Using the Senior Reach Program to Address Risk Factors for Suicide Among Older Adults

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National Council on Aging

Improving the lives of 10 million older adults by 2020
When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful.

- Malala Yousafzai
Population Projection by Age in the U.S. \(^1\)

![Population projection chart showing the projected population by age in the U.S. from 2015 to 2060. The chart shows an increase in the population 65+ and 65-84, with 65+ as a percentage of the U.S. population also increasing.](image-url)
Suicide Rates Among Adults ages 60+
By Race, Age, and Gender, 2015

Suicide Rates Among Adults ages 60+
By Race, Age, and Gender, 2015
Suicide Rates in the U.S.²
By Age, 2004-2015

Suicide Rate per 100,000

Year


20-34
35-49
50-64
65-79
80+
Late Life Suicide

- Older people are often:
  - More frail
  - More isolated
  - More planful and determined

- Implying that:
  - Interventions must be aggressive
  - Prevention efforts are key
Attempted : Completed Suicide³

General Population

Deaths: 1
Hospitalizations: 5
ED Visits: 30

Older Adults

Deaths: 1
Hospitalizations: 2
ED Visits: 4
Means of Suicide

Under Age 50
- Firearms
- Suffocation
- Fall/Jump
- Poisoning
- Cut/Pierce
- Other

Age 50+
- Firearms
- Suffocation
- Fall/Jump
- Poisoning
- Cut/Pierce
- Other
Risk Factors

• Depression
• Prior suicide attempts
• Marked feelings of hopelessness
• Co-morbid general medical conditions that significantly limit functioning or life expectancy
• Pain and declining role function (e.g., loss of independence or sense of purpose)
Risk Factors (cont...)\textsuperscript{5}

- Social isolation
- Family discord or losses (e.g., recent death of a loved one)
- Inflexible personality or marked difficulty adapting to change
- Access to lethal means (e.g., firearms)
- Alcohol or medication misuse or abuse
- Impulsivity in the context of cognitive impairment
Protective Factors

• Care for mental and physical health problems
• Social connectedness
• Skills in coping and adapting to change
Prevention

• A multi-level approach is most effective due to the complex and multi-determined nature of suicide in older adults
  • Indicated
  • Selective
  • Universal
Resources

- ADRC/No Wrong Door Training (2016)*
- Suicide Prevention Toolkits (2011 and 2015)*
- Older Adult Behavioral Health Regional Profiles (2016)*
- Issue Briefs and Webinars*
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center/Lifeline

*Available on ACL’s behavioral health webpage
For more information:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living, Washington, DC
- Email: shannon.skowronski@acl.hhs.gov
- Web: ACL Website
References


Senior Reach: Program Overview and Michigan Implementation Project

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The mission of Senior Reach is to support the well-being, independence and dignity of older adults by educating the community, providing behavioral health, care management services, and connecting older adults to community resources.
Through collaboration and partnership, address the behavioral health and social support needs for underserved older adults who are isolated or in need of support
Benefits of Senior Reach

- Identifies and screens seniors at risk
- Cost effective
- Population based, whole person health
- Increases access to quality care and services
- Decreases service fragmentation
- Promotes collaborative and integrated care
- Can decrease health care costs

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Key Components

Community Education & Outreach

- Train individuals and professionals in the community to become Community Partners and identify and refer seniors in need

Screening

- Elder friendly, telephonic, single point of entry
- Receives referrals from community and reaches out to seniors in need
- Provides screening, information and referral
- Links to behavioral health and/or care management services

Services

- Home based intake to determine individualized needs and services
- Brief, solution-focused, behavioral health treatment
- Care management
- Referral to additional community resources as needed to support the wellness and independence of seniors

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Senior Reach – Required Outcome Measures

- Care Manager Survey
- PHQ 9
- CCAR
- Senior Reach Data Application

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Senior Reach Clinical Outcomes

- Decrease in overall symptom severity and emotional disturbance
- Decrease in depression, anxiety, attention issues
- Decreased social isolation
- Improved overall level of functioning and ability to address self-care/basic needs
- Increase level of activity involvement and social supports
- Improved interpersonal relationships
- Increase empowerment, overall recovery, and hopefulness about the future.
Suicide Risk Factors

- Family history of suicide
- Family history of child maltreatment
- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- History of mental disorders, particularly clinical depression
- History of alcohol and substance abuse
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Cultural and religious beliefs (e.g., belief that suicide is noble resolution of a personal dilemma)

- Local epidemics of suicide
- Isolation, a feeling of being cut off from other people
- Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- Loss (relational, social, work, or financial)
- Physical illness
- Easy access to lethal methods
- Unwillingness to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental health and substance abuse disorders or to suicidal thoughts

(CDC, 2016)
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(CDC, 2016)
MICHIGAN
Senior Reach Implementation
Implementation Goals

- Develop Michigan based program implementation model used to create additional programs statewide
- Increase community awareness of the needs of older adults
- Identify at risk older adults
- Make a positive impact on the lives of those referred
- Develop an infrastructure for sustainability
Michigan Senior Reach

- Copper Country Mental Health
- Easter Seals Michigan Oakland
- Easter Seals Michigan West Michigan
- Lapeer County Community Mental Health
- Community Mental Health Services of Livingston County
- Montcalm Care Network
- Northeast Guidance Center
- Northern Lakes Community Mental Health
- Community Mental Health of Ottawa County
- CMHSAS Saint Joseph County
- Services to Enhance Potential
- Van Buren Community Mental Health Authority

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Michigan Implementation: Community Education and Outreach

- Traditional partners: 39.7%
- Non-traditional partners: 60.3%

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Michigan Implementation: Community Education and Outreach

- Have you referred any older adults for Senior Reach services?
  - No: 70%
  - Yes: 30%

- If you have not referred any older adults for Senior Reach services, do you intend to make referrals in the future?
  - Intend to refer: 81%
  - Do not intend to refer: 19%

- Usefulness of training:
  - Not at all useful: 0%
  - Somewhat un-useful: 0%
  - Neutral: 2%
  - Somewhat useful: 15%
  - Very useful: 84%
Michigan Implementation: Referrals

Total number of referrals: 1,119

- Urban: 515
- Suburban: 487
- Rural: 117

Percentage of referrals received from traditional and nontraditional partners:

- Statewide: 54% Traditional, 46% Nontraditional
- Rural: 42% Traditional, 58% Nontraditional
- Suburban: 60% Traditional, 40% Nontraditional
- Urban: 50% Traditional, 50% Nontraditional

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Michigan Implementation: Engagement Rate

- Rural: 19% Engaged in services, 81% Eligible for, but not engaged in services
- Suburban: 12% Engaged in services, 88% Eligible for, but not engaged in services
- Urban: 13% Engaged in services, 87% Eligible for, but not engaged in services
- Statewide: 15% Engaged in services, 85% Eligible for, but not engaged in services
Michigan Implementation: Service Delivery

- Care management services: 38%
- Clinical services: 32%
- Both care management and clinical services: 30%
Michigan Implementation: Clinical Outcomes

![Graph showing clinical outcomes](image)

- Overall recovery
- Overall level of functioning
- Overall mental health symptom severity
- Activity involvement
- Hopefulness
- Empowerment
- Social support relationships
- Interpersonal relationships
- Anxiety issues
- Attention issues
- Self-care/basic needs
- Depression
- Emotional disturbance
- Social isolation

**Legend:****Average score at discharge** | **Average score at intake**

![Bar chart with data points](image)
Michigan Implementation: Client Satisfaction with Providers

- My care manager/clinician returned my phone calls in a timely manner: 96% Always, 4% Some of the time, 0% Not usually, 0% Never.
- I felt I could talk openly with my care manager/clinician about my feelings: 91% Always, 8% Some of the time, 1% Not usually, 0% Never.
- I felt my care manager/clinician listened to me: 96% Always, 4% Some of the time, 0% Not usually, 0% Never.
Michigan Implementation: Client Satisfaction

Would you recommend Senior Reach to someone you know?

- Yes: 95%
- No: 1%
- Maybe: 4%

How willing are you to call Senior Reach if you need help again?

- Extremely willing: 88%
- Slightly willing: 9%
- Slightly unwilling: 3%
- Extremely unwilling: 0%

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Michigan Implementation: Client Satisfaction

- Did Senior Reach help?

- Did your situation improve as a result?
Common Themes & Challenges

- Serving a new population
  - SPMI or IDD
- Billing & Sustainability
  - Ability to bill Medicare
  - Mileage, care management, referral line, outreach
- Balancing workload
  - Outreach vs. Service Delivery
- Building trust
  - With older adults
  - With other community providers
Thank you!

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Jennifer Onwenu, MSW - Care Manager
Senior Reach: Challenges

- STEP is brand new to senior services.
- Recognizing service gaps
- Removing the negative stigma behind mental health.
- Helping the community understand the importance of training, and how community partnerships work.
- Understanding the diversity of the population, and how it affects service provision.
Income

Northville
- Per Capita: $59,359
- Median: $95,478

Detroit
- Per Capita: $15,038
- Median: $25,764

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Senior Reach: Lessons Learned

- The diversity of the population allows us to adapt practice skills to all different dynamics. No case is the same.
- Seniors are just as receptive to mental health treatment as anyone else.
- Having community partners understand how we can support them.
Senior Reach: Keys to Success

- Strong Community Partners
  - Northeast Guidance Center
  - J & J Transportation
- Being fully staffed, and working as a team to fulfill program goals.
- Building trust with older adults.

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How Senior Reach Addresses Suicide Risk

- In both the behavioral health professional and care management baseline assessments ask about suicidal ideation.

- Senior Reach provides support to staff through education.
  - Addressing mental health emergencies.
Life changing services
Questions & Answers

Type your question into the chat box on the lower left-hand side of your screen.

For reference, the recording of this webinar will be available shortly on www.ncoa.org/cha.