

## Project Report #2 - January 17, 2019

### Suicide Prevention at Lake Washington Institute of Technology (LWTech)

Lead partner:

- [Lake Washington Institute of Technology](#) (LWTech)

Other Partners:

- [Asian Counseling and Referral Service](#) (ACRS)
- [The JED Foundation](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid](#) (MHFA)

Term of Project:

- January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

Project Director:

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Former Co-Director:

Michelle Berry  
Dean, High School Programs  
*(No longer with the college due to recent relocation out of state)*

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## Executive summary

Briefly summarize project objectives, inputs, activities, participants, and outcomes.

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The Suicide Prevention at Lake Washington Institute of Technology (LWTech) aimed to enhance suicide prevention work in a resource-challenged technical college environment with three key objectives:

1. Better connect students with relevant mental health services.
2. Reduce the means by which a person could harm themselves on the LWTech campus.
3. Improve faculty/staff ability to support students who may be experiencing a mental health crisis through training from Mental Health First Aid.

The college completed the following using grant funds.

The college successfully completed two activities to meet Objective One:

- Results from the LWTech's "Healthy Minds Survey" (part of a partnership with JED campus) showed a high prevalence of mental health conditions in the college population and, in response, the college partnered with Asian Counseling and Referral Services to increase short-term mental health counseling on campus. The project proved so successful that the college hired a permanent half-time mental health counselor on campus following the close of grant funding.
- The college created targeted mental health messaging following a joint project between the Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Support and the Marketing & Communications team. The departments implemented a survey tool and conducted a follow-up focus group with veteran students to identify ways to better support mental health needs of this population. The result is an impressive and visually coordinated communication plan complete with poster, wallet card, and bi-weekly newsletter.

The college completed one activity to meet Objective Two:

- The Campus Public Safety Team at LWTech addressed items from the comprehensive environmental scan completed in 2017 as part of the college's suicide prevention plan. The college implemented the highest priority changes to reduce the means by which a person could harm themselves on the LWTech campus. The result of this work is strategically placed signs around campus providing immediate access to suicide hotlines, availability of suicide prevention brochures reprinted with permission from National Institute of Mental Health, new sharps containers located in campus common areas, and a new flame proof locker for hazardous chemicals.

The college completed one activity to meet Objective Three:

- To address faculty and staff discomfort in working with a student in distress, LWTech hosted Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) on campus for a 3.5-day "train the trainer" session to improve faculty/staff ability to support students who may be experiencing a mental health crisis. The result of this training is 13 certified teachers who have provided ongoing, in-person mental health first aid workshops since summer 2019. These 8-hour workshops are open to students, faculty, and staff.

The project had a strong implementation team and implemented all four targeted strategies as outlined in the proposal. LWTech received an extension from June 30, 2019 to December 31, 2019 to ensure the final activities related to means restriction and veteran support could be wrapped up with a focus on quality, not just completion.

## Project activities description

List the major activities that occurred during the project and say whether or not they proceeded according to plan in terms of their nature, timing, and number of participants. Activities are actions, tasks, trainings, meetings, workshops, etc. that implement project strategies in order to achieve project objectives. Include numerical data (e.g. headcounts, duration of activities, etc.) when appropriate.

With the generous funding from the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), LWTech accomplished four key activities to meet the overall objective of enhancing suicide prevention efforts at LWTech.

### 1. ACRS Counseling Services On Campus

Beginning January 2, 2019, LWTech partnered with Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS) to provide 10 hours per week of on-site Mental health counseling to students in the form of one-on-one appointments. This was the only form of mental health support available to students on campus. Services lasted until June 30, 2019.

During it's the LWTech's partnership with ACRS, 26 students received services and most students received multiple appointments. Even with pressing mental health issues, the majority of students were retained in college; that is, they did not drop out due to their mental health condition or concern. Students served were more likely to be female and slightly younger than the general college population (the average age of an LWTech student is 31 and 60% of students identify as female). Students of color accessed the services at the same proportionate rate as their white peers. Table 1 details information about these students.

Table 1: Demographics and Persistence of Students Participating in Counseling Services

	Number of Students Served	Average Number of Sessions	% still enrolled or graduated	Average Age	% Female; % Male	% Students of Color
Winter 2019	11	3	64%	26	(F) 73%; (M) 27%	36%
Spring 2019	15	3	67%	28	(F) 73%; (M) 27%	33%

### 2. Improve Counseling Access for Veteran Students:

The LWTech marketing and communications department developed targeted messaging and designed collateral pieces, to specifically connect with the college's Veteran community. Ahmad Bennett, coordinator of LWTech's Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success (Veteran's Center) led the focus groups in June 2019 and Dr. Ruby Hayden, Vice President of Students conducted a theme analysis in October 2019. Their work showed that Veteran students are significantly interested in learning more about counseling opportunities, but also simultaneously found the term "counseling" to be off-putting and a barrier to seeking support. Additionally, Veteran students expressed a need for consistent information sharing in a timely manner.

The marketing solution was to come up with a name/brand, supporting messaging and design

elements and pieces that would better resonate with the Veteran community. With that information and feedback, the following pieces have been created and are in distribution on campus:

- A. **Name/Brand:** Through the feedback received from the core team at LWTech that works with the Veteran community, the team created the brand/name below to resonate with Veterans, and hopefully help remove any stigmas attached with mental health and counseling:

- Mental Health First

Mental Health First has two different connotations. It can be interpreted as, “Do this first,” like an order, a familiar communication style to Veterans. It can also be interpreted as self-care and putting yourself first, above everything else. It’s relatable and memorable.

- B. **Logo:** The Mental Health First logo was designed to resonate with Veterans, in the following ways: (1) The design is badge, a familiar application that Veterans are used to seeing; (2) The badge could be perceived as a badge of honor, helping to remove any stigmas association with mental health and counseling; (3) The badge could be perceived as having a connection to wearing your heart on your sleeve, indirectly lifting stigmas attached to mental health and counseling; and, (4) The badge incorporates the colors of the American flag, while also including the brand colors of the college.



C. **Collateral Pieces**

- i. *Poster:* The poster aims to encourage LWTech Veterans to put their mental health first and reach out to a mental health professional. The image and copy work together to create a connection to remove any stigmas around mental health and counseling.

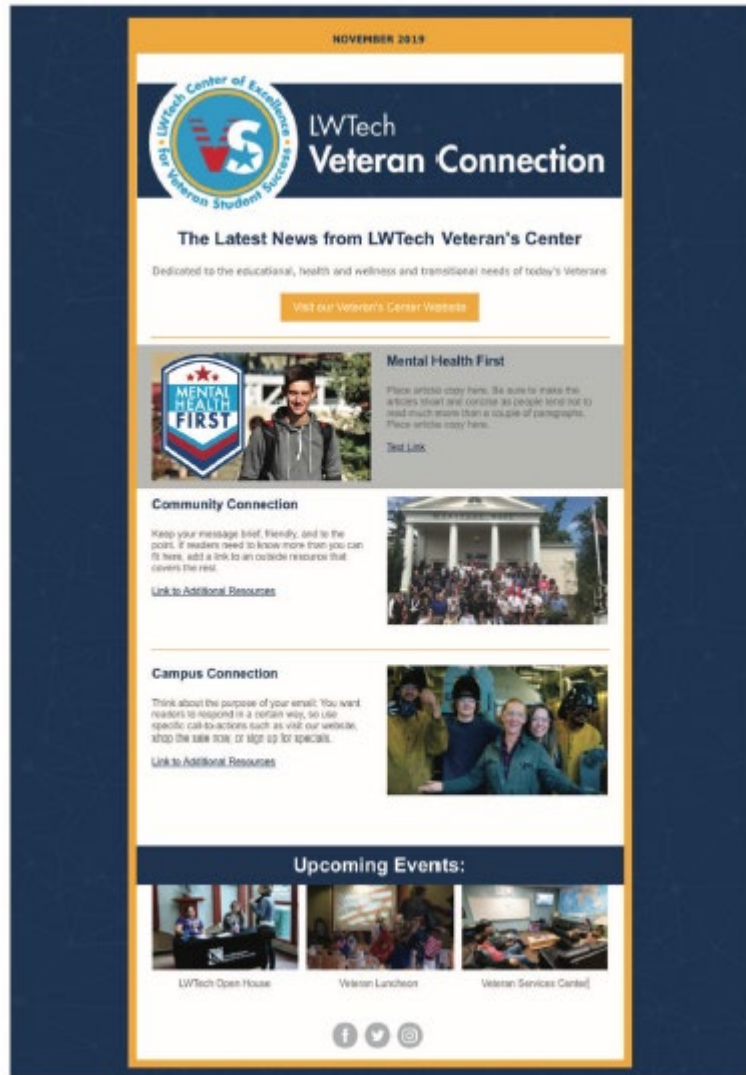


- ii. *Wallet Card:* Like the poster, the wallet card aims to encourage LWTech Veterans to put their mental health first and reach out to a mental health professional. The piece is designed to be carried with a person and includes key information. The image and copy work together to create a connection to remove any stigmas around mental health and counseling.



- iii. *Email/Newsletter Template:* Like the poster and wallet card, the email/newsletter aims to encourage LWTech Veterans to put their mental health first and reach out to a mental health professional. The newsletter –

and future editions – can be emailed or printed and displayed in the Veteran’s Center. The newsletter is named *LWTech Veteran Connection*. This name stems from feedback through focus groups and intercepts, and through conversations with the Veterans Services team at LWTech, we have determined that veteran students on our campus are looking for connections outside their service. This includes connection to each other, connection to the Veteran’s Center, connection to the Veterans services team, and connection to LWTech and its community.



### 3. Suicide Means Restriction

As part of the college’s participation as a JED Campus (a national suicide prevention non-profit organization), the campus public safety office completed a comprehensive evaluation of LWTech’s physical changes needed to reduce the likelihood of a suicide attempt on campus. From that report, the implementation team selected several items as the most beneficial to complete quickly:



- A. Signs around campus providing more immediate access to suicide hotlines. These have been strategically installed around the campus and several parking lot areas that are lower traffic areas (and due to that isolation may be selected by someone experiencing suicide ideation).

**YOU MATTER, AND  
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

If you are considering harming yourself, please get help by:

- Calling 911.
- Texting HOME to 741741.
- Calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1.800.273.8255.
- Telling your instructor, friends, family or counselor immediately.
- Calling LWTech Campus Public Safety at 425.739.8224.



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- B. Brochures and associated brochure racks with suicide prevention pamphlets in multiple languages reprinted with permission from National Institute of Mental Health.
- C. New sharps containers now located in strategic areas of the campus.
- D. New flame proof locker for hazardous chemicals in the Horticulture department.
- 4. Host Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training**  
From June 10 through 13, 2019, thirteen (13) LWTech employees attended a training to become Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Instructors (2 attendees dropped out at the last minute due to illness). After being evaluated on teaching a portion of the presentation, scored with an Instructor Certification Course Presentation rubric, all individuals passed and are now certified to teach the 8-hour MHFA program.



*pictured l-r: front row – Mihaela Cosma, Michelle Berry, Art Land, middle row – Cary Henry, Rhonda DeWitt, Kaytlyn Hoch, Anna Bennett, Jenny Rogoff, Meisha Wangerin, back row – MHFA trainer Ali Gheith, Maia Lacher, Ahmad Bennet, Stephanie Bostwick.*

Mental Health First Aid training encourages early detection and intervention by teaching participants about the signs and symptoms of specific illnesses like anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, eating disorders and addictions. Through role-playing and simulations, it demonstrates how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions; provide initial help; and connect people to professional, peer and social supports as well as self-help resources. It also includes a module to focus specifically on mental health in higher education.

The program offers concrete tools and answers key questions like “What can I do?” and “Where can someone find help?” Participants are introduced to local mental health resources, national organizations, support groups and online tools for mental health and addiction treatment and support.

Mental Health First Aid USA is operated by the National Council for Behavioral Health.

## Project evaluation

Briefly describe the project's effectiveness at accomplishing its objectives to attain the overall goal of postsecondary student suicide prevention. To the extent such evidence is available, include quantitative and qualitative evidence in support of effectiveness claims.

### 1. Objective One: Better connect students with relevant mental health services.

- **Activity: ACRS Counseling Services On Campus**

Students report that these services were appreciated and improved the student experience on campus (Table 2). While direct causation cannot be proved (and a single activity is unlikely to be the sole cause of such change), since project implementation LWTech has not experienced any suicide attempts of its students.

Table 2: Student Evaluations of Counseling Services

Statements	Scale of 1 to 4; 4 being high
I was able to get an appointment when I needed it.	3.80
The procedure for scheduling an appointment was clear and easy.	3.86
I was able to talk about the problems that are bothering me.	3.81
The counselor listened to me.	3.90
The counselor helped me explore my options.	3.86
The counseling session was helpful to me.	3.38
The counselor treated me with courtesy and respect.	3.95
The counselor provided the information I needed.	3.52
After meeting with the counselor, I have another way of looking at my situation.	3.33
The counseling environment felt safe and confidential	3.67
I would recommend this counselor to others.	3.71
To what extent did Counseling Services help you?	Scale of 1 to 4; 4 being high
Increase self-awareness.	3.40
Develop new coping skills.	3.33
Resolve issues that interfere with ability to continue as a student.	2.90
Open ended comments	
"I felt that the session helped my mental state and to vocalize some things that were troubling me."	
"If we could have more time in the appt or more appt windows that would help scheduling a lot. I felt much better and in a better place mentally after using the counseling services."	
"[name of counselor] is amazing, this is a wonderful service at our school"	
"Continue to offer them! It is important for students to have this safe space to talk about whatever is on their minds. Counseling & therapy have made my life a lot better."	

- **Activity: Improve Counseling Access for Veteran Students:**

Anecdotally, students state they appreciate the new materials created from grant funds. The college plans to reconvene these focus groups in Spring 2021 years to further evaluate the impact of how we encourage veteran students to seek support. Again, with the same caveats as earlier, since project implementation LWTech has not experienced any suicide attempts of its students.

## 2. Reduce the means by which a person could harm themselves on the LWTech campus.

- **Activity: Suicide Means Restriction**

Anecdotally, students have expressed appreciation for posters and brochures at project meeting/Employees have expressed feeling more safe with the addition of the sharps containers and flam locker.

While direct causation cannot be proved (and a single activity is unlikely to be the sole cause of such change), since project implementation LWTech has not experienced any suicide attempts of its students

## 3. Improve faculty/staff ability to support students who may be experiencing a mental health crisis through training from Mental Health First Aid.

- **Activity: Host Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training**

Since the June 2019 train-the-trainer experience, LWTech has offered MHFA 8-hour training on 5 occasions to both employees and student leaders. Evaluations of training to date include comments such as:

- “Gave me a lot of information to better equip me to help my students; learned a lot!”
- “Learned how to confront difficult situations.”
- “Informative, real situations and realistic use.”
- “I learned so much and changed my knowledge on several things.”
- “Good info; all faculty should get.”

While direct causation cannot be proved (and a single activity is unlikely to be the sole cause of such change), since project implementation LWTech has not experienced any suicide attempts of its students.

## Expenditure report

Excel version of Expenditure Report also attached.

	LINE ITEMS	TOTAL ACROSS ALL PARTNERS
1.	Salary & wages	\$7,388.02
2.	Fringe benefits	\$2,072.73
3.	Services of independent contractors	\$41,250.00
4.	Materials and supplies	\$9,289.25
5.	Travel	0
6.	Other costs (specify, and include no indirect costs)	0
7.	<i>TOTAL DIRECT COSTS</i>	\$60,000.00
8.	Indirect costs (subject to limits outlined in RFP)	0
9.	<i>TOTAL GRANT FUNDS SPENT (line 7 + line 8)</i>	\$60,000.00
10.	Additional funding or in-kind contribution from other sources	0

## Next steps

Explain how each postsecondary institution in your partnership will follow up on its project work after the project ends. Follow-up could take many forms, including but not limited to voluntary use of the Statewide Resource for Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention.

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LWTech is pleased to continue to work begun with WSAC funding as detailed below. In addition, the college, via its CARE team (campus assessment, response, and evaluation team) will use the statewide Resources for Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention.

### 1. ACRS Counseling Services On Campus

As a direct result of this project, the Vice President of Student Services secured college funding to continue providing Mental Health services by hiring a half-time faculty counselor. This position starts on February 3, 2020 and will provide 20 hours per week of mental health services directly to students. This person will also serve on the CARE team (campus assessment, response, and evaluation team) to provide further support to mental health work on campus.

Additionally, the college will continue its relationship with JED campus. As part of this work a new healthy minds study will launch in Spring 2020 and the college is anxious to see how student responses may have shifted since the last survey four years ago.

### 2. Host Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training

To date, this training has been offered 5 times and the Engagement and Learning office will continue to work with the employees who received the training to schedule monthly sessions. These sessions are open to the campus community.

### 3. Suicide Means Restriction

The Campus Public Safety office, in conjunction with the office of the Vice President of Student Services, will continue to seek additional funds for implementation of more items identified under the comprehensive environmental scan.

### 4. Improve Counseling Access for Veteran Students:

Through research (focus groups and intercepts), LWTech created key outreach pieces to resonate with the Veteran community. These pieces are designed to meet veteran students where they are with the goal of removing stigmas associated with mental health and counseling. The brand, messaging and I materials are designed to provide consistent messaging and visuals that will be delivered in a timely manner. Future marketing efforts can be developed from these initial pieces as this work built the foundation for a comprehensive approach to Veterans mental health and wellness communications.

**Certifications**

*The undersigned certify, to the best of their knowledge, that this report is accurate and complete. If employed by a postsecondary education institution, the undersigned also certify that the institution they work for completed the data survey outlined in Substitute Senate Bill 6514 and plans to complete future data surveys resulting from the bill.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Project Director Signature

Ruby Hayden  
Print Project Director Name

Vice President of Student Services  
Print Project Director Title

1/29/2020  
Print Date Signed

If applicable (add as many lines as necessary for multiple co-directors):

N/A – former co-director relocated out of state  
Project Co-Director Signature

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Print Project Co-Director Name

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Print Project Co-Director Title

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Print Date Signed