

# New York State Suicide Prevention Conference Sept 17, 2019

## TRAINING SUICIDE PREVENTION RESEARCHERS: Lessons Learned from the CSPS Postdoctoral Training Program

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MEDICINE *of* THE HIGHEST ORDER



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# Disclosures

Grant funding:

T32 MH20061: Postdoctoral Training in  
Suicide Prevention Research

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# Learning Objectives

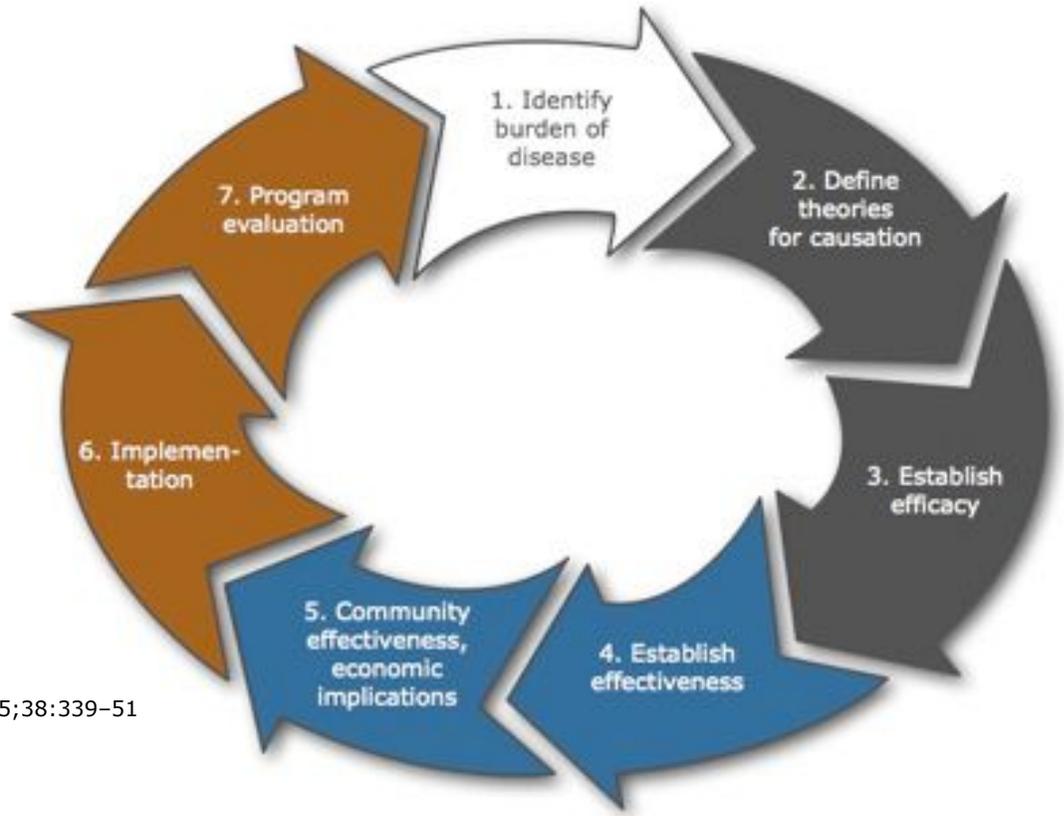
- To appreciate the need for, and challenges of, research on suicide and its prevention
- To understand the design and history of the CSPS Postdoctoral Training Program in Suicide Prevention Research
- To discuss gaps and new directions in suicide prevention research training

# Outline

1. The terrain of suicide research and design of the CSPS approach (Yeates)
2. The experience of one current and one recent graduate (Kim interviews Caroline and Ian)
3. Audience discussion of
  - The changing landscape of suicide prevention
  - How to enrich the experience to accelerate progress

# Challenges to suicide prevention research

- Breadth of the topic
  - Multidisciplinary team science



Tugwell P, Bennett KJ, Sackett DL et al. J Chronic Dis 1985;38:339-51

# Challenges to suicide prevention research

- Breadth of the topic
  - Multidisciplinary team science
- Limited funding
- Complexities
  - Methodological
  - Clinical
  - Human subjects protections
- Limited “critical mass” of investigators
  - Community of Practice

# CSPS T32: POSTDOCTORAL TRAINING IN SUICIDE PREVENTION RESEARCH

- Context:
  - University of Rochester Medical Center
    - Departments of Psychiatry, Emergency Medicine, Public Health Sciences, others
  - Center for the Study and Prevention of Suicide (CSPS)
  - Canandaigua VA Center of Excellence in Suicide Prevention (CoE)
- Initial funding 9/17/01 for five years
- Renewed 2006, 2011, 2016
  - 4 postdoctoral slots
  - 2 yrs (3<sup>rd</sup> possible)

# CSPS T32: Postdoctoral Training in Suicide Prevention Research

- Long-term Objective: *To develop a cadre of early career scientists with the knowledge and experience necessary to establish careers as independent investigators and members of interdisciplinary teams dedicated to the study of suicide and its prevention.*
- Core areas of knowledge and skill development include
  - suicidology
  - research methods
  - academic career development and “survival skills”, and
  - professional integrity and the ethical conduct of research.
- Mentored research

# CSPS T32: Specific Aims

- Aim 1: Recruit a diverse group of highly qualified postdoctoral trainees who are committed to careers in suicide prevention research.
- Aim 2: Through courses, seminars, and workshops, to provide CSPS T32 fellows with a firm foundation in the knowledge and skills necessary for successful academic career development.
- Aim 3: Through mentored research experiences fellows will gain expertise in the design and study of suicide preventive interventions.
- Aim 4: By fostering communications between those trained in different theoretical and methodological approaches to prevention, we will stimulate interdisciplinary collaborations in suicide research.
- Aim 5: We will rigorously evaluate the program and its participants (faculty and trainees).



# CSPS T32 Training Sequence

Yr	Research	Courses/Seminars	Skill Building/Other Activities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary analyses of existing data (e.g., mentors' data sets, dissertation data)</li> <li>• Participation in ongoing CSPS studies</li> <li>• Lay the foundation for one's own study (e.g., literature review, subject access, protocol design)</li> <li>• IRB protocol preparation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Skills Seminar (RSS; monthly)</li> <li>• Suicidology journal club (monthly)</li> <li>• ICRC-S Webinar Series (monthly)</li> <li>• Courses (or equivalent)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Ethics and Professional Integrity (IND 503)</li> <li>-- Principles of Epi (PM 415)</li> <li>-- Intro to Biostatistics (BST 463)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Academic Development Plan (ADP)</li> <li>• Mentor's lab meeting (weekly)</li> <li>• CSPS Research Meeting (biweekly)</li> <li>• Skill-Building Workshops               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Intro to Clinical Research</li> <li>-- Research Project Administration</li> <li>-- Recruitment/Retention of Research Subjects</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Skill-Building Workshops               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Community-Based Participatory Research</li> <li>-- Writing Workshop</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Products	3 papers submitted (1 <sup>st</sup> author); 1 conf presentation (AAS); 1 IRB protocol submission; course grades	

# CSPS T32 Fellows Profile

▪ Total enrollees = 33

▪ Female = 67%

Discipline	<u>N</u>
○ Psychology	22 (67%)
○ Social work	5 (15%)
○ Anthropology	2 (6%)
○ Medicine	2 (6%)
○ Public Health	2 (6%)

▪ Current activity

○ Academia	25 (76%)
○ Grants management	2 (6%)
○ Policy/consulting	2 (6%)
○ Private practice/other	4 (12%)

Race/ethnicity	<u>N</u>
○ African American	4 (12%)
○ Asian	1 (3%)
○ Caucasian	26 (79%)
○ Hispanic	2 (6%)

▪ Years in the program

○ 3 years	16 (53%)
○ 2 years	10 (33%)
○ 1 year	4 (13%)

▪ Current activity

○ Academia	25 (76%)
○ Grants management	2 (6%)
○ Policy/consulting	2 (6%)
○ Private practice/other	4 (12%)

# CSPS T32 Fellows Profile

## Sample topics undertaken

- Optimism and hope as protective factors for suicide
- College and university campus suicide prevention
- Risk behaviors in Latino youth
- Peer supports as an intervention to reduce suicide risk
- Training of health professionals in suicide risk management
- Suicide risk in African American youth in juvenile justice system
- Interpersonal psychotherapy for men at risk for suicide
- Interpersonal factors in suicide risk among Spanish speakers
- Risk factors for suicide risk among individuals recently incarcerated
- Social networks of individuals at risk for suicide

# CSPS T32 Fellows Profile

## Sample methods used

- Optimism and hope: paper & pencil surveys
- College and university campus: focus groups
- Risk behaviors in Latino youth: existing, large data sets
- Peer supports/ training health professionals/ African American youth: in-person interviews
- Interpersonal psychotherapy for men at risk for suicide: Implicit Association Test for Suicide
- Interpersonal factors in suicide risk among Spanish speakers: passive monitoring from smartphones
- Risk factors for suicide risk among individuals recently incarcerated: ecological momentary assessment
- Social networks of individuals at risk for suicide: social media data

# Other suicide research training opportunities

- Funded training programs
  - NIMH – CSPS T32
  - VA
    - VA CoE at Canandaigua
    - VA VISN 19 MIRECC
      - ✧ Denver
      - ✧ Salt Lake City
- Individual training grants
  - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
  - NIMH F32 mechanism
- Funded slots tied to specific projects

# Gaps and Challenges

- Training in suicide prevention for other professions
  - Clinicians
  - First responders
  - Violence and injury prevention professionals
- Collaborations between researchers, prevention practitioners, and those with lived experience
  - Clinical and public health approaches
  - High risk and population-based approaches
- Evolving field: what is known, methods to ask questions

# Recommendations:

How do we make research training even more productive and relevant to our evolving field?

- Let's hear from current and prior fellows
- Let's hear from you

# Thank you

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