

Suicide Prevention Province V Network Meeting Notes

Tuesday, June 8, 2021 1 PM ET/ 12 PM CT

Attendees:

Erin Sample, Marna Franson, Betty Bowersox, Susan Harries (UP), Ann Garvin, Bishop Ray, Susan Ray, Kathy Mank, Convener

Meeting opened with prayer followed by individual discussion of local ministry work.

Erin Sample is the Young Adult Missioner at St. Paul's, Indianapolis. Suicide prevention will be part of the Formation. Erin's special interest is suicide and disabilities. New to the Indianapolis area, Erin would like to develop an emergency resource list for her area which would include suicide prevention and mental health. Erin offered to develop a template for use throughout the Province.

Susan Harries followed with a national resources tool through FEMA: the RAPT (Resilience Analysis & Planning Tool). <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/resilience-analysis-and-planning-tool> The tool provides an Infrastructure Asset Map including houses of worship, hospitals, and public school. Call 2-1-1 which will connect to a live person to help with resources including food pantries, housing, and health. (www.211.org)

Ann Garvin is connecting to AFSP (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention) to participate in Out of the Darkness walks. Soul Shop training will be held in Detroit on July 10th – website: soulshopmovement.org for more information.

Rayford is interested in communicating the suicide prevention public health message to his Diocese and strengthen the mental health resources available. The church could be an advocate with policy makers to provide funding for mental health services. There are high rates of depression and substance use in the UP. Marna brought suicide prevention to his attention as a ministry. From this network, Rayford would like us to share stories of this ministry and with an emphasis on caring for family members who have a story to share.

Marna believes we can help people save their own lives by building infrastructure and directing access to suicide prevention resources. It is the role of the church to bring resources and share the public health message. Marna attended the Soul Shop training in Arkansas in mid-May 2021. Soul Shop is a great forum to train leaders in congregations to teach suicide prevention, to use the language of faith (through Biblical narratives and Scripture), and to be comfortable about talking about suicide as part of safe congregations. CALL – commit, ask, listen, lead people to safety.

Soul Shop also addresses what leads to desperation. They believe suicide is not an act of depression, but an act of desperation. Underlying factors include economics, family systems, vocation, mental and physical health (ex. addiction, loss of jobs, not enough food). At any moment suicide prevention is a public health issue where the church tries to keep people from the road of desperation. Open the doors to AI-Anon, AA, and NA for this ministry. Soul Shop has a step-by-step plan to build the infrastructure to implement suicide prevention in congregations. They have done the work. The UP will host a Soul Shop training on Monday, March 21, 2022 – the entire Province is invited. It would be ideal to invite all Bishops and have at least 2 people from each Diocese attend.

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Marna asked if there is a follow-up mechanism to Soul Shop. Currently, there is not, but the leaders of Soul Shop may start a discussion group on Zoom in the future.

The largest risk group for suicide is men 45 – 65. The peak for women is 50 (menopause and empty nests). There are more attempts by women, but more men die by suicide due to guns. Teens and the elderly have significant risks.

Thanks to Marna for developing a Language of Suicide resource document. Our culture has criminalized the word suicide. The language surrounding suicide needed to be destigmatized. The terms came out of the bereavement community with the understanding that the actual language we use makes a significant difference in communication.

The Network would like to host a Panel Discussion in the Fall for the Province to include a diverse representation of perspectives on suicide prevention. Please share contacts for: an Indigenous representative, an LGBTQ minister that might include bullying issues (The Rev. Carol Mader, Rector of St. James, Dexter was offered), The Rev. Barry Randolph, Rector of Messiah, Detroit was offered, Campus Ministry – ask Rick Stanitis for possible contacts. The Panel Discussion would be held on Zoom and recorded for posting on the webpage.

The next meeting will be Tues. July 13th at 2 PM ET, 1 PM CT.

Meeting closed in prayer offered by Susan Ray.