



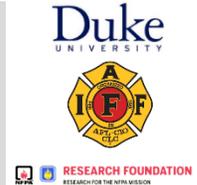
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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“Preventing Suicide Among Firefighters Through Implementation of Safety Planning Training for Peer Support Specialists” (Short Title: Firefighter Suicide Intervention Training)

PROJECT SUMMARY

Last Updated: 15 February 2019



Background:

Suicidal behavior among firefighters may be categorized into three categories, suicide ideation, suicide planning, and suicide attempts. This project aims to join the conversation that has been developed through a number of studies on this subject. Through a number of studies conducted, the trends suicidal behavior among firefighters have been surprising. One of the largest studies aimed at understanding this demographic reported that nearly half (47%) of surveyed firefighters reported life suicidal ideation. Other studies indicate even more surprising facts. It has been found that nearly 1 of every 5 firefighters (19%) surveyed had made a suicide plan, and 1 out of 6 (16%) had made at least one suicide attempt.

These figures indicate that there is an urgent need for innovative implementation projects aimed at preventing suicide among firefighters. Previous empirical studies documented that the development of safety plans is associated with positive outcomes including (a) reduced risk for future suicide attempts; (b) faster declines in suicidal ideation; (c) reduced likelihood of future hospitalizations; and (d) increased mental health treatment engagement.

Implementation and Schedule:

This research project is led by Duke University with collaborative support from the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the Fire Protection Research Foundation (FPRF). Funding for this project is through a DHS/FEMA AFG Fire Grant and the FPRF with a targeted project completion within two years starting from September 2018. The Principal Investigator (PI) for this project is: Dr. Nathan Kimbrel of Duke University, email: Nathan.kimbrel@duke.edu.



Project Goal and Aims:

The goal of this project is to reduce the occurrence of suicide and suicide attempts among firefighters.

Project Methodology:

This study involves the following tasks:

Task 1: Develop Extended Expert Team and Refine Project Strategy. A Project Technical Panel (PTP) will be established to confirm the project plan, identify potential challenges. The PTP will represent the emergency response community, and will provide feedback on the ongoing project efforts from design through dissemination and implementation.

Task 2: Adapt Safety Planning Intervention training program for use with firefighter peer support specialists.

Task 3: Implement evidence-based suicide prevention training program throughout fire service through online trainings to peer support specialists

Task 4: Conduct program evaluation activities to:

- (a) Determine if the proposed training program is an effective method of teaching peer support specialists the essential components of the Safety Planning Intervention.
- (b) Assess the degree to which the peer support specialists who receive the training are able to effectively utilize and implement Safety Planning during the weeks and months that follow the training.
- (c) Identify barriers that prevent peer support specialists from effectively implementing Safety Planning as well as potential solutions to overcome these challenges in order to inform and improve future trainings.

Project Deliverables:

The anticipated outcomes from this two-year effort are:

- 1) To train hundreds of peer support specialists to develop high-quality, evidence-based safety plans with high-risk firefighters in order to reduce the occurrence of suicide and suicidal behavior among firefighters; and
- 2) To significantly improve the health, safety, and wellness of firefighters throughout the United States and Canada.