



Rolling out an organisational suicide prevention protocol

The Salvation Army

Introduction

As a large organisation, The Salvation Army has established a Sudden Deaths Review Group, who carefully and compassionately review any deaths that have occurred in their services. The group meets every quarter to identify trends and apply any learning across the organisation. In 2019, the Sudden Deaths Review Group became concerned about the number of deaths through suicide. It was therefore decided that The Salvation Army would set up a work stream to look at suicide prevention across the organisation as part of their harm reduction approach.

Developing the strategy and framework

A subgroup of clinical staff was created to consider this further. The subgroup developed a Suicide Prevention Framework that contained the different areas that the organisation wanted to address to equip our staff and services more effectively in suicide prevention

The framework identified 8 key areas:

1. Internal communications
2. Policies
3. Safety indicators on the data management system (Atlas)
4. Inter-agency working
5. Clinical governance
6. Training

7. Support
8. Crisis Intervention

A Project Implementation Group was then formed consisting of senior operational staff from Homelessness Services. This included people with clinical experience, staff from the Addiction Service, the Health and Safety team and Chaplaincy - in addition to Regional and Service Managers from Homelessness Services.

This group developed an Implementation Plan that laid out the steps that were needed to ensure each element of the framework was rolled out effectively. This includes:

- Ensuring senior management input.
 - High level project sponsor – member of most senior leadership team had oversight over the project.
 - Setting measures to monitor effectiveness of the project
- Development of resources
 - What content is needed
 - Clinical assurance group to ensure appropriate content
- Communication of resources
 - Plan developed to ensure effective roll out of the strategy and accompanying resources
 - Rolling out of information by sharing presentation of ideas to different levels of management
 - Presentation and video for staff shared with managers to discuss with their teams

Key outcomes

The outcomes have been development of :

- Organisational commitment to focusing on suicide prevention.
- Clinical assurance group developed to oversee work
- Tools for staff to use with service users.
- Accessible suicide awareness training and included in induction for all staff across Homelessness Services
- Refined and improved suicide prevention policies including an easy read version and a flow chart.
- Revision and improvement of related policies for example Handling Medication Policy and Handover Guidance.
- Protocol for managers to engage with statutory agencies including legal advice
- Safety indicators onto the client management system including a self-screening tool. The system will also flag up where additional risk factors may be presented at a later date if multiple incidents are connected.

- Incident reporting procedure includes lessons learnt from suicides

The Salvation Army is a large organisation with over 1000 members of staff within Homelessness Services. Rolling out any new programme is a large undertaking and requires a commitment from all levels of the organisation as well as a dedicated lead.

The project has worked well especially in terms of bringing together different parts of the organisation. It was a good opportunity to make use of the clinical expertise across the organisation and the knowledge of the Addiction and Homelessness Services. Together, the group have created a number of high-quality resources for staff to use if they are concerned about someone.

The challenge is communicating information across such a large organisation and ensuring that information is presented in ways that take account of different learning styles. However, the group tried to take this into account by created quick read versions and a video.

Related documents

[The Salvation Army Preventing Suicide Framework](#)

[The Salvation Army Suicide Harm Reduction Toolkit](#)

[The Salvation Army Suicide Harm Reduction Information Leaflet](#)

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