

## Measuring the Collective Impact of Suicide Prevention

The Central Oregon Suicide Prevention Alliance (COSPA) is a regional organization that was created through a collaborative partnership among public and private organizations in Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties, including local school representatives and school-based health center representatives. The mission of COSPA is to develop, implement, and monitor effective programs and evidence-based tools that promote wellness and prevent suicide death, suicide attempts, and related behaviors. This mission is achieved by integrating and coordinating county specific and regionally-available suicide prevention activities across multiple settings and systems alongside existing programs and efforts that address risk and protective factors for suicide behaviors. The Leadership Group of COSPA is charged with implementing a shared, regional Action Plan with corresponding activities that is derived from the Collective Impact Framework. The Collective Impact Framework, according to the Stanford Innovation Review, is premised on the belief that no single entity alone can solve complex social problems.<sup>1</sup> COSPA implements this framework through its essential elements, one of which is shared measurement.

Preventing suicide is a complex issue that requires strategic, coordinated, and community-based solutions to address risk factors and augment protective factors. The work in and of itself can seem daunting and difficult to accurately measure, especially when mechanisms are not put into place to honor or track progress. When progress is not measured, it is difficult to know which efforts are working and which are falling short. COSPA's Coordinator and Leadership Group Research Representative are currently working towards measuring and evaluating its collective impact for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts. Presenters will share their process in creating a realistic, simple, and impactful evaluation framework and implementation plan for COSPA's regional Action Plan. Presenters will also share tools and allow time during the workshop for participants to put the tools into practice. At the end of the workshop, participants will walk away with tangible methods and tools to measure their community's collective impact of suicide prevention.

1. Kania, J. and Kramer, M. (2011). Collective Impact. Stanford Social Innovation Review.

### **Whitney Schumacher, MPH, Suicide Prevention Coordinator for Deschutes County Health Services**



Ms. Schumacher is an alumna of Bradley University where she earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Health Sciences and an alumna of Oregon State University where she earned her Master of Public Health Degree in International Health. Whitney has worked in substance abuse, violence, and suicide prevention since 2014 in higher education, secondary education, community, and local government settings. In her current role as Deschutes County's Suicide Prevention Coordinator, she works alongside public and private entities to reduce suicide attempts and deaths across the lifespan through awareness, education, and policy systems change. Whitney loves working with data and enjoys collaborating with colleagues and community partners to use data to tell a meaningful story. Whitney is a certified trainer in Question, Persuade Refer (QPR), Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), and the Connect Postvention Program.

**Paige Farris, MSW, Community Research Program Administrator for Oregon Health & Science University Community Research Hub in Central Oregon**



Ms. Farris has worked at Oregon Health & Science University for almost 15 years; her research interests focus on building community capacity for research and data-driven decision making. Her passion is prevention and pro-action on all levels. Paige conducts trainings in community settings with the goal of familiarizing individuals and research teams to the research process so community researchers can begin their own projects more quickly, efficiently and ethically. Also, by working alongside community researchers, Paige enjoys providing technical assistance to community researchers in relation to project design; assuring outcomes are – sometimes creatively – met based on novel data collection tools or recruitment techniques with the goal of assuring the community partner’s collected data is aligned with set goals. She has a commitment to improving health policy through research and values collaboration and research partnerships in order

to improve health and the wide range of prevention efforts in support of all people.