

## Oregon College & University Suicide Prevention Project

[http://counseling.uoregon.edu/OUSPP/About\\_OCUSPP.htm](http://counseling.uoregon.edu/OUSPP/About_OCUSPP.htm)

The Oregon College and University Suicide Prevention Project (OCUSPP) is a joint effort by colleges and universities in Oregon to reduce suicide risk on our campuses. We believe that suicide is often preventable, and we've developed a multifaceted program to raise awareness on our campuses and to assist at-risk students in receiving appropriate help. Consortium members include Lewis and Clark College, Oregon Health Sciences University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Reed College, Southern Oregon University, University of Oregon and University of Portland.

Suicide is a leading cause of death among college students. In 2002, Oregon ranked 19th in the nation for youth suicides, ages 10-24 (Centers for Disease Control, 2004). In 1997, the CDC reported that 10.3% of college students surveyed considered suicide during the previous 12 months. 6.7% actually made plans to kill themselves. If we extrapolate this data to the consortium, this would mean that 8,455 consortium students had seriously considered attempting suicide during the past year.

The consortium grew out of collaboration supported by a federal grant. In Fall 2005, the eight public universities in Oregon received a 3-year campus suicide prevention grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) under the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. In Fall 2008, we sought and obtained funding from member institutions to continue our work. We also welcomed a few private colleges and universities into the consortium so that the knowledge gained from implementing the grant could benefit a wider group of students.

To reduce suicide risk on campus, the OCUSPP's multipronged effort includes the following components: 1) raising awareness among students, faculty and staff about suicide risk, warning signs and treatment resources, 2) providing training for health and mental health staff on "best practices" for identifying and working effectively with suicidal students, 3) training campus "gatekeepers" who are uniquely positioned to identify students at-risk for suicide and to refer them for professional help, and 4) facilitate the work of campus suicide task forces to develop suicide prevention and postvention plans and to reduce the means for suicide on campus.