Prevention Signs

According to the American Foundation for Suicide prevention, someone completes suicide every 13 minutes in the United States. For SEPTA, suicide has become a priority issue, with 50% of deaths on train tracks deemed suicides. SEPTA Chief Safety Officer Scott Sauer reports in 2011, there were 11 completed suicides on SEPTA tracks in our area.

In September 2014 SEPTA began rolling out a suicide prevention campaign by placing signs in the stations throughout the Philadelphia region. SEPTA is

following in the footsteps of other large cities such as New York, Boston and Toronto, who have all instituted suicide prevention efforts through the posting of signs with 800 prevention numbers.

The unveiling of the signs that are now across Bucks County took place at the Langhorne train station on Thursday February 12th. In attendance were State Representative Frank Farry, Commissioners Loughery, Martin and Marseglia, several SEPTA

officials and county officials as well as members of the Bucks County Suicide Prevention Task Force and community members.

Commissioner Diane Ellis-Marseglia thanked SEPTA and recognized their efforts by stating "SEPTA is giving people one new lifeline".



Life Saving Drug: Naloxone

On November 29, 2014, Act 139 went into effect to allow police officers, EMTs, firefighters, and family members to administer Narcan (Naloxone) to individuals who are believed to have overdosed on opioids. In addition, Act 139 provides legal protections

for witnesses, or Good Samaritans, seeking medical help at the scene of an overdose.

Naloxone is a prescription medication that reverses opioid (prescription or heroin) overdoses. Prior to this bill, the drug could only be administered by paramedics or medical professionals, who were often not available when an individual overdosed. Naloxone works within minutes to restore breathing in people overdosing on opiate drugs. If people have taken other substances such as alcohol or cocaine, the Naloxone is ineffective. The drug can be administered

through a nasal spray and the applicator is pre measured and easily used.

On February 12, 2015 there was a media event announcing that Bucks County purchased over 200 Naloxone kits for use by Bucks County Police Officers. This was achieved through a partnership of government/ law enforcement funding and the non-profit Steps to Recovery. In addition, if you have a loved one whom you are concerned is at risk for opioid overdose, you may obtain a prescription from your family physician for Naloxone.

