



July 18, 2016

Strategic Communications Approach: Zero Suicide Initiative Adoption/Implementation

I. Situation

In the fall of 2015, LifeWorks NW adopted the Zero Suicide Initiative to reduce the occurrence of suicide among LifeWorks NW clients. This initiative is a commitment to reduce suicides in health and behavioral health care systems, and also a specific set of tools and strategies that can be used to accomplish this work. It is both a concept and a practice intended to provide safety and support for clients and staff in regard to suicide prevention and intervention.

LifeWorks NW has created an implementation team to review the elements of Zero Suicide and put them into practice across the organization. This team has representation from various areas of the organization including administration, adolescent day treatment, crisis response, human resources, outpatient addictions, peer support services, and specialty mental health services. The elements of Zero Suicide are:

- Create a leadership-driven, safety-oriented culture, committed to dramatically reducing suicide among people under care.
- Develop a competent, confident and caring workforce by offering suicide awareness and prevention training to all staff.
- Systematically identify and assess suicide risk among people receiving care.
- Ensure every person has a suicide care management plan that is both timely and adequate to meet their needs.
- Use effective, evidence-based treatments that directly target suicide.
- Provide continuous contact and support, especially after acute care.
- Apply a data-driven quality improvement approach to inform system changes that will lead to improved patient outcomes and better care for those at risk.

Below is the timeline of Zero Suicide work to date – and upcoming activities:

- The LifeWorks NW Zero Suicide Implementation Team has been meeting monthly since October 2015.
- An initial communication from XXXXXX was sent to staff in Oct. 2015 (see attachment 1)
- A workforce survey examining attitudes and practice related to suicide was conducted among all staff (see attachment 2)
- Based on workforce survey results, the Implementation Team is currently deciding what trainings to require for all staff.
- Development of a plan to communicate the workforce survey results to staff as well as ongoing education and awareness about Zero Suicide.
- Review and recommend updates/revisions to existing related policy and procedure documents (i.e. 3.6 Management of Suicidal Clients).

The Zero Suicide Initiative has been adopted by the Suicide Prevention Council of Washington County and is a focus of the Washington County Community Health Improvement Plan. Washington County Public Health recently received funding to work with healthcare systems in the region on Zero Suicide and intends to support this effort in any way possible.

The Challenge: The Zero Suicide Initiative is both a change in attitudes and in staff and clinician practice. It is important to develop messages and communicate them in a way that promotes buy-in from LifeWorks NW staff regarding Zero Suicide. It will also be necessary to support changing attitudes about how to treat patients with suicidal thoughts/behaviors, and that suicide is preventable. Changes in practice and attitudes can be challenging so communication needs to help keep staff up-to-date on work being done as well as allow for interactive discussion and feedback.

II. Objective

- To implement communications and training that will serve as the foundation for a culture shift that facilitates adoption of Zero Suicide principles and practices among all LWNW staff.
- To support tactics toward adoption of Zero Suicide with effective communications that results in decrease in gaps of understanding based on a post campaign survey.

III. Audiences

Primary tier

- a. Leadership Management Council
- b. All frontline staff
- c. Clinicians

Secondary tier

- a. LWNW board
- b. External partnership
- c. General community

IV. Key Messages

Overarching message themes include:

- Suicide is preventable, and understanding how to prevent it is part of everyone’s job at LWNW.
- LifeWorks NW approaches its clients with care and compassion.
- Our approach to preventing suicide will incorporate and implement best practices, evidence-based screenings and assessments and appropriate interventions as we treat and aid those clients that are most vulnerable to suicidal thoughts/behaviors.
- Our approach to care for suicidal or potentially suicidal clients will be conducted in a collaborative, supportive learning environment.
- In all our work, we place a strong focus on safety of the client, our staff and the community.

V. Strategy

Following are the primary strategic communication channels we will employ to deliver messaging and achieve objectives:

- Email
- Intranet
- Website: info and link to national website, <http://zerosuicide.sprc.org/>
- Influencers
- Face-to-Face
- Trainings

VI. Tactics and Timeline

Timeframe	Tactic	Channel	Anticipated Outcome
August 2016	Share survey results with staff; provide talking points to managers to share in staff	Email, intranet	Staff gain baseline level of understanding about LWNW awareness about Zero Suicide Initiative and tactics for addressing suicide.

	meetings; put slide deck on intranet for staff use.		
August – September	Identify training courses and plan implementation and communication approach	Workgroup, Relias, email, intranet	Workgroup creates the cadre of courses to be taken by clinicians and non-clinicians alike to further the adoption of Zero Suicide attitudes and practices agency-wide.
August – December	Identify policies and procedures for revision/update/creation; develop associated communication approach to distribute information about the updates	Workgroup, email, intranet	First priority policies and procedures updated and adopted in practice by all-staff.
January 2017	Zero Suicide Initiative updates and upcoming activities included as part of the All Staff Meetings	Face-to-face meeting presentation	Power of face-to-face information exchange allows all LWNW employees to understand their role in Zero Suicide and what actions they can take to contribute to objectives
Beginning in August and bi-monthly following	Zero Suicide information – stats/data, key messaging, calls to action, training updates, etc.; included in <i>Management Update</i> e-news publication	Email/e-news, intranet	Information provided directly to LMC allows them to be a vehicle for disseminating same to frontline staff – effectively extending the adoption of Zero Suicide as a part of LWNW culture.
TBD	Zero Suicide page and regularly updated information and interactive opportunities on updated Intranet	Intranet	Engages employees in active discussion about Zero Suicide, which helps them internalize the key messages and take desired actions.

VII. External Communications

An external communications/media relations campaign could be considered if there are innovative methods used in agency adoption of Zero Suicide or otherwise any measurable and replicable differences made in the quest toward Zero Suicide.

VIII. Budget

Costs to implement a communications approach are not anticipated, unless it is determined that a hard copy collateral piece would need to be produced.

IX. Evaluation

We will know we are successful when we achieve our objective and when subsequent surveys show movement in understanding where there currently are gaps.

X. Next Steps

Upon review of this plan among the workgroup, we can proceed to refine it and anticipate date for initial implementation.