

Suicide Prevention Report – 8/22/2017

This summary of suicide prevention efforts on the campus of the University of Montana Western, is written to reflect our efforts according to the nine recommendations set forth by the 2016 MUS Suicide Prevention and Student Mental Health Task Force.

The University of Montana Western Student Counseling currently employs two full-time and fully credentialed clinical mental health therapists. Student Counseling provides free, flexible, and confidential counseling services to students. If needed, student counselors collaborate with community resources to help students access higher levels of care in cases of emergency or mental health crises (recommendation 1).

Of our two student counselors, one is currently qualified to teach QPR Gatekeeper training and the other is in the process of becoming qualified through the QPR home study. Having QPR trainers on staff has allowed us to offer QPR Gatekeeper training to students, staff, and faculty. To date, several student groups have been trained by collaborating with faculty and staff, including regular trainings with residence life staff and peer educators. The plan this year is to offer free, on-campus QPR training to students, staff, and faculty once per odd numbers academic Block (recommendation 2).

The intent this year is to create a Suicide Prevention and Awareness Task Force on our campus. This task force will be led by the two student counselors and it will include members of staff, faculty, and the student body. This will give the University of Montana Western a group who can work together, using the nine MUS Task Force recommendations, to enhance suicide prevention and awareness efforts on campus. This body also will have the opportunity to elicit feedback from students, staff, and faculty for the purpose of developing suicide prevention and awareness programming on campus (recommendation 3). This group will also regularly review Montana Western campus policy and programming for the purpose of enhancing student safety and awareness (recommendation 8).

Montana Western Student Counseling currently administers the PHQ-2 combined with questions 1 and 2 of the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale to each student upon arrival at the Student Counseling Center (recommendation 4). This is also a piece of a community-wide effort to increase and standardize universal depression and suicidality screening for patients/clients in all medical and behavioral health setting in the community of Dillon, MT.

In 2016, the MUS Task Force's survey was completed by Student Counseling and returned per request (recommendation 5).

The therapists of Montana Western Student Counseling engage in ongoing training regarding suicide prevention and treatment, as well as for other relevant mental health issues (recommendation 6). In addition, the 2 therapists at Montana Western are also engaged with the Beaverhead County Mental Health Local Advisory Council which has engaged in a community-wide effort to prevent suicide and promote awareness. During the week of September 11-15, 2017, both Montana Western counselors will be active in a community-wide suicide prevention week that will involve several prevention and awareness events being hosted on our campus and open to the community (recommendation 9).

One of the priorities of the soon-to-be-formed suicide task force will be to address the need for an environmental scan of our campus and work the campus community to address needs and

implement needed changes to restrict community access to lethal means. This assessment will be done using suggestions and tools provided by the MUS Task Force (recommendation 7).