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# A Multi-System Approach to Help Prevent Teen Suicide in the Upper Valley: A Focus on the LGBTQ Community

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# A Multi-System Approach to Help Prevent Teen Suicide in the Upper Valley

A focus on the LGBTQ community

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ROTATION 2

MAY-JUNE 2016

MENTORS: DR. SHEILLA BACHELDER, SUSAN WHITE

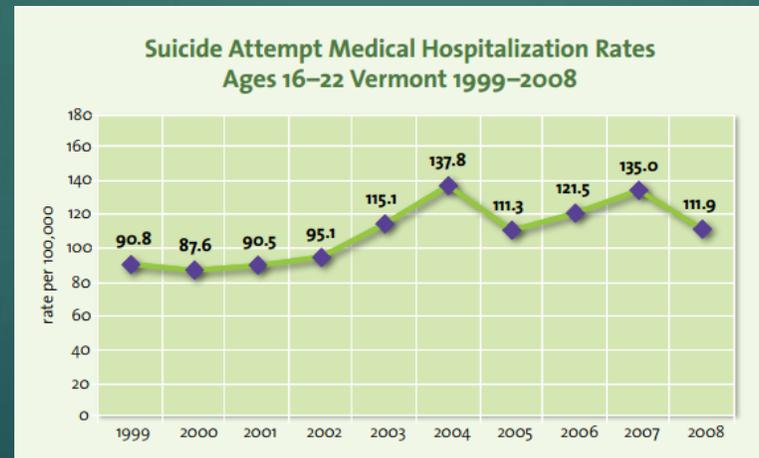
# The Problem

- ▶ According to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey
  - ▶ 41% of respondents reported attempting suicide compared to 1.6% of the general population
- ▶ According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey
  - ▶ LGB youth are 4 times more likely, and questioning youth are 3 times more likely, to attempt suicide as compared to their straight peers
- ▶ According to a 2002 review of literature study published in The American Journal of Psychiatry
  - ▶ Approximately 1/3 of suicide victims had contact with their mental health provider within a year of suicide while **75%** had contact with their primary care provider within a year of suicide
- ▶ According to a recent Lambda Legal study of trans patients in healthcare settings:
  - ▶ **70% reported abusive or discriminatory experiences in healthcare settings**

**Despite best intentions providers lack training on how to best serve LGBTQ teens, a community at great risk of depression and suicide. Currently there are too few funded efforts in the Upper Valley to coordinate care and resources that do exist don't reach kids.**

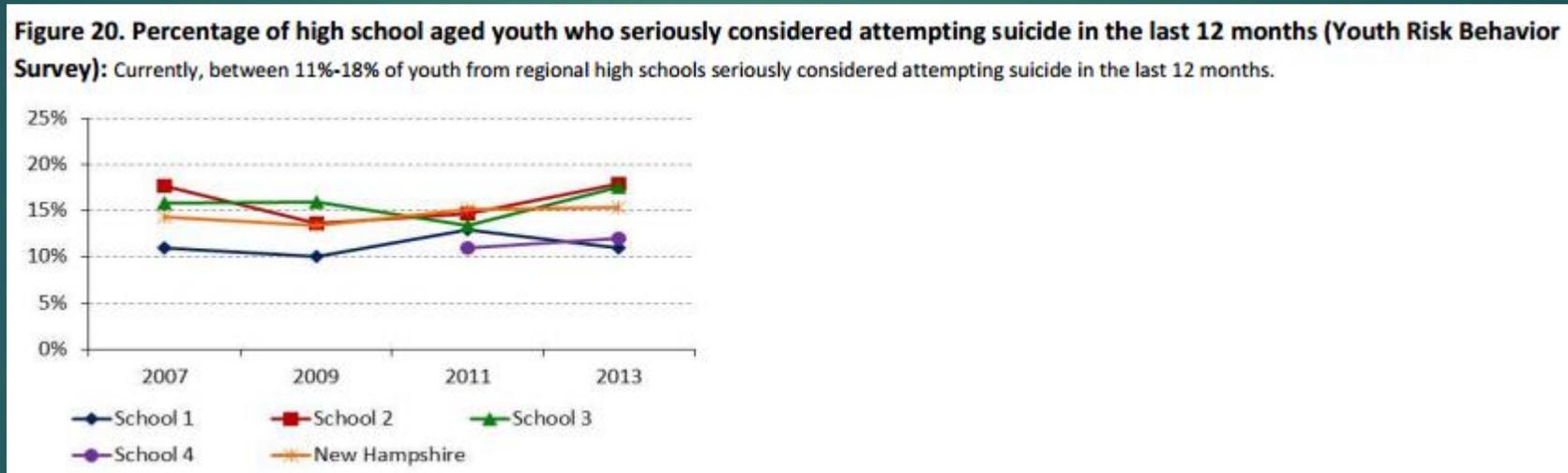
# Public Health Cost

- ▶ According to the Vermont Youth Prevention Platform
  - ▶ “Nationally, more than 33,000 take their own lives each year which amounts to 11 per 100,000. In Vermont, there are 80 suicides annually for a rate of 14 deaths per 100,000 people. This is higher than the number of motor vehicle deaths or homicides in Vermont.”
  - ▶ Since 1999, the rate of suicide-related hospitalizations for young adults has been roughly 120 per 100,000 people.



# Unique cost considerations in host community

- ▶ According to an ALL Together survey conducted in the Upper Valley:



# Community Perspective

- ▶ **"GSA groups are variably active in the area, so students who don't feel that they have support at their schools typically come to find a home with our group."** Ana Rodriguez Villa, Geisel medical student and Co-Founder of BRIDGES a monthly LGBTQ support group held at LISTEN's Teen Life Skills Center
- ▶ **"It would be great if we could create more coordinated communication between high school guidance counselors and doctors in the area. I'd love to just know who the doctors are so I have a sense of what other providers my students are interacting with."** RD Jenkinson, School Counselor at Hartford High School
- ▶ **"We have an on-site license therapist for the summer and really know the community of mental health providers in the area. It would be great if doctors referred patients here because we have the resources to provide comprehensive help to the LGBTQ community."** Katie O'Day, LISTEN's Teen Life Skills Center
- ▶ **"It would be really easy to follow up with teens who present with depression. Doctors could simply just assign me the task and it would pop up on my calendar to call and check in in a few weeks. We do that for post-op and other things, it would be simple to do for this too."** Nurse, Alice Peck Day Hospital

# Intervention and Methodology

## ▶ **Project Aim:**

- ▶ Connect various community organizations working on teen suicide.
- ▶ Compile a list of resources and make suggestions for how APD providers might play a pivotal role in providing mental health support to the Upper Valley's LGBTQ teens.

## ▶ **Methodology:**

- ▶ Conducted interviews with local guidance counselors, faith-based organizations, support groups, therapists, and teen centers
- ▶ Compiled a list of LGBTQ specific providers and support groups for providers to point patients towards in an effort to improve teen mental health
- ▶ Created and distributed pamphlet to Alice Peck Day providers to use when engaging with LGBTQ teens

# Results/Response

- ▶ **“Most of the kids in our program go to Hartford or Lebanon, but it would be so great to have doctors refer students from other areas to our group.”** Ana Rodriguez-Villa, Geisel medical student and Co-Founder of BRIDGES, a monthly LGBTQ support group held at LISTEN’s Teen Life Skills Center
- ▶ **“It’s amazing to see the change in perspective that’s happening. 3 out of the 6 seniors in our congregation are a part of their school’s GSA, but I know there are still a lot of kids who feel isolated and need access to resources. I think this project is a great idea.”** Rev. Patience Stoddard, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley
- ▶ **“It would be wonderful if doctors knew to refer to me for mental health care. While I’m certainly open to providing individual care, my hope is to build a trans youth group because I think there is a lot of value in group sessions.”** Local Therapist, LICSW

# Evaluation of effectiveness and limitations

- ▶ How to evaluate effectiveness of provider pamphlet
  - ▶ Engage with LISTEN's BRIDGES group and mental health providers in the area and quantify how many referrals come from Alice Peck Day
  - ▶ Compare teens' depression ratings from PHQ-9 survey pre- and post-community referrals
  - ▶ Conduct focus groups at the LISTEN Teen Skills Center to see how welcoming Alice Peck Day is for LGBTQ youth. Compare over time.
- ▶ Limitations
  - ▶ LGBTQ teens may be reluctant to come out to providers making it difficult to make adequate referrals
  - ▶ Limited number of mental health providers who specify that they are LGBTQ-friendly
  - ▶ Insurance and long waiting lists make it difficult to establish continued mental health care

# Recommendations for future interventions/projects

- ▶ Create take-home resource pamphlet for LGBTQ teens
- ▶ Conduct focus groups at LISTEN and with local GSA groups to better understand what resources LGBTQ teens are currently accessing
- ▶ Utilize new technologies being developed at UVM, such as <http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/?Page=news&storyID=23011&category=comstude#.V1163bCbEAY.mailto>, to better equip nurses, NPs, and MDs in detecting suicide risk of all patients at APD
- ▶ Create a database of mental health providers who have a proven track record of being LGBTQ friendly
- ▶ Conduct joint trainings with high school counselors and doctors in the area

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