

Suicide Prevention: Primary Care and Mental Health Coordination for Risk Assessment & Response

Suicide is a serious public health issue affecting Oregon's youth where the rate of suicide among adolescents is roughly 35% greater than the national average. In 2016 alone, twenty-seven middle school and high school aged youth died by suicide in the state. Each year in Oregon roughly one in five high school aged youth report that they seriously consider suicide and nearly one in ten report attempting suicide. Effectively assessing and responding to suicide risk is critical to effective care, particularly given the startlingly high attempt rate among this population.

Despite these alarming statistics, the vast majority of healthcare providers and educators do not receive training in suicide prevention during their education. In this session presenters will provide participants with a broad overview of evidence-based and best practices in suicide prevention for screening, risk assessment, safety planning and counseling on access to lethal means to supplement their training needs. Presenters will also describe how to implement these practices in a school-based health center and collaborate with other healthcare providers to support patient health.



Ellen Thornton-Love, LCSW, completed graduate studies in clinical social work, and has obtained an MSW from Virginia Commonwealth University. Ellen also has a BS in psychology, with a specialty certificate in Substance Abuse treatment from Virginia Commonwealth. In addition, Ellen has completed post graduate studies in play therapy, and completed training in Trauma Focused CBT, through The National Child Trauma Center at Duke University. Ellen has clinical training to support families with traumatic grief and loss, supporting first responders, and specializes in treating children and adolescents with major depressive illness.

Ellen is currently the supervisor for the child and adolescent program at Lane County Behavioral Health and supervises mental health clinicians at North Eugene, Churchill and Springfield School Based Health Centers. Ellen serves on several committees specializing in the mental health needs of young people in Lane County.



Roger Brubaker, MPH, is the Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Promotion Coordinator at Lane County Public Health. Roger completed his graduate studies in public health with a concentration in epidemiology from Oregon State University. In his current role, Roger provides technical consultation and training in suicide prevention, intervention and postvention with Lane County schools and the Lane Education Service District. Roger's background in education and public and behavioral health includes teaching forestry and natural resource science at the secondary level, volunteering with the U.S. Peace Corps in Thailand working on dengue fever prevention, facilitating group interventions for perpetrators of intimate partner violence and child abuse in a Batterer Intervention Program and teaching undergraduate epidemiology courses at Oregon State University. Roger is certified as a trainer in the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) suicide prevention program as well as the Connect Postvention program.