



MISSISSIPPI COALITION OF PARTNERS IN PREVENTION

Stay Dry!

Mississippi Coalition of Partners in Prevention Newsletter

February 2016

Issue 12

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MCPP Update: Welcome New Members!

Through a previous coalition grant from the U.S. Department of Education (2009), in which MSU was the lead entity, a state-wide alcohol prevention group — the Mississippi Coalition of Partners in Prevention (MCPP) — was formed to reduce underage drinking and binge drinking among college students in Mississippi.

An initial group of three universities quickly grew to an impressive network of twenty-three higher education schools. Through this growth, the mission of the coalition has been expanded to implement a focus on suicide prevention efforts, along with alcohol and drug prevention. In support of this endeavor, funding has been provided at various intervals from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health.

The following schools and members are warmly welcomed in 2015-2016:

- ◆ Coahoma Community College
- ◆ Copiah-Lincoln Community College
- ◆ Institutions-Higher Learning
- ◆ Madison Rankin Prevention Partnership
- ◆ Mississippi Community College Board
- ◆ Mississippi Delta Community College
- ◆ Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
- ◆ Rust College
- ◆ Southwest Mississippi Community College



Recap of Conference Call— January 28, 2016

- ◆ Prevention Webinar and Opportunities
 - ◇ Tom Colthurst, a SAMSHA consultant, emphasized Town Hall meetings for higher education to collaborate with community-based organizations to prevent underage drinking.
- ◆ Evaluation for Social Media Campaign
 - ◇ Access evaluation surveys; each participating school should submit 50 surveys to: Health Promotion and Wellness of MSU
Attn: Joyce Yates
P.O. Box 6338
MS State, MS 39762
- ◆ New Volunteers for Committees Needed
 - ◇ Media, Workshops, Publication, Mental Health, Suicide, Alcohol, and Drugs Prevention topics
 - ◇ Volunteer by emailing Jyates@saffairs.msstate.edu
- ◆ Mini Grants — Date extended to February 29, 2016 — Apply ASAP!
 - ◇ Alcohol or Depression Screening/Suicide Toolkits (Material designs are complete, but can be customized with date and location of screening)
- ◆ Strategic Prevention Framework
 - ◇ Chuck Oliphant, SABG Program Administrator for the Mississippi Department of Mental Health
 - ◇ Cancellation of the March 3rd speaker; update coming soon

Upcoming Business

- ◆ Please note: Newsletters for MCPP will now be annually released in February



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QPR & Suicide Prevention Initiatives — “Live Through This”

On October 8, 2015, suicide attempt survivor, Dese'Rae Stage spoke at the Colvard Student Union at Mississippi State University. Dese'Rae shared her journey which included self-harm, Bipolar Disorder, and involvement in an abusive relationship that ultimately led to her suicide attempt. After receiving help, she dedicated her life to helping others and created “Live Through This,” which is an online project of images and stories of suicide attempt survivors. Dese'Rae showed the audience the portraits of several of the individuals she has interviewed humanizing the issue of suicide and what we can learn from those who have lived through experience with suicidal thoughts and attempts. Dese'Rae relayed Brene Brown's quote, “The two most powerful words when we are in struggle: me too,” and encouraged the attempt survivors in the audience to raise their hands— making a significant impact.

Over 400 people were in attendance. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, articulating how “real” the speaker was and expressing the compelling statement, “I'm not alone.” Campus and community suicide prevention resources were mentioned by the speaker and made available after the event. Together, the MCPP can devote itself to preventing suicide deaths among students in Mississippi!

Kavalsky, K. (2015, November). Suicide Prevention Speaker Event. Interview. Conducted from Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS.



Timely Topic: Impact of the Frontline Faculty

Suicide remains as the second leading cause of death among persons age 15-34, with 8% of total college students contemplating suicide or creating suicidal plans within the last year (Suicide Facts at a Glance, 2016). Students are repeatedly showing signs of mental distress within their academic life through erratic mood swings in class, frustration and anxiety which displaces a mind to the outskirts of reality, the uncomfortable struggle to sit through a 50-minute class with an attuned mind, attendance records similar to an unfinished tic-tac-toe board, and even assignment responses and essays which reflect thoughts of suicide or self-harm.

Often times, the distress is revealed through simple actions; other times, it is displayed through polite and inconspicuous language. Faculty members are at the front-line of defense against the beginning thoughts of potential self-harm or suicide for students. What if the entire staff was trained to read between the lines— could students' lives be saved? Though most would agree that warning signs are sometimes easy to pick up on, is it clear for faculty what steps to take next? Is our college's faculty prepared to intervene? According to the *Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors*, a 2014 survey revealed that the percent of colleges which offer formal or informal faculty training has decreased 0.5% since 2007— dropping from 59% to 58.5% respectively (Howard, J., 2015). When you're talking of the possibility of saving lives, that's simply not enough.

Throughout our state, the importance on this topic has been acted upon as the Coalition recently expanded initiatives to focus on QPR training. Of the respondents in the survey spoken of above, 32.5% specifically reported completing the QPR Program for training, along with only 22.5% who used locally developed models. Paul Quinnett, developer and CEO of the QPR Institute, encourages one central message: “When you experience a flash, just a flash, of ‘Something could be wrong here,’ you need to act. Do something.” (Howard, J. 2015)

Howard, J. (2015, Fall). Faculty on the Front Lines. The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inc.

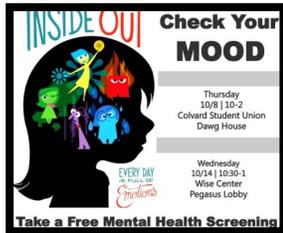
Suicide Facts at a Glance. (2016, January). Center for Disease Control, Injury Prevention and Control. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/suicide-datasheet-a.pdf>



What's Happening at Your School?

Alcorn State University: Substance Abuse Prevention Program (ASAPP)

On the week of October 19-23rd, Alcorn's Substance Abuse Prevention Program presented *National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week*— which held daily events and programs to raise awareness to alcohol consumption dangers. The week began with a kickoff table and free alcohol screenings for students. As the week commenced, events which featured MDOT Drunk Goggles and Seat Belt Convincer and a Greek Mocktails Mix-Off brought in students from all over campus.



Mississippi State University: Mental Health Screenings

MSU held two mental health screenings during the month of October, which were in connection with National Depression Screening Day. A total of 187 students across the university were screened. Clinicians from the counseling center were on hand to discuss results of the screenings with students and provide resources. Mental health screening events have been an effective outreach in reaching students outside of the counseling center.

University of Southern Mississippi: Alcohol Awareness Week

In October of 2015, Moffitt Health Services partnered with the department of counseling psychology to host events for alcohol awareness week. The week-long events included both awareness and education activities. Interactive education activities were provided by hosting a pour station for students to learn the correct amount of alcohol in a standard drink and using the drunk goggles to simulate vision/coordination at a .08 BAC. With funding from MCPP, USM was able to distribute cups with a social norming message regarding drinking and driving.



Mississippi Valley State University: Alcohol Awareness Outreach

MVSU Student Counseling Center, in collaboration with the MS Highway Safety Patrol and the Greenwood Police Department, sponsored an Alcohol Awareness Outreach for the university community. The activities were geared towards educating and increasing the awareness and prevention of alcohol abuse on college campuses. The event was well-attended by students, faculty, and staff. There was a presentation on the dangers of impaired driving, a demonstration on seatbelt safety, and a 'rollover simulator' replication by the Highway Patrol.

Social Media: Today's Avenue of Communication

176,000,000. That is the number of people who joined the social media world just in the last year. Facebook, alone, adds 500,000 users every day— accumulating 6 new profiles every second. We have the world of communication at our very fingertips, giving us the invaluable ability to get our message across to college students throughout the state in just seconds. Even the most introverted and active students are interacting via social media; they're learning and engaging through posts on social media platforms. Together, as the Coalition, let's take advantage of this way to communicate the dangers of binge drinking and prevent self-harm and suicide to our Mississippi college students.

Regan, K. (2015, August 10) *10 Amazing Social Media Growth Stats*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialmediatoday.com/socialnetworks/kadie-regan/2015-08-10/10-amazing-social-media-growth-stats-2015>

