

Mental Wellness & Suicide Prevention: Working With the Faith Community



Youth Suicide and Depression Task Force
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History of the Faith Community Initiative

- **Fairfax Partnership for Youth**
 - Bringing the community together to reduce youth violence and promote positive youth development
- **Youth Suicide and Depression Task Force (“YSAD”)**
 - To provide leadership and advocacy in creating a coordinated system of services that incorporates education, prevention, identification, intervention and treatment programs to address youth suicide and depression.
- **Working with “Fairfax Faith Communities in Action”**
- **Collaborative Conference (FP4Y, CrisisLink & VDH)**
- **Other Faith Community Activities**

Task Force Partners

- CrisisLink
- Community and Recreation Services
- Fairfax County Public Schools
- Community Mental Health/Community Services Board
- Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court
- Office of Child and Protective Services
- Community Coalitions
- National Mental Health Association

Defining the Need

The 2001 Fairfax Communities that Care Survey (CTC) highlighted the following in terms of suicide and depression:

- When questioned about if they had felt sad or hopeless for days or weeks at a time over the last 12 months, **35.9%** of the youth responding acknowledged such feelings;
- **18.5%** reported that they had considered suicide;
- **3.6%** indicated one suicide attempt; and
- **4.6%** indicated more than one attempt.

Refining the Focus

- **FCPS Depression Screening Survey (2003-04)**
- **244** students from five high schools screened
- **102 (42%)** students referred for follow-up services
- **40%** of students referred did not pursue services

Principal YSAD Task Force Initiatives

- Development of RFP process for delivery of depression awareness & suicide prevention trainings to parents of teens
- Expansion of the use of depression screenings in schools, CSB Prevention programs
- Development of media materials, including the production of a “Top Priority” cable t.v. show, and an article in the County Council of PTAs newsletter
- Consultation to the County Survey team regarding the inclusion of mental health questions for the 2005 CTC Survey
- Outreach to the faith community for potential involvement in Task Force initiatives

Interfaith Mental Wellness Initiative: State of Purpose

Partners in faith across the county are taking this opportunity to focus attention on the mental health and well being of each of us. The Fairfax Partnership for Youth, an organization dedicated to bringing together the entire community to reduce youth violence and promote positive youth development, has initiated this initiative in order to improve outcomes for the young people across the county. To have healthy children and youth we must have healthy individuals, healthy families and a healthy community environment.

Faith communities play a crucial role in supporting healthy families by teaching values, by modeling strong morals and by providing connectedness to strength and purpose beyond ourselves. Faith supports resilience in the face of adversities.

Interfaith Mental Wellness Initiative: State of Purpose (continued)

By acknowledging the impact of mental illness on individuals and families, faith communities can nurture and support members to have the courage to seek help. Recognizing difficulties such as serious anxiety and depression as treatable illnesses, and receiving help, can prevent tragedy and reduce suffering.

So now we join others of all faiths in prayer and in action to support those that are in need.

YSAD Interfaith Mental Wellness Initiatives

- **Convened steering committee of regional faith leaders** to explore how Task Force and faith community can work together
- Created the **Interfaith Mental Health Tool Kit** for use during Mental Health Month (May)
- **1st Interfaith Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Conference** held June 2005 sponsored by CrisisLink, the Fairfax Partnership for Youth and the Virginia Department of Health

YSAD Interfaith Mental Wellness Initiatives (Continued)

- **2nd Interfaith Mental Wellness & Suicide Prevention Conference** held May 4, 2006 (same sponsors)
- **May 2006 Mental Health Month activities** (proclamation, conference, mental wellness programs, suicide prevention trainings)
- **3d Annual Conference on Suicide Prevention & Mental Wellness**, May 2007

Mental Wellness Tool Kit - Themes

- Mental Illness as a Biological Disease
- Depression versus a “Bad Day”
- Impact of Mental Illness on the Family
- The Relationship Between Untreated Depression and Suicide
- The Devastating Impact of Suicide on Families and Communities
- Faith as a “Protective Element” in Mental Health

Interfaith Mental Health Tool Kit - Contents

Who Are We?

- Youth Suicide and Depression (YSAD) Task Force Fact Sheet
- Cover Letter
- Interfaith Mental Wellness Initiative Statement of Purpose

Why Are Depression and Suicide Important Topics For Youth And Parents?

- Newsletter Article
- Statistics One-Pager

What Is Depression And What Are The Warning Signs?

- Warning Signs of Depression and Suicidal Thinking
- Coping with Stress One-Pager

Interfaith Mental Health Tool Kit – Contents (Continued)

What Can Adults/Parents Do?

- Facts and Fables Worksheet & Answers
- Talking About Suicide

What Can The Faith Community Do?

- Potential Activities
- Talking Points
- Sermon Example Number One
- Sermon Example Number Two

What Are The Resources That Can Help Me Do These Things?

- CrisisLink One-Pager
- Center for Pastoral Care One-Pager
- Therapy: What to Expect & How to Get the Most Out of It
- Additional Resources

What Can Faith Communities Do?

- Observe *Mental Health Month*
- Create denomination specific referral list
- Use your building as a depression screening site
- Feature an article in your newsletter
- Use sermon/remarks to address mental health and mental illness
- Establish a volunteer “ombudsman”
- Train volunteers in care-giving to support members in need
- Sponsor educational classes, training
- Stress protective factors

Bridging the Gap:

An Interfaith Conference on Suicide Prevention and Mental Wellness

- Funding
- Conference Committee
- Recruiting Presenters
- Community Outreach
- Registration
- Publicity
- Agenda
- Evaluation

Conference 2006 Agenda

- **8-8:30 AM** **Continental Breakfast & Registration**
- **8:30-8:45 AM** **Opening Blessing**
Conference Overview & Greetings
- **8:45- 9:15 AM** **Keynote Speaker**
- **9:15-10:00 AM** **3 Concurrent Sessions: Depression & Suicide Through the Life Span (Youth, Adult, Elderly)**
- **10:00-10:15 AM** **Break**
- **10:15-11:15 AM** **Suicide Survivors Panel**
- **11:15-11:30 AM** **Break**

Conference Agenda (Continued)

- **11:30-12:30 PM** **“Bridging the Gap” Panel: Putting Suicide Prevention & Mental Wellness into Action**
- **12:30-1:30 PM** **Lunch (with Blessing)**
- **1:30-2:30 PM** **“QPR” Depression Awareness & Suicide Prevention Training**
- **2:30-3:15 PM** **Information Tables & Networking**
Video Screening: “*The Fierce Goodbye*”
- **3:15-4:15 PM** **Panel: Religious & Cultural Approaches to Mental Illness & Suicide**
- **4:15-4:30 PM** **Wrap Up & Closing Blessing**

Other “Mental Health Month” Activities in Faith Community

- **Interfaith Mental Wellness Observance Week (May 15-21, 2006)**
- **May 1st event at Fairfax Government Center**
- **Mental Wellness Programs**
- **Depression Awareness & Suicide Prevention Trainings**



For More Information

- ❑ To Download Tool Kit:

<http://www.fairfaxyouth.org/programs/mid.html#4>

- ❑ To Contact Us:

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