

Developed by Meredith Martin, PhD for Undergraduate Courses in Psychology

## SUICIDALITY AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: PSA

This activity will allow you to practice translating research and sharing factual information about mental health among college students in a creative and visual way. Your assignment is to design a Public Service Announcement (PSA) or infographic to inform college students at Syracuse University of the signs of and risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors, and to provide affected students with information about the resources available on campus. It will be completed in two parts. First, you will complete research. Second, you will use that research to convey important information to your fellow college students.

### PART I – RESEARCH

#### STEP #1: Choose & read TWO empirical articles

First, select one empirical article from the list below (located in Blackboard). Second, find another empirical research article of your own choice investigating the nature and risk for suicidality *among college students*. Read both.

Choose one article from this list:

- Downs, M. F., & Eisenberg, D. (2012). Help seeking and treatment use among suicidal college students. *Journal of American College Health, 60*, 104-114..
- Busby, D. R., Zheng, K., et al. (2019). Black college students at elevated risk for suicide: Barriers to mental health service utilization. *Journal of American College Health, 1-7*.
- Busby, D. R., Horwitz, A. G., et al. (2020). Suicide risk among gender and sexual minority college students: the roles of victimization, discrimination, connectedness, and identity affirmation. *Journal of Psychiatric Research, 121*, 182-188.
- Nam, B. et al. (2018). Perceived need for care and mental health service utilization among college students with suicidal ideation. *Journal of American College Health, 66*, 713-719.
- Gnan, G. H., Rahman, Q., Ussher, G., Baker, D., West, E., & Rimes, K. A. (2019). General and LGBTQ-specific factors associated with mental health and suicide risk among LGBTQ students. *Journal of Youth Studies, 22*, 1393-1408.
- Samlan, H., Shetty, A., & McWhirter, E. H. (2020). Gender and Racial-Ethnic Differences in Treatment Barriers among College Students with Suicidal Ideation. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 1-18*.
- Becker, S. P., Dvorsky, M. R., Holdaway, A. S., & Luebbe, A. M. (2018). Sleep problems and suicidal behaviors in college students. *Journal of Psychiatric Research, 99*, 122-128.
- Muehlenkamp, J. J., Marrone, S., Gray, J. S., & Brown, D. L. (2009). A college suicide prevention model for American Indian students. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 40*, 134–140.

#### STEP #2: Summarize each empirical article

Provide citations in correct APA format for both articles. For part I, provide a brief overview



of each article by answering the following questions. It is entirely appropriate to answer these questions in 1-2 sentences. No answer should exceed a single paragraph. Please use full sentences, but be succinct.

For EACH article, answer the following:

1. What is the main research question/s in this study?
2. Who are the participants in this study?
3. Briefly describe, how was the primary research question measured and tested?
4. What were the results (you do NOT need to describe the statistics in detail, just a general, plain-English summary of the major finding/s)?
5. What important information does this tell you about suicidality among college students? In other words, what should other college students (or those who work with college students) know?

Submit your responses in a Word document or PDF to Blackboard.

## **PART II – PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

Your assignment is to design a Public Service Announcement (PSA). A PSA is a message of public interest shared in order to raise awareness of and/or change public attitudes and behaviors towards a social issue.

Your audience for this PSA are other college students at Syracuse University. The goal is to inform college students (feel free to identify a more specific popular within SU's larger student body if you wish) of the signs of, risk factors for, and/or relevant contextual factors associated with suicidal ideation and behavior. Thinking about your audience, design a PSA poster to provide affected students with research-based information about this public health issue and provide details about the resources available on campus to support individuals considering suicide.

### **STEP #1: Identify resources**

Identify mental health resources that are available to Syracuse University students experiencing suicidal ideation. These may be on campus (like the Barnes Center) or off-campus (such as a national hotline). Identify at least one resource, including contact information. This is an important component of your PSA, as it helps to direct students in need to these resources.

### **STEP #2: Decide which facts/information to include**

Based on your research articles, provide some basic, summary information helping to inform college students about this public health issue. You need to be judicious here – your audience won't spend time reading fine print on a poster. Select out the most



important information you want to share. Be sure to cite any relevant facts in APA format.

\*Information on APA formatting is in the syllabus and on Blackboard.

### **STEP #3: Design and create your PSA**

Use any software you want (e.g., Powerpoint, Word, Adobe Illustrator) to design a one-page PSA (poster). It should provide factual information based on your research as well as the information for how to access the resources you found.

**All information included on your PSA must be accurate and verifiable.**

You should provide citations in correct APA formatting for any facts you include. You should save your work as a PDF before uploading to Blackboard.

Be creative! Keep your audience in mind – who are you trying to reach? What would make these individuals stop and read your poster? How can you be most informative?

Your completed project **MUST** fit onto a single page or PP slide and include:

- At least 2 facts about suicidality in the population you choose
- Evidence to support these facts in the form of at least one empirical research article citation
- At least 1 strategy or suggestion for avoiding suicidality (ideation or behavior)
- At least 1 campus or community resource for students experiencing mental health issues (e.g., suicidal ideation)

Please include a separate Word document with the citations for your two articles in APA format.

