



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration,
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Grant Project Fact Sheet

Project Title

“THE STEPS PROGRAM: EXPANDING AND ENHANCING A COORDINATED RESPONSE TO STUDENT SUICIDE ON A LARGE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY CAMPUS”

Funder

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration,
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Funding Amount

\$304,000

Funding Period

3 Years (Funded for Second Time)

Project Director/Principal Investigator

Estela M. Rivero, Ph.D., Director, University Counseling Center

Co-Project Directors

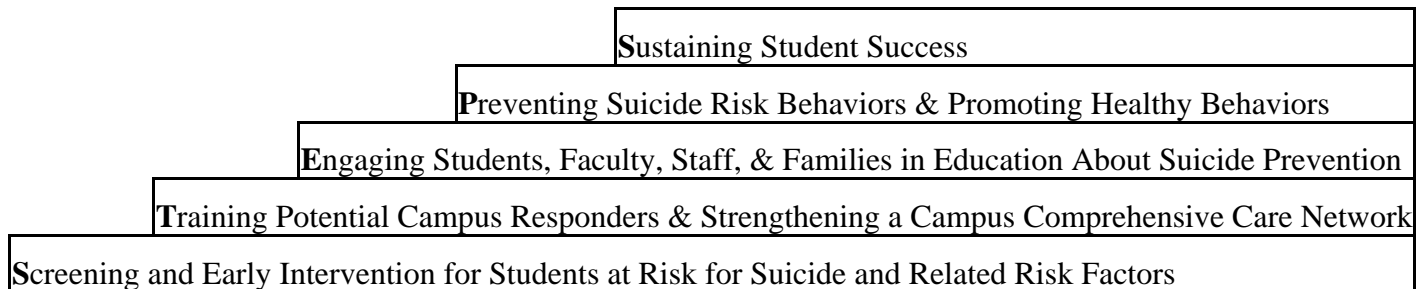
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Evaluator

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The STEPS Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Program Model
University at Albany, State University of New York



"Partnerships Working to Prevent Student Suicide...One Step at a Time"

Abstract

The University at Albany, State University of New York (UAlbany) proposes to meet the unique and complex needs of its undergraduate and graduate students who are at high risk for suicide through the enhancement of its existing Comprehensive Campus Suicide Prevention Model, entitled “**The STEPS Program**”. Specifically, we will focus efforts on: 1) developing comprehensive, targeted, culturally sensitive, and audience/department-specific gatekeeper training programs for academic faculty and paraprofessional student staff members to assist them in responding effectively to students with mental health and behavioral health problems that can lead to school failure, and; 2) prepare informational materials, including a media campaign featuring our students, addressing these risk factors and encouraging help-seeking. These educational materials will be specifically designed to address the needs of for students, staff, faculty, and parents/families and will outline warning signs of suicide, describe risk and protective factors, and identify appropriate actions to take when a student is in distress. The objectives of the UAlbany STEPS Program training and educational enhancements are consistent with the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (2004) recommendations and will 1) reduce rates of student suicide, suicide attempts, and related mental/behavioral health problems that can lead to school failure, and; 2) increase the utilization of campus mental health and related primary care services by the students in most need of them, as well as to increase the number of mental health consultations and referrals of students by our campus responders.. This project contributes to the development and enhancement of targeted educational, service and prevention best practice strategies and capacity by clarifying how well both universal and targeted individual-focused interventions derived from needs assessments and survey research with our target population work with our students who are identified as being at high risk for suicide. Outcome and process measures will be used to assess the effects of the STEPS Program intervention enhancements both on the individual student and, more broadly, across time upon variables such as campus suicide and suicide attempt rates, student referrals to the campus health and mental health care system, and incidents involving the treatment of mental health emergencies, including hospital transports and interventions by our community-based Mobile Crisis Team to the UAlbany campus. This project has been developed through a strategic planning process involving a diverse cross-section of the target population in response to a critical service need at the University as documented by assessment survey data and records of critical incidents, including the occurrence of two completed suicides during the past two years. Building on its long history of commitment and national leadership in both the suicide prevention and alcohol and substance abuse prevention fields, as well as its successful work under a current SAMHSA Campus Suicide Prevention Grant, UAlbany has prepared for project implementation by expanding existing collaborative partnerships with a number of groups on and off campus, including members of the target population of college students, as well as the community-based Capital District Psychiatric Center/Albany County Mobile Crisis Team.

About the Grant Competition

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) today announced 37 grants with a first year total of \$9.7 million to support national suicide prevention efforts. These grants will support a suicide prevention resource center, suicide prevention efforts on college campus, and state and tribal youth suicide prevention and early intervention programs across the country.

Campus Suicide Prevention Grants will support institutions of higher education to enhance services for students with mental and behavioral health problems. The Campus Suicide Prevention Grants program is authorized under the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. The awards will range up to \$75,000 per year for up to three years, with an equivalent match from the application organization. Continuation of these awards is subject to availability of funds, as well as the progress achieved by the grantees.