

# **Suicide Prevention at Everett Community College**

## **Project Report #2**

**Date:**

January 31, 2020

**Lead Partners:**

Sea Mar Community Health Center

**Term of Project:**

January 1 - December 31, 2019

**Project Directors:**

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## Executive Summary

The Suicide Prevention in Higher Education Grant Program at Everett Community College (EvCC) was designed to build capacity within the institution to deliver a comprehensive approach to behavioral health and suicide prevention for students. This report builds on a comprehensive mid-project report and offers quantitative and qualitative information demonstrating that anticipated short- and intermediate outcomes were met and in some cases exceeded. As a result of this funding, EvCC has in place a much stronger infrastructure to support the mental health of its students. Faculty, staff, and students are better connected with each other thanks to on- and off-campus training and they are more aware of when and how to help students that may be struggling with mental health symptoms including suicidality. Veterans on campus, in particular, report an increased sense of solidarity and knowledge about how to support each other. Professional development for EvCC counselors strengthened their capacity to support veterans and other student groups that are more likely to experience mental health concerns. Increasing the number of counseling appointment hours resulted expedited service delivery for distressed students and the College is exploring how to reach students better served by appointments made available later in the day. Further, EvCC now has direct connection to Sea Mar, where students can access long-term mental health treatment, and a clear process for referral.

## Project Activities

Objective 1 was to establish links and referral systems between Everett Community College (EvCC) campus behavioral health resources and a minimum of one community-based mental health resource. Working with Sea Mar representatives, the college developed a pilot program to help EvCC students more quickly and easily access mental health treatment at the Sea Mar Behavioral Health Clinic located at 5007 Claremont Way, Everett, WA 98203. The partnership will implement the new Intake Referral process when students return in January 2020. A mid-April 2020 meeting is scheduled to assess the success of the referral process and make adjustments as needed.

Objective 2 was to complete an assessment of the viability for providing co-located behavioral health services on campus indicating needs, barriers, and opportunities for implementation. The Community Health Centers (CHC) of Snohomish County determined early on that it did not have the capacity to provide behavioral health services at its location on EvCC's campus. The College remains open to partnering with CHC of Snohomish County to establish links and referral systems and the possibility may be revisited in the future.

Objective 3 was to reduce the gap in available counseling services from 9am-4pm (Monday – Friday) to include up to 15 additional counseling appointments per week during winter quarter 2019-2020. A new associate faculty counselor was initially hired to provide counseling for students from 10:00-3:00 on Tuesdays through Fridays beginning on September 23, 2019. This opened up approximately 20 hours of counseling for students after an onboarding period. The hours were increased to 9:00-3:00 on Mondays through Fridays as of November 18, 2019 which created a total of 25-30 additional student counseling hours per week. Capacity building continues. Interviews for additional part-time counselors are being conducted with the aim of providing counseling hours later in the day.

Objective 4 was to provide professional development and training to empower 300 faculty, staff, and students to help people in crisis and those considering suicide. All EvCC counselors completed the LEARN Train the Trainer Program through the University of Washington's Forefront Suicide Prevention Program in April 2019. By October 2019, five counselors had facilitated 22 LEARN trainings for 316 staff, faculty, and students at EvCC. EvCC's Veterans Resource Center Program Specialist reported that 19 student-Veterans participated in the May 2019 Veteran Peer Mentor Training. It was well received by students and the Veterans Center intends to coordinate another training in 2020.

**Additional areas of need addressed:**

During the grant period, the college identified additional areas of need around our goal to improve support for students' mental health with special attention to suicide prevention. These activities were outlined in an amendment to the original contract for performance and were successfully implemented as follows:

- Twenty-five (25) faculty and staff attended the 8-hour Mental Health First Aid Training on November 22, 2019. Over sixty (60) faculty and staff registered for the next Mental Health First Aid Training scheduled for January 31, 2020. To accommodate the high volume of interested faculty and staff, the college is looking into options for offering a third training before spring.
- Counselors are completing the Serving Our Veterans Behavioral Health Certificate based on the latest evidence and clinical practice guidelines developed by the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs for treating conditions such as posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, addictions, and depression.
- The counselors identified the following professional development trainings and certifications as vital to expanding EvCC's capacity for clinical services to students on campus. These were purchased and all six counselors have completed or are in the process of completing them:
  - Washington State 2019 Conference on Suicide Prevention on Postsecondary Education & Training Day
  - High Risk Clients: Effectively Handle Five of the Most Critical Scenarios You'll Face as a Clinician Training
  - Training with a specific focus on treating those who suffer from Anxiety. Student anxiety is on the rise and highly correlated with risk for suicide.
- The Counseling and Student Success webpage has been redesigned and updated to increase awareness of resources available to students both on-campus and off-campus.
- The college explored options for drug and alcohol screening for students using Screen U. Screen U is a web-based method that administers screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment to college students. Although Screen U appears to be a useful tool, it is currently cost prohibitive. Students will continue to be referred to Sea Mar's Chemical Dependency Program.

## Project Evaluation

EvCC evaluated the success of its effort based on the short-term and intermediate-term outcomes outlined in the project application.

### Short-term Outcomes

- Increased knowledge and skills for faculty, staff, and students specific to helping people in crisis and those considering suicide
- Stronger internal structures and processes to ensure the safety of students and connect them to support and resources
- Knowledge about the viability and resources needed to establish co-located behavioral healthcare services
- Increased capacity for the college to connect students to needed resources

Feedback from faculty, staff and students who attended the LEARN trainings has been very positive. The Behavior Intervention Team (BIT) reported it has evidence from recent reports to suggest that faculty and staff who have completed a LEARN session are actually applying what they learned to practice. The college exceeded its goal of training 300 participants in six months. In order to reach that goal, however, more than twice as many sessions were planned and delivered for a total of 22. The project was just shy of reaching its faculty engagement goal.

EvCC LEARN Training Participants		
Audience	Goal	Actual
Students	120	162
Veterans	20	20
Faculty/Staff	180	219
Faculty	60	56
Total Unduplicated Count	300	316

Staff members and students have reported in person and by email that they feel increased comfort in knowing how to support and/or refer those struggling on campus to resources because of the LEARN training.

The Veterans Resource Center Program Specialist reported that the Veteran Peer Mentor Training that occurred in May 2019 was attended by 19 students. The group of veterans that attended the training state that they feel more closely connected since the training, and they continue to meet for coffee and conversation to help mentor each other as peers. Some have shared their stories with other veterans and they feel less alone as a result. These are all protective factors identified

as important in reducing the risk of suicide. Another training in 2020 is in the planning process and it will be free for all veterans.

Counselors, in addition to other faculty and staff members, reviewed the Mental Health First Aid training very positively. The discussions held resulted in connections and information-sharing that will likely increase the quality and speed of responses to student crises in the classroom, counseling center, and across campus.

The improved web page contains resource links that are more visually inviting, clear, and simple for students to use, including resources for those who are unready or unable to access services in person. This work helps the college to better connect with all students as they now have access to resources and referral information outside of business hours and available appointments.

## **Intermediate-term Outcomes**

- Students displaying warning signs of suicide are connected to behavioral health services
- Improve the capacity of the college to respond to students seeking immediate help by increasing the number of qualified counselors that are trained in college policies and procedures.
- Increase the number of successful internal and external referrals made

EvCC will begin using the new Sea Mar/EvCC Intake Referral packet in January 2020. A Licensed Mental Health Counselor at Sea Mar will be directly and quickly accessible to EvCC counselors and their students. Counselors anticipate that the streamlined system and warm handoff will make accessing services simpler and more student-friendly, and that the number of students that are then able to access long term mental health treatment services significantly increases. Please see the attached Referral Form and the draft of internal protocol for EvCC counselors to make a referral to Sea Mar. A single point of contact has been identified at each organization to support this ongoing work.

An additional 95 appointments hours were added to serve students mental health needs due to the addition of a faculty counselor during fall quarter. This counselor also increased outreach services to faculty, staff and students. Additional faculty counselor candidates are currently in the interview process, with the intention of increasing available appointments, outreach services, and open hours.

Increasing counselors' knowledge of veterans' needs through the Serving Our Veterans Behavioral Health Certificate training supports counselors in being sensitive to the circumstances and conditions impacting veterans. The 15 self-paced online courses required for completion of

the certificate are based on real-life cases and provide applicable knowledge and skills for providers (EvCC counselors) to help Veterans and their families build a framework of resiliency for mental health challenges and/or re-integration difficulties. The counselors believe that sessions and referrals will then be more effective as a result.

Similarly, increasing counselors' understanding of the needs of students with high risk factors, including anxiety and suicidal ideation, will help counselors facilitate more effective counseling sessions and referrals for students with these conditions. Helping students to name and organize their mental health symptoms, find related coping strategies, and understand when additional resources are necessary can reduce anxiety and other mental health symptoms, and thereby decrease the risk of suicide.

EvCC was not uniformly using Titanium, an electronic medical records system specifically designed for mental health providers, prior to the grant period. The inconsistency made reporting on the mental health needs of students difficult to manage and because negotiated counseling contracts at EvCC encompass more than a singular crisis and mental health counseling services role. Students may also seek support from a counselor for career counseling and academic advising (i.e. mandatory education plans, removing holds on registrations, etc.). Moving forward, Titanium can help the College to identify trends in student needs and better align resources to meet those needs. The level of data available through Titanium reports will also help the college to complete the mandated data survey outlined in Substitute Senate Bill 6514.

The grant period started in January 2019 and the transition to exclusively using Titanium to track counseling sessions was completed in the fall quarter 2019. Data were lost in the process of making the shift to electronic medical records, however, counselors recorded 373 data forms and 177 unique clients mostly between September-December 2019. This includes new work to report on the number and percentage of students experiencing previous or current suicidal ideation (13.6%), previous or current suicide attempts with or without hospitalization (5.6%). Other sources of mental health concern that students experienced included Interpersonal Relationships (45%), Anxiety (43%), Family Issues (37%), Depression (29%), Self-Care (28%), Mental Health (26%), Loss/Grief/Transitions (22%). Extrapolating to full year of data collection, the college anticipates a caseload of over 600 students between faculty counselors.



## Next Steps

Follow-up steps include:

- Collect data and evaluate how well the referral process is working for students as well as EvCC and Sea Mar counselors.
- Connect with Forefront to request survey data that would provide feedback regarding our LEARN training sessions, then revise our practices as indicated.
- Schedule future LEARN trainings and recruit attendees.
- Hire new counselors as possible to increase counseling capacity on campus.
- Continue developing and using Titanium to collect data and increase understanding of student needs and trends on campus.

# Expenditure Report

## Suicide Prevention in Higher Education Grant Program EXPENDITURE REPORT

Fiscal Agent Partner Name: EVERETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE


Project Name: SUICIDE PREVENTION


Report Period: 1/04/2019-12/31/2019


	LINE ITEMS	TOTAL ACROSS ALL PARTNERS
1.	Salary & wages	33,603.54
2.	Fringe benefits	9,929.81
3.	Services of independent contractors	0
4.	Materials and supplies	101.96
5.	Travel	3,943.65
6.	Other costs (refreshments for students at trainings)	2,916.63
7.	<i>TOTAL DIRECT COSTS</i>	50,495.59
8.	Indirect costs (subject to limits outlined in RFP)	9,504.41
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


## 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.

  
Laurie Franklin (Jan 30, 2020) Date Jan 30, 2020  
Laurie Franklin  
Dean of Enrollment and Student Financial Services  
Project Director

  
Jean Giudice (Jan 30, 2020) Date Jan 30, 2020  
Jean Giudice, Associate Faculty, Counseling and Student Success  
Project Co-Director

  
Christine Sullivan (Jan 31, 2020) Date Jan 31, 2020  
Christine Sullivan, Full-time Faculty, Counseling and Student Success  
Project Co-Director

  
Kristi Leksén (Jan 30, 2020) Date Jan 30, 2020  
Kristi Leksén, Associate Faculty, Counseling and Student Success  
Project Co-Director

# Annex

## Sea Mar/EvCC Referral Process

1. Counselor assesses student and determines the student needs mental health treatment.
2. Counselor informs student of the possibility of receiving care at Sea Mar. This includes the following information:
  - Sea Mar offers treatment regardless of the student's ability to pay
  - Sea Mar and EvCC have a relationship that ensures the student can get an appointment within 10 days. Every attempt will be made to ensure an appointment within 5 days.
  - The counselor can try to help the student make an appointment while the student is still in the counselor's office
3. Student decides to pursue treatment at Sea Mar.
4. Student completes screening assessments PHQ-9 and GAD-7 while in the counselor's office and returns the forms to the counselor.
5. Counselor completes referral form. It is acceptable to leave the Advanced Directive question blank.
6. Counselor and student determine if they would like a Release of Information for the counselor and Sea Mar practitioners to communicate about the student ("two-way").
7. Counselor attaches PHQ-9 and GAD-7 to the referral form, and ROI if necessary, and faxes them to Hannah Hamilton at Sea Mar at 425.609.5506.
8. If the student has suicidal ideation or an otherwise concerning level of distress for which the counselor determines that the student is at high-risk for suicide, the counselor calls Hannah to inform her of the incoming referral and to request an appointment that same day, or at most within 48 hours. The request can be made together with the student or separately.
9. The counselor makes a note in Titanium to record the date that the referral was made.
10. If the student is high-risk, and with the student's consent, the counselor attempts to follow up with the student within one to two business days to confirm that they received care.

## Referral Form



### EVCC BH Level of Care Screening Form

EVCC Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Prospective Client: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Language: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Referral/Services (Current/Recent BH Symptoms):

Past/Current MH Diagnoses:

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently receiving counseling/therapy or medications? If so, provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in counseling/therapy, group therapy, or case management services?  Yes  No

Have you experienced thoughts about harming yourself, suicide, or harming others in the last 90 days?  Yes  No

Have you been hospitalized for mental health reasons in the last 90 days?  Yes  No

What medical conditions do you have and are they being treated?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently using any recreational drugs or alcohol? If so, type, how much, and how frequently?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you taking the medications prescribed to you consistently (Attach current medication list to this form)?

Yes  No

Advanced directive in place?  Yes  No PHQ-9 Score: \_\_\_\_\_ GAD-7 Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Referral:**

Mental Health  Substance Abuse

**\*Risk Indicated:**

Emergent (high risk; same day apt)  Urgent (apt within 48 hours)  Non-Urgent (within 10 business days)

Additional Notes or Special Needs:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

EVCC Counselor Signature/Date:

\_\_\_\_\_