

MISSOURI COLLEGE STUDENTS AND SUICIDE

Partners in Prevention is a statewide coalition dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses in Missouri. The coalition is comprised of 21 public and private colleges and universities across the state. Partners in Prevention focuses on reducing high-risk behaviors, such as substance abuse, as well as promoting positive mental health among Missouri college students. Since 2005, Partners in Prevention has been funded by a grant from the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Missouri Suicide Prevention Project to address college student mental health and increase suicide prevention at Missouri's campuses.

Suicide is a leading cause of death among college-age youth (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2011). Due to the alarming number of college-age students nationwide who die by suicide each year (1100), Partners in Prevention has incorporated questions related to suicide on the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS). The 2012 MCHBS data indicates that 14% of students report suicidal thoughts in the 12 months prior to the survey.

EXPERIENCED SUICIDAL THOUGHTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS	
Suicidal thoughts—All Students	14%
Female / Male	14% / 14%
LGBQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer) / Heterosexual	36% / 11%
Thought of Transferring	23%
International Student	12%
Former Service Member / Present Service Member	14% / 13%
Eligible for Pell Grant	14%
Race/Ethnicity	
Asian	16%
White	13%
African American or Black	12%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	15%

Survey data also indicates a majority of students are most comfortable discussing those thoughts with a friend (63%). These results support the need for students and peers to be trained through bystander suicide prevention programs.

WHO DO YOU FEEL YOU CAN GO TO ON CAMPUS WHEN PERSONAL CONCERNS ARISE? (TOP THREE RESPONSES)*	
Friends/peers	63%
University Counseling Center	22%
Faculty/Professor	18%

WHO DO YOU FEEL YOU CAN GO TO OFF CAMPUS WHEN PERSONAL CONCERNS ARISE? (TOP THREE RESPONSES)*	
Friends/peers	69%
Parents	63%
Sibling/extended family	43%

**Charts above reflect data from the 2012 MCHBS Survey, n=9151.*

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Furthermore, a Partners in Prevention campus found that many students obtain their information about suicide and/or depression on the internet (32%)**, which suggests that valuable suicide prevention resources need to be available in a web-based format.

HOW DO YOU OBTAIN INFORMATION WHEN PERSONAL CONCERNS ARISE?	
Internet	32%
Books/magazines	11%
Mental health professionals	12%
Family members	9%
Peers	7%
Media	7%
Facebook	4%
Professors	2%

**University of Missouri Wellness Survey 2011, n=942

SUMMARY

To address the need for suicide prevention among college-age youth, Partners in Prevention has implemented Ask Listen Refer (ALR). The program is an online suicide prevention training tool that takes about 20 minutes to complete. The program addresses the need to educate students, faculty, and staff about suicide prevention, and also addresses the need to have suicide prevention resources in an online format. The goal of this program is to educate students, faculty and staff on how to ASK if someone is thinking about suicide, LISTEN to their response and REFER them to a professional.

As of January 2013, 31 Missouri campuses utilize the program and 8,136 students, faculty and staff have completed the training. Four out-of-state campuses also use the program. ALR participants are assessed for knowledge of risk factors, protective factors and warning signs of suicide, prior to the training and 3, 6 and 12 months later. Results are promising for college suicide prevention, with scores indicating statistically significant improvement in knowledge of several factors related to suicide ($t=87.404$, $p < 0.000$), pretest ($M=21.32$, $SD=3.46$) to posttest ($M=25.95$, $SD=3.57$).

Due to the success of Ask Listen Refer on college and university campuses, the program has been made more

widely available as Missouri Ask Listen Refer (MO ALR). MO ALR has been available since November 2011, and is open to anyone who wants to learn how to help a person in need. MO ALR is helpful for parents, community organizations, high school students and staff, etc. Missouri Ask Listen Refer addresses the need for suicide prevention throughout the state by educating individuals on how to recognize and respond to warning signs of suicide. In addition to this education, the program provides helpful resources found in Missouri.



Ask Listen Refer can be accessed at
www.asklistenrefer.org

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www.moasklistenrefer.org

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