

NH Suicide Prevention Council—Military & Veterans

August 5, 2020

In attendance:

Co-Chairs: Amy Cook, Beth Alves

Members & Guests: Kristen McGraw, Dale Garrow, Chaplain (LTC) Steve Veinotte, Tye Thompson, Sheena Bice, Thom O'Connor, Lisa Boedigheimer, Seth Gahr, Sarah Morrissey, Andrea Reed

If you were logged on to this meeting, but your name did not get recorded in the attendance, please notify Amy Cook for a correction to be made.

Committee Housekeeping

Reviewed email distribution list to update. Provided update on the status of three members who will no longer be in regular attendance.

SPC Full/Leadership Update

The SPC Annual Suicide Prevention Conference will be switched to a virtual format and will take place in November. The SPC continues to meet virtually on last Monday of month—if anyone wants to attend, let us know and we'll forward link. There seems to be more collaboration occurring than in the past which is great to see. SPC applied for grant funding for Facilitator; should know more by September. DMHC has not yet heard about SAMHSA suicide prevention grant they applied for—should hear in September.

Status Reports on Initiatives

Together With Veterans (Chaplain (LTC) Veinotte & Beth Alves)— Veterans in Lakes Region decided to move forward with the program. They started to put together a Steering Committee and already have about 6 people who have expressed interest and commitment, two organizations that will work together to fill the roles of fiscal intermediary, Coordinator & Facilitator and solid commitment from the region's public health network, the VA and DMAVS. Their plan is to continue putting together a team over the next few months as they get ready for an Academy that TWV will provide for them virtually this year in October.

Partnership with Servicelink (Amy Cook & Thom O'Connor)—new Servicelink contracts began on 7/1. Amy & Thom are looking at October to meet with Servicelink Directors in order to further the discussion about how to move forward with formal and effective working relationships between this committee, the VA, DHHS and the vendors. COVID and a transition to a new technology platform have slightly delayed the original timeline.

Postvention (Beth Alves)—Beth Alves will reach out to those who participated in the most recent postvention discussion in order to move this forward. Looking to September for a meeting.

Military Culture Training (Amy Cook & Sheena Bice)— Amy is in the process of engaging the Military Leadership Team to develop some additional opportunities in order to provide a wide variety of trainings to stakeholders and community partners throughout the state. The intent is that what they develop will be able to supplement and align with the work of this committee.

Sheena--Star Behavioral Health Provider program trainings will be moving to a virtual platform until further notice. There are trainings for all three tiers scheduled in August & September. Sheena has been widely distributing the new flier. If you did not get it, contact her. In order to attend Tier 2 or 3, you must have attended Tier 1 already. A proposal was submitted for Sheena, Troy Townsend & Chrissy (SBHP) to provide an overview of the SBHP program at the annual Behavioral Health Summit in December.

Lakes Region Veteran Wellness Series with NEP (Tye Thompson)—NEP is still waiting to hear if they received the Adaptive Sports Grant for the Veteran Wellness Series. They should hear no later than September. There are specific objectives that need to be met by the program and there is flexibility to incorporate other ideas. They will be starting the development pieces in order to be ready for an October start date.

Other Related Initiative Updates

Zero Suicide Academy (Beth Alves)—At this time, due to COVID-19, they are re-evaluating the plan to hold the Zero Suicide Academy and are waiting for more information that will help make that determination. If it is held, it will probably be virtual. There is no date set. More details will be available in the future.

Discussion

Committee members discussed the following question: What have you learned or discovered during the public health crisis that should be considered in our work to prevent suicide among SMVF?

The following points/observations/thoughts were shared:

- There have been some positives along with the negatives
- No-shows have declined with regards to appointments
- One negative—miss out on team building (for Veterans receiving services, but also for our workforce)
- There seems to be two “camps” of people with regards to virtual technology that has been largely relied on during this time—1) people who can use technology and like that it cuts down on barriers to service, 2) people who hate the technology or lack the skill to use it and a physical presence on video can be anxiety-provoking.
- How are we helping people be more comfortable with virtual technology and engage more effectively? How are we helping Veterans we serve? How are we helping each other and other service providers?
- Pros & cons—you reach some additional people, but also lose some people
- There’s an unknown about how long this might go on, so it might be worthwhile to start helping each other do better in this environment.
- More opportunities to attend conferences or workshops that otherwise wouldn’t have been able to attend.

Announcements

National Guard (LTC Veinotte & Dale Garrow)—NHNG has been very busy lately! Lots of missions have provided employment to some who might have otherwise been unemployed. Overall, Guardsmen are doing well now, but worry about future once missions are complete.

The first ASSIST workshop is scheduled for 8/20-8/21. It will take place in person in Hooksett. Contact Dale Garrow for more information.

Northeast Passage (Tye Thompson)—NEP is now approved to provide services again to small groups in outdoor settings. They are slowly returning to an array of full services, but they may need to look a bit different for a while.

VFR (Sheena Bice)—VFR has started some new, specialized programs including a LGBTQ group for Veterans and a Female Veteran Group. They continue to expand their reach and want to grow the groups.

Division of Community Based Programs (Amy Cook)—Applications will be accepted for the Veteran-Friendly Business Recognition Program until 8/30/20. Please encourage your employer to apply and spread the word. CARES Act Funding—the Department is now accepting applications from organizations that serve Veterans. Deadline for applications 8/10; \$2 million dollars for traditional services and not many applicants to date. Additional funds will be devoted to Veteran homelessness and behavioral health services, but not sure if it will be an application process or not. DMAVS will not be responsible for those funds. The Military & Veteran Family Resource Guide that was compiled last year continues to be available this year and we’d like to distribute it widely to schools—if anyone has an idea of how to do that, please contact Amy. It has already been provided to the DOE.

NH State Police (Trooper Seth Gahr)—The NH State Police continue to be very busy serving and helping Veterans.

NH Employment Security (Sarah Morrissey)—The team at NHES has been extremely busy working 7 days/week, 12 hours/day to address COVID-related employment challenges. They will be launching a new job search portal that gives priority to Veterans. They will be hosting virtual job fairs in the coming months—virtual job fairs allow for the fair to be focused on specific types of jobs.

Harbor Homes (Andrea Reed)—Shelters are full, but they continue to go out into Manchester camps to find homeless Veterans. The organization will be re-branding and joining with others to form Harbor Care.

The Crisis Center is contracted through the end of Oct so it continues to run as normal. This includes the crisis apartments and answering crisis calls. There should be a new vendor for the crisis team by the end of Oct to take over the crisis team in the greater Nashua area.*

The Safe Station service through Harbor Homes has ended—they are no longer responding to the fire departments for SUD calls.*

*This information shown in the minutes is different than the verbal report given at the 8/5/20 meeting. The verbal report contained inaccurate information. It was corrected via email after the meeting and the correct information is documented here in the minutes.

Next Meeting

September 1, 2020

2-3:30pm; Webex virtual platform

Recorded By:

Amy Cook