

Rural Communities Response to a Local Suicide

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Rural Communities

- Based on population density
 - 1,000 people per square mile per town
 - <500 people per square mile town's limits
- 80% of US Land
- Marginalizes communities by not considering values, morals, traits, and special issues that actually define the community

(Carter, 2019; Cheesmond, Davies, Inder, 2019; Harowskki, Turner, LeVine, Shank, and Leichter, 2006)





Case Example



- White, Male, Late 50's, Farmer
- 2 sons, and a wife
- 50 years inheritance
 - No health insurance
 - Low income
- Sold cattle due to financial stress
- Died by suicide
- Limited time for grieving
 - Farm expectations



Barriers to Mental Healthcare in Rural Communities

- Reduced access to services
- Lack of mental health education
- Limited use of self-care strategies and coping skills

(Lee et al., 2017; Morales, Barksdale, and Beckel-Mitcher, 2020; Schroeder et al., 2021; Cheesmond, Davies, and Inder, 2019; Crumb, Mingo, and Crowe, 2019)



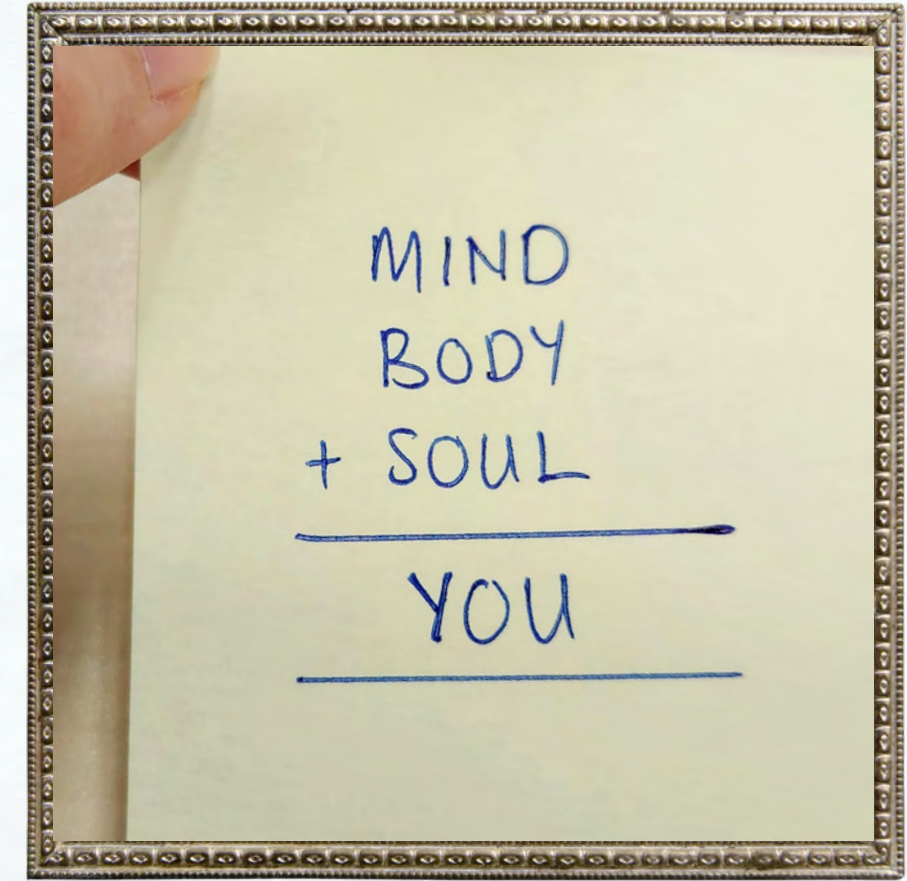
Accessibility

- Population correlates with available services
- Offered by general providers
- Rural schools contribute to mental health services



Lack of Mental Health Education

- Difference in meaning of key concepts
- Stigma (self and community)
- Distrust in professionals



Limited Coping

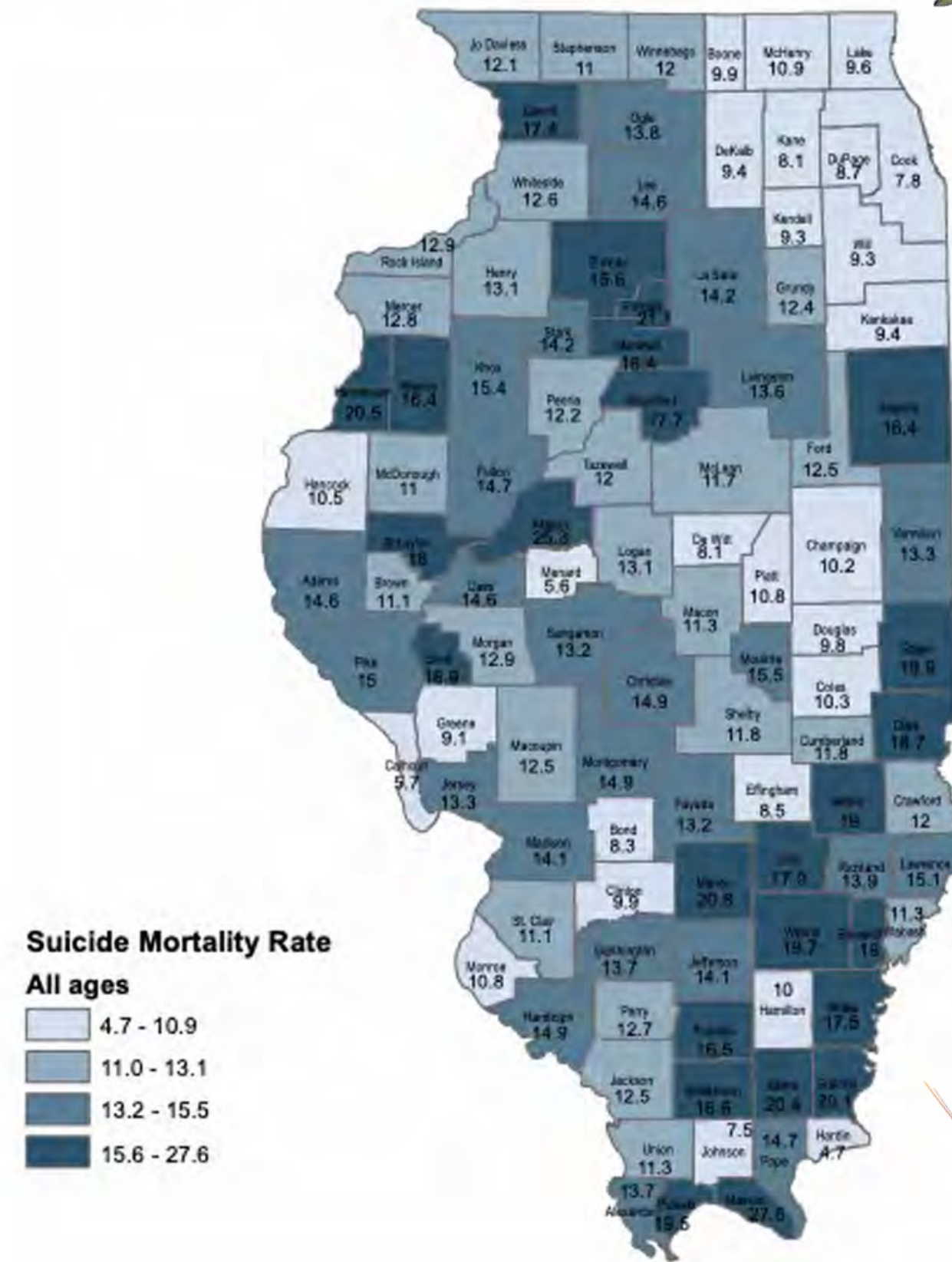
- Stoicism: Silently coping with mental distress
- Pride and part of an identity
- Fate and religion, "out of my hands"

Suicide Stats in Rural Communities

- Suicide is the leading cause of death across the US...for the past two decades, suicide rates are 46% higher in rural communities.
 - Greater access to firearms
 - Higher rates of drug and alcohol use
 - Minimal health care providers and medical facilities
 - Financial and economic factors

(World Health Organization, 2023; Rebecca Clay, 2014;)

Figure 8. Suicide Rates (per 100,000), 2008-2017 (IDPH)



Strengths in Rural Communities

Social Connection

- Rural relationships span generations rather than years
- Social contract dictating tight-knit social networks and mutual aid
- “You would be there for them, so let them be there for you.”

Community Resiliency

- Farming, nurturing livestock and responding to the worst outcomes brought by poor weather, individuals learn to persevere
- Provides a strong drive for problem solving

Audience Input

- What do you think is a strength of your rural community?



How to bridge the gap

Utilizing rural community strengths to respond to a local community member suicide.

Some published rural response guidelines are...

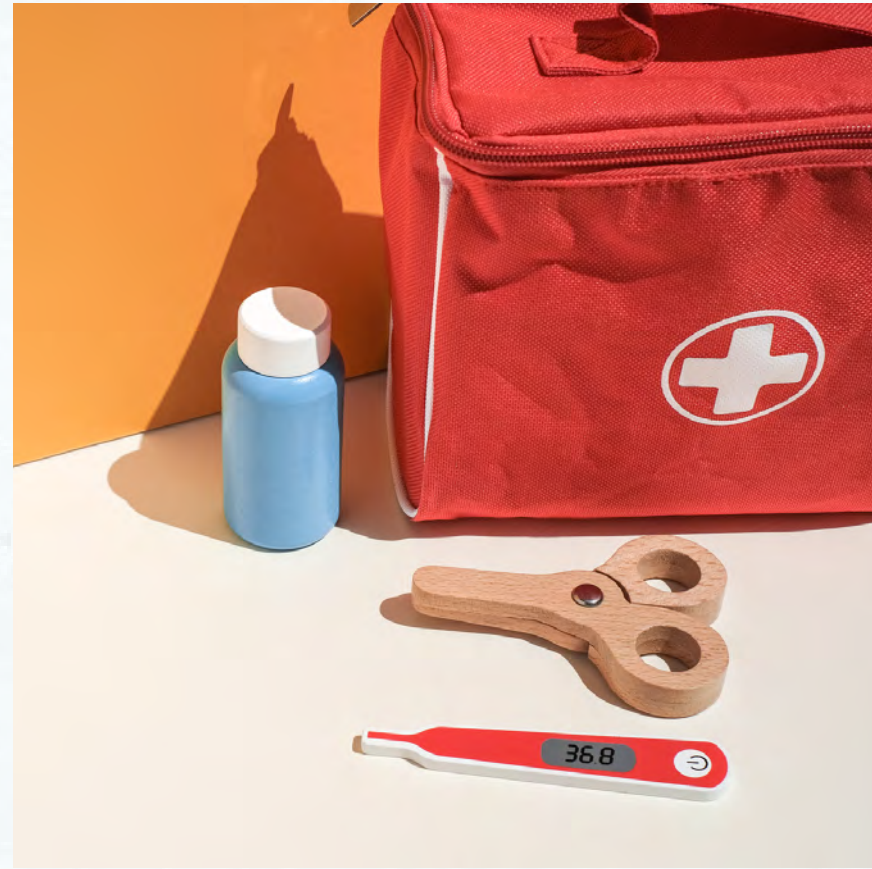
- Building A Community Suicide Response Team (SAMHSA)
- After Rural Suicide: A Guide For Coordinated Community Postvention Response (CalMHSA)

Building A Community Suicide Response Team:



Objectives of Crisis Teams

- To support and debrief those affected by SI, a threat, an attempt or a death
- Reduce the possibility of other suicidal crises by increasing prevention education, referral for intervention, and postvention activities



Activities

- Identify and recruit stakeholders
 - First responders
 - Law enforcement
 - School Representatives
 - Mental Health Care Workers
 - Community Members

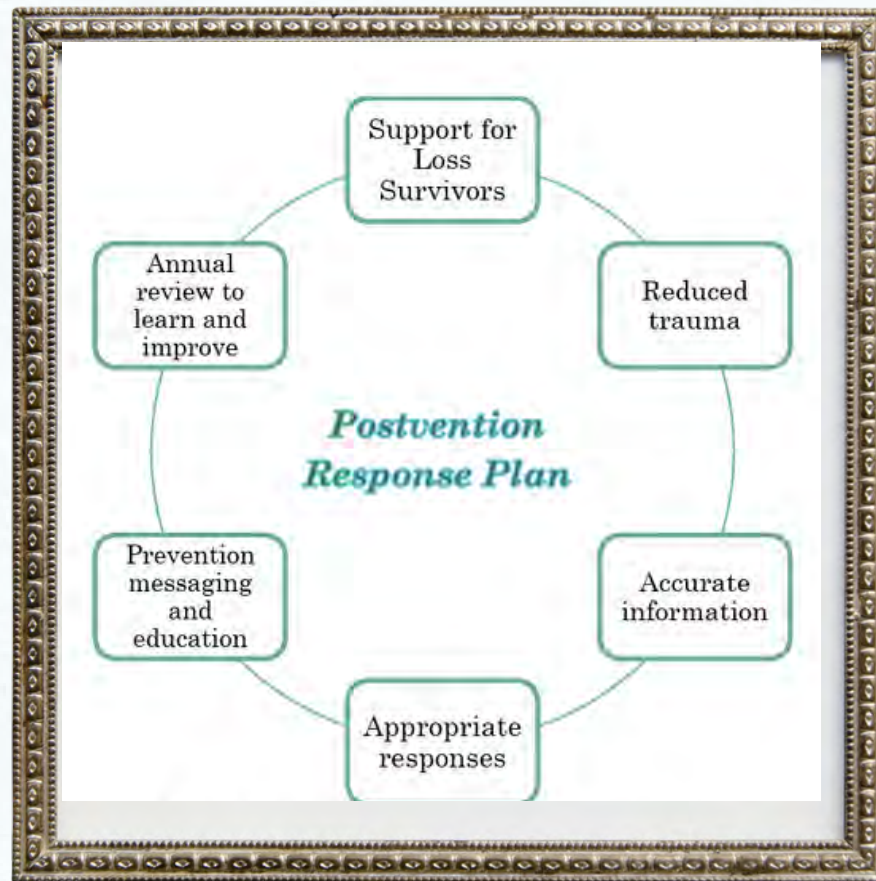
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA)

- Contact Stakeholders and get community buy in
 - Identify Leaders
 - Formalize Membership
 - Schedule Meetings
- Develop a Volunteer Application
- Develop a Standards Operating Procedure Manual
- Develop a Suicide response and follow up form
- Develop a data tracking system
- Provide mock drills and trainings

After A Rural Suicide: A Guide For Coordinated Community

Postvention Response

California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA)



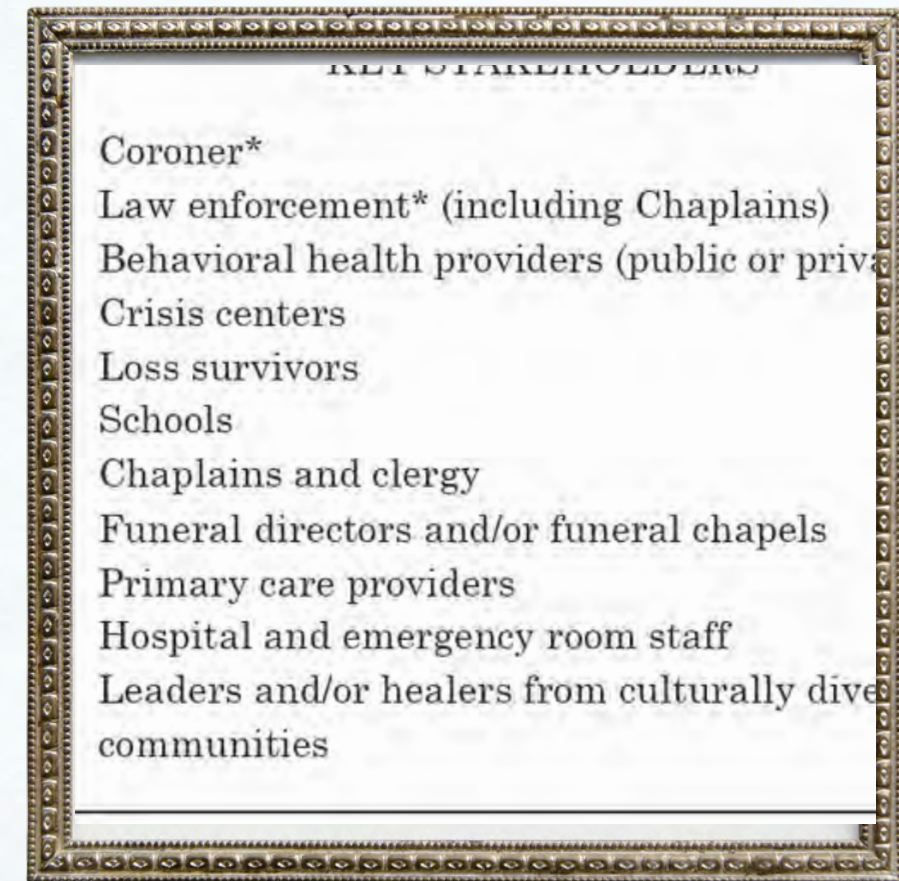
Needing Postvention Plan

- Gather data on current response plan
- Establish a core team
- Create inventory of current services and supports available for loss survivors



Postvention Response

- Engaging the community
 - Target responses
- Mobilize and offer support
- Communicate carefully
 - NOT focus on details of death, but promote support and resources



Conclusion

- Relationships are crucial
 - People need to see value in what they do
- Confidentiality with sharing details after a suicide
- Must know resources in order to promote them
- Family comes first



Implications for Rural Community Counselors

Community Involvement

- Reach out and learn about agencies in your community and their response plans.
- Enforce and explain confidentiality to build trust in community members.
- Congruency as a counselor is important due to rural community values and traits.

Advocacy Needs

- Understanding rural community traits and incorporate knowledge with treatment planning.
- Collaborating with local schools in time of crisis.
- Relationships with stakeholders is key.

Local Community Resources

LIFELINKS

- ☎ (217)-238-5700
- 🌐 www.lifelinks.org
- 📍 750 Broadway Avenue East
Mattoon, IL 61938
- 💰 Medicare, Medicaid,
Private Insurance
- 💖 SUD, Crisis Services, Child
& Adolescent, & more

WILLOW POINT

- ☎ (217)-238-5700
- 🌐 www.willowpointcounseling.org
- 📍 300 Richmond Ave East
Mattoon, IL 61938
- 💰 Medicare, Medicaid,
Private Insurance
- 💖 Mental Health, Family,
Couples, Individual, & more

ABBCON COUNSELING

- ☎ (217)-317-2089
- 🌐 abbconcounseling.com
- 📍 201 North Logan, Suite A,
Mattoon, IL 61938
- 💰 Medicaid, Private
Insurance
- 💖 SUD, Individual, Group,
& more



NEURO HARMONY, LLC

- ☎ (217)-508-8080
- 🌐 neuroharmony.org
- 📍 1836 Victoria Lane
Charleston, IL 61920
- 💰 Medicare, Medicaid,
Private Insurance
- 💖 Behavior, Trauma, Play,
Couples, Telehealth, & more

RTS COUNSELING SERVICES

- ☎ (217)-345-0336
- 🌐 rtscounselingservices.com
- 📍 655 W Lincoln Suite 8
Charleston, IL 61920
- 💰 Private Insurance
- 💖 Individual, Teen, Faith-Based,
Couples, & more

ELLIOT COUNSELING GROUP

- ☎ (217)-398-9066
- 🌐 elliottcounselinggroup.com
- 📍 105 8th Street
Mattoon, IL 61938
- 💰 Medicare, Private Insurance
- 💖 Expressive Arts, Wellness
Practice, Play, Group, & more

HOUR HOUSE

- ☎ (217)-348-8108
- 🌐 hourhourecovery.org
- 📍 635 Division Street
Charleston, IL 61920
- 💰 Medicaid, Private Insurance
- 💖 SUD, Recovery Support,
Community-Based, & more

JOURNEY PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING

- ☎ (217)-345-4642
- 🌐 journeyprofessionalcounseling.com
- 📍 121 West State Street
Charleston, IL 61920
- 💰 Private Insurance
- 💖 Individual, Child & Adolescent,
Mental Health, Christian, & more

MIDWEST NEUROFITNESS

- ☎ (217)-398-1086
- 🌐 midwestneurofitness.com
- 📍 5566 Lincoln Highway Road
Charleston, IL 61920
- 💰 Private Insurance
- 💖 Mental Health, Psychotherapy,
EDMR, Neurofeedback & more

EIU COUNSELING CLINIC (ONLY EIU STUDENTS)

- ☎ (217)-581-3413
- 🌐 eiu.edu/counsctr/aboutus.php
- 📍 1st Floor Human Services Building,
Office Suite 1200, EIU
- 💰 Included in EIU tuition
- 💖 Individual, Group, Emergency, &
more





Thank you

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