

## NH Suicide Prevention Council—Military & Veterans September 2, 2020

### **In attendance:**

Co-Chairs: Amy Cook, Beth Alves

Members & Guests: Allison McCully, Candace (UpReach Intern), Chaplain (LTC) Steve Veinotte, Sheena Bice, Lisa Boedigheimer, Seth Gahr, Andrea Reed, Thomas Groulx, Gary D'Armour, Susan Stearns, Troy Townsend

\*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.\*

### **SPC Full/Leadership Update**

The SPC Annual Suicide Prevention Conference will be switched to a virtual format and will take place November, 12<sup>th</sup>. There will be no charge unless you need CEUs. The SPC continues to meet virtually on last Monday of month—if anyone wants to attend, let us know and we'll forward link. A press conference is planned for 9/10 in honor of suicide prevention month. The SPC Communications Committee will be conducting a social media campaign and asked if our committee wanted a day to highlight a message aimed at SMVF. Beth will forward them information that can be used.

### **Status Reports on Initiatives**

**Together With Veterans (Chaplain (LTC) Veinotte & Beth Alves)**— A launch training for the TWV Steering Committee and other interested partners was held in August and, reportedly, went very well. Steering Committee has been formed and formal roles identified. The launch training provided an agenda for the next 1-2 years, so it is very well organized. The next step will be to conduct a needs assessment in the community.

**Postvention (Beth Alves)**—There were not many responses regarding interest in postvention follow-up amongst committee members. Moving forward, we will include Postvention as an agenda item in our monthly meeting encouraging further discussion. As a result of regular discussion and sharing experiences, appropriate action items will be developed in this area as-needed.

Elizabeth Santos has moved on from her position in Survivor Outreach Services. Susan S. will check the postvention packet to see if the materials from SOS contain Elizabeth's contact information—they may need to be replaced. The committee will also need to find out if someone has been hired to replace Elizabeth.

### **Military Culture Training—**

**Sheena Bice**—Star Behavioral Health Provider program trainings are being in next few months, additional trainings have been added. Sheena provided an updated flyer. Please distribute as appropriate. All trainings are scheduled to be virtual.

**Amy Cook**—A draft was shared with the committee for review of a MCC Training Recommendations Sheet. The sheet was modeled after one created by the Virginia Dept of Military Affairs and customized for NH. This is in DRAFT form and feedback is being sought from all committee members.

**Purpose of sheet:** To be used a resource for any sector desiring to know what is available or recommended for military culture training and suicide prevention training in NH. The resource will be provided to social service organizations, employers, government agencies, schools, universities, etc.

**Organization of sheet:** Committee will agree on what is the priority recommendation for trainings and what should be included as reasonable alternatives if someone cannot take the priority recommendation.

**Commitment related to sheet:** We'd like for organization members to be able to commit to supporting the training recommendations by referencing them when referring others and enrolling their own staff in the trainings.

Action steps—

1. All committee members review rough draft of training recommendations. Provide feedback directly to Amy Cook no later than 9/30/20. What other trainings should we consider including?
2. At the next meeting on 10/7/20, we will further discuss the sheet and make a final determination about priority recommendations and alternative trainings to be included on the sheet.
3. Once finalized, committee members will take the resource back to their organizations to get official support.

Also, regarding Military Culture Training, Amy and Beth will be speaking with a representative from PsychArmor later this week to learn about the services they provide to organizations and states in order to help promote a curriculum and maintain data on learners.

### **Other Related Initiative Updates**

**Zero Suicide Academy (Beth Alves)**—The contract for this was awarded, so planning will move forward. Most feedback collected prefers a virtual event. Anyone interested in helping with the planning should contact Beth Alves.

### **Discussion**

#### **Opportunities for Further or Future Work**

Amy presented an outline of the priorities previously identified by the committee as ones the group wanted to work on in the coming years. These are what Beth & Amy will bring to the SPC Strategic Planning Retreat when it is scheduled. Refer to 2020-2025 Goals and Priorities\_SPC\_MV DRAFT.ppt. These will be attached to minutes so all committee members can review. Time will be set aside on future agendas to discuss each in detail and begin to add strategies and actions to them.

#### **Other:**

SAMHSA SMVF TA Center decided to NOT host another cohort of Mayor's Challenge cities, so Claremont will not be receiving an invitation as previously promised by the TA Center. Instead, they will be inviting cities to participate in Governor's Challenge Community Expansion in the next month or so. There's not a lot of information available as to what this will entail, so it will be discussed further at a later time.

With an increase in virtual services, the committee should consider how to seize on technology opportunities. Amy C. shared three potential opportunities for development and/or collaboration—

- **Virtual Living Room**--The Military Leadership Team (including Manchester VAMC and WRJ VAMC) is currently in the process of exploring the possibility of opening a Virtual Living Room in the north country for Veterans to access the broadband connectivity and equipment necessary to participate in telehealth appointments.
- **Virtual Resource Event for Veterans**—Amy learned about this event format from a web conference she attended. An individual from another state shared how they coordinated a variety of professionals and resources for Veterans, Veterans signed up for a time and indicated what they were looking for help with, then the appropriate professionals all logged onto a Zoom call with the Veteran at the coordinated time to participate in a facilitated wrap-around discussion to benefit the Veteran and answer his/her questions. This may be a format we can use in NH in some way.
- **Military Spouse & Family Supports**—Amy is working with the Military Leadership Team to develop supports in NH for military/Veteran spouses and families. They've narrowed their focus to connecting spouses with information and social outlets. They are carefully trying to not duplicate any existing programs or efforts. Amy and a member from the MLT will be meeting virtually with the Program Director from the Veteran Spouse Network in Texas in the next few weeks. VSN has two programs they want to learn more about and consider replicating in NH—Veteran Spouse Resilience Group and a Veteran Spouse Virtual Social Club. If anyone is interested in helping to explore these possibilities, please let Amy know.

### **Announcements**

**National Guard** (LTC Veinotte & Troy T.)—NHNG continues to be very busy. 120 mobilizations coming up, 90 coming home in next 6 weeks. Many are still working on COVID-related assignments. Additional ASIST workshop dates have been scheduled—you can find them online through ASIST website or contact Dale Garrow for more information.

**Division of Community Based Military Programs** (Amy Cook)—The deadline for NH Veteran-Friendly applications has been extended to 9/30/20. Please encourage your employer to apply and spread the word. The new Ask the Question website is finally live as of today! [www.askthequestion.nh.gov](http://www.askthequestion.nh.gov)  
HB 1582 was recently passed and creates three new positions for Division of Community Based Military Programs that will be a great help to the work of the committee including a position to focus on homelessness & suicide prevention and a grant writer; however, there is not yet any funding attached to the bill, so the positions will not be posted until funded is appropriated.

**NH State Police** (Trooper Seth Gahr)—Two weeks ago, State Police collaborated with NAMI NH to provide 40 hours of training (CIT) to police from Dover, Rochester & Exeter Police Departments. On a daily basis, Seth and his team experience a need to connect non-law enforcement Veterans to services. It seems that there has been an increased need lately.

**Harbor Care (formerly Harbor Homes)** (Andrea Reed)—Transitioning to a new identity—Harbor Care. Despite COVID concerns, many clients need face-to-face assistance and Harbor Care is meeting those needs. They've started to provide some new services and staffing patterns in response to needs they've seen. Mental health counseling is now available on site. They were also able to use some funding recently received to make tablets available to clients so they can search for employment or participate in telehealth services. If you are with an organization that you feel would be a good resource for Harbor Care clients, please send Andrea Reed business cards. Contact her at [a.reed@nhpartnership.org](mailto:a.reed@nhpartnership.org).

### Next Meeting

October 7, 2020

2-3:30pm; Webex virtual platform

For Agenda & Follow Up:

- 2020-2025 Goals and Priorities—October meeting will discuss:
  - Military Cultural Competency Training: 1) MCC Recommendations Sheet—review feedback submitted to Amy (please submit prior to 10/7 meeting) and finalize sheet. Feedback sought: Is there something missing that you think should be considered and included on this resource sheet? Would it be a priority recommendation or an alternative/additional recommendation?
  - Social Connectedness—ideas for this area? What is needed? For a specific military/Veteran-related target audience? What can be done?
- Postvention—any experiences to share since September meeting? Susan S—need to change materials from SOS?
- Has someone been hired to replace Elizabeth Santos at SOS?
- Contact Beth Alves at VA if you want to help with Zero Suicide Academy training planning.
- Contact Amy Cook at DMAVS if you want to be involved with exploring and planning social supports for Veteran spouses & families.
- Contact Andrea Reed at Harbor Care if you can provide business cards for her clients.

Recorded By:

Amy Cook