



SUPPORT IN THE AFTERMATH OF SUICIDE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

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ABSTRACT

According to the American Psychological Association, "Suicide is the act of killing oneself, most often as a result of depression or other mental illness." Suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 15-24, making it a relevant health concern for college age students. Suicide is also seen on college campuses frequently due to unique risk factors such as increased stress, presence of alcohol and drugs, pressure for perfection, difficulty adjusting to a new environment, and the recent loss of a home safety net. Unfortunately, due to the difficult nature of the topic, suicide and the resulting aftermath is often overlooked as a health concern. This specific health concern is applicable to the Dayton community, because the University of Dayton has a higher average of student suicides compared to the national average on college campuses. Although, the cause of death is never stated, the University of Dayton's administration will send out campus wide emails advising students to utilize on campus resources, such as the counseling center, campus ministry, and residence life staff. These services can be very beneficial for grieving students; unfortunately, these resources have limitations. These barriers limit the capabilities and population of students that they are able to reach and effectively help. This presentation will investigate the effectiveness of these resources, student perceptions of the resources through interviews, and give recommendations to improve existing programs for outreach and coping strategies for those who suffered a loss by suicide. The University of Dayton provides many resources for grieving students, although they could be improved and enhanced. After thoroughly reviewing the suggested resources available at the University of Dayton, we are presenting several proposals regarding community support in the aftermath of suicide.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- General Risk Factors on a College Campus
 - Alcohol/ Drug Abuse
 - Stress
 - Pressure for Perfection
 - Isolation
 - Loss of Security of Home
 - Difficulty Adjusting
- Risk Factors Specific to UD
 - Social isolation or loss of support network
 - Not feeling apart of the "community" that "everyone" is a part of
 - 3rd happiest students in the nation on college campuses
 - "In a community of doers there is always something to do"
 - If one does not feel apart of community or happy, they may think something is wrong with them
- UD has a Higher Suicide Rate than Average
 - UD's is around six times higher than average
 - This is unexpected considering the university is regularly ranked in the top 10 for happiness
 - In addition, prior research suggests that Catholic communities should be expected to commit suicide less frequently
- Grief Manifests Differently On a Religious College Campus
 - Creates a stigma when dealing with suicide
 - Grief from suicide can result in a lower grade point average due to difficulty sleeping and concentrating
 - An associate professor at Purdue University studied 277 students who experienced a recent loss (within 3 years), and found that they had lower GPA in comparison to those who have not experienced a recent loss.

INTERVIEWS

UD Student	Well-prepared ?	Known resources?	Suicide a problem at UD?	Recommendations for improvement?	Comments
Student personally affected at UD who utilized resources on campus	No, in personal experience University is almost at fault	Health center	Yes, and an even bigger problem that UD doesn't acknowledge it	Counseling Center be available and UD reach out to students	UD needs to be more accountable and actually address "community"
Student personally affected at UD who did not utilize resources on campus	No No reach out from university in prior experience.	Counseling center, but does not even know where it is or ever had contact	Did not think we had a problem and was surprised by our rate	Counseling center actually being available and reaching out to students. More proactive instead of reactive.	Has relied on friends in the past. General email or prayer service is not enough.
Student not affected in any way by suicide at UD	No Learn in the moment No exposure to any information	Counseling center	If it's happening, it is a problem Long reaching effects	Online module	What would you use? Rely on friends Counseling center
Student involved with UD residence life (Fellow/RA)	N/A	Counseling Center Campus Ministry Administration in HRL	Not widespread, but something to be addressed, as with any campus	Wants more attention to suicide prevention week, didn't know it existed	A multi-day training specifically tailored to situations involving suicide

RESOURCES

- Counseling Center**
 - Individual Therapy
 - Group Therapy
 - Outreach Programs
- Campus Ministry**
 - Living With Loss Support Group
 - Spiritual Directors
- Residence Life Staff**

School	Public or Private?	Counseling Services	Campus Ministry Services	Additional Services
University of Dayton 	Private 8,665 students	No walk-ins, appt. only M-F 8:30-4:30 (excluding holidays) Group therapy Individual therapy	Spiritual Directors Living with loss support groups *	Links to the American Foundation for Suicide Awareness Contact RA/fellow or public safety
Ohio State University 	Public 45,831 students	REACH RUOK? Buckeyes At-risk online module Phone screening M-F 9:00-4:00, appt. only Let's Talk- Thursdays, no appt. needed	N/A	Weekly workshops Social media Blogs Youtube videos Stigma reduction Recommended books to read
Xavier University 	Private 4,572 students	M-F 8:30-5:00, walk-ins for emergencies (free) Individual therapy Mindful grief healing group	Student organization- Students Committed to Christ	Local and national suicide hotline On campus police Apps

PROPOSALS

1 Increased Staff at the Counseling Center

- Allow walk-ins during time period immediately following the suicide
- Appointments can be made for sooner dates
- May involve a budget increase for the Counseling Center

2 Personal Email from the Dean of Students

- Make it known that UD cares, and there are people who can help in the grieving process
- Have resources such as counseling readily available for the roommates
- List and describe all available resources with contact information
- Offer to assist in the process of organizing support groups
- Recommend to individuals receiving the email to share information with other students in need

3 Suicide Specific Group Therapy & Outreach Programs

Group Therapy

- Currently offered : Anxiety and Stress Reduction, Wise Minds, Eating Concerns/Body Image Discussion, Survivors of Sexual Assault, Test Anxiety, LGBT Support, Men's Process Group, Women and Relationship Goals, Mindfulness
- Add a support group for "Loss from Suicide", structured the same way as all group therapy programs

Outreach Programs

- Currently offered: Test anxiety, Strategies for coping with a roommate/friend's eating concerns, MBTI group interpretations, Assertiveness, Decision-making, Procrastination, Stress management, Mindfulness
- Add outreach programming and presentation for "Grieving after Suicide", structured similar to other outreach programs

4 University of Dayton Grief Webpage

Include a webpage on UD's website that specifically lists resources and information about the grieving process

- With updated links
- All resources in one place
- Include all details of resources
- Links to directly contact organizers
- More sensitive tone in the writing
- More effort in the creation of the webpage
- Include what grieving is, its process, and why it needs to be addressed

CONCLUSION

While suicide is something that affects us all, through the implementation of the proposals you heard today, we believe that UD can become an even stronger and more caring community than we already are.

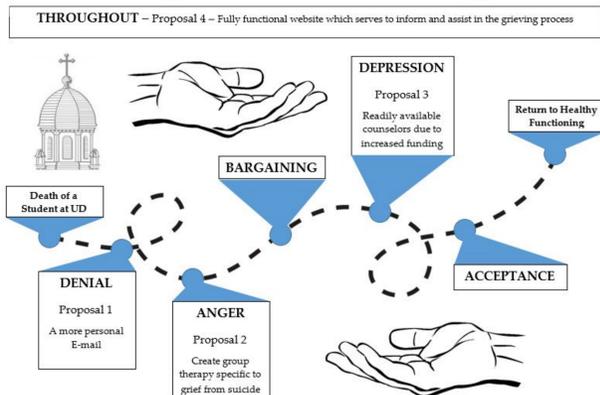
Dear Students,

We extend our deepest sympathy and prayers to you in this time of great sadness. The University of Dayton community truly cares for the safety and well-being of its students, and our community must remain strong. As a roommate and/or close friend of [student] I wanted to pass along the contact information for various programs on campus that may assist you in this time of need. In addition to these resources, please rely on one another for support. Please pass along this email to any and all people you know who were close to [student] and would benefit from these programs and information. Please let me know if there is anything else the university can do to assist you as we go through this time of hardship.

Campus Ministry: Liberty Hall 101 - (937) 229-3339
Counseling Center: First Floor Gosiger Hall - (937) 229-3141
If you need assistance with finding a spiritual director, contact Kathy Sales at ksales1@udayton.edu
Contact [Kathleen Rossman](#), OSF to be connected with the Living with Loss support group
Contact your RA or Fellow

Example Email for Proposal 2

How Our Proposals Function in the Grieving Process



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