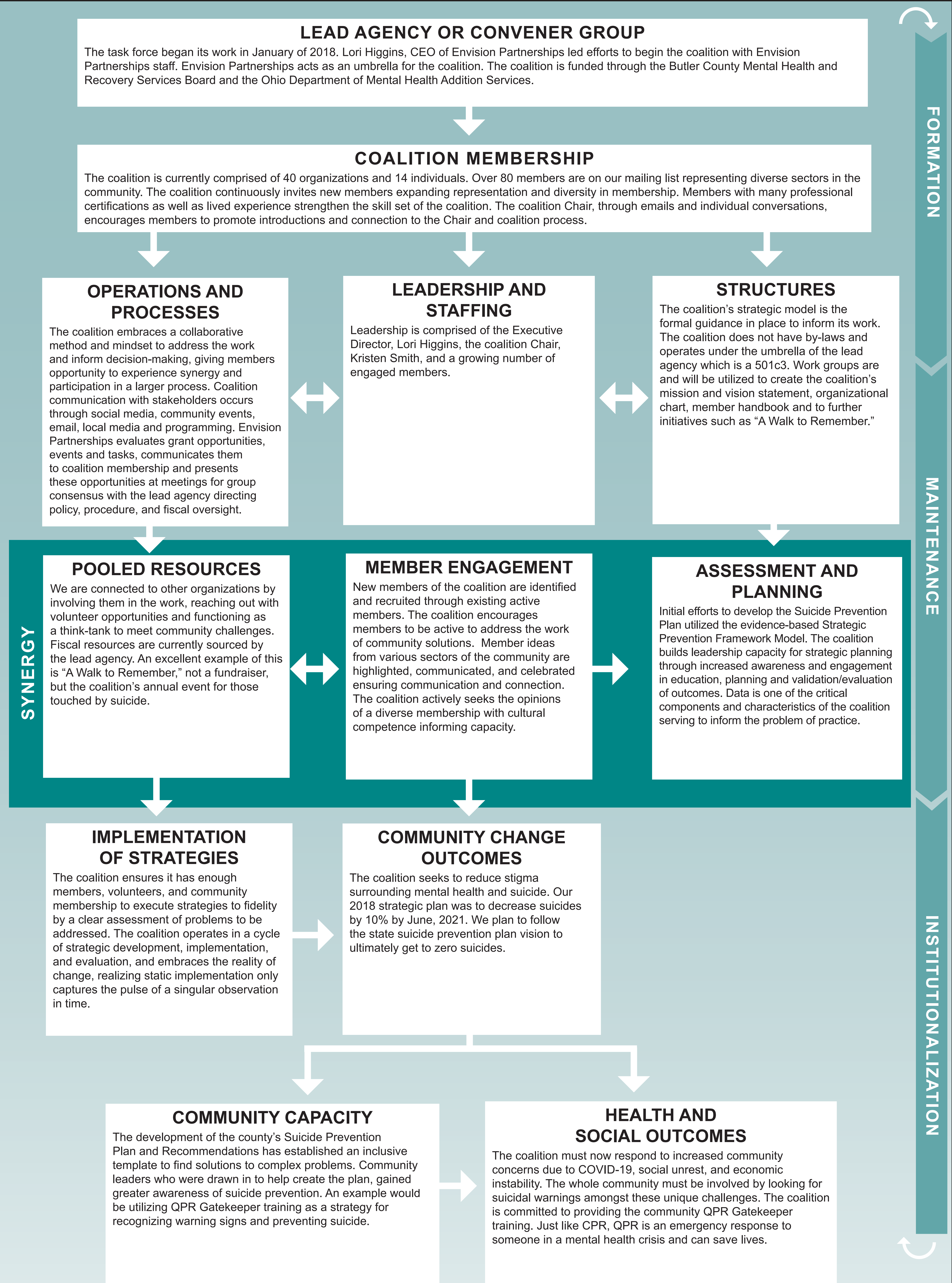




BUTLER COUNTY SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

COMMUNITY CONTEXT: Butler County is located in southwest Ohio and is comprised of ten distinctly different school districts. Uniquely, the county is made up of urban, rural and suburban areas. Ethnic representation is 84% White, 9.2% Black, 3.9% Asian, 5% Hispanic, 2.5% two or more races, 0.4% other. 15% residents are aged 65 and older and 0.005% are Veterans. Many languages are spoken. The percentage of people in poverty (12.4%) exists within a median household income of 63k. The county has a history in farming that has shifted to expansion and continued rapid development and is home to an abundance of treatment facilities, hospitals, and five colleges and universities, including Miami University.



Community Coalition Action Theory – Longer Narrative Butler County Suicide Prevention Coalition Butler County, Ohio

Community Context

Butler County is located between Cincinnati and Dayton, along two major interstates. We have ten different school districts, many of which are quite different from each other. For example, Lakota Local Schools is the 11th largest in the state where students come from homes where 23 languages are spoken. This may or may not contribute to isolation/boundaries. Our county has urban, rural, and suburban areas all within it, which is something unique. Ethnicity in our county is 84% White, 9.2% Black, 5.0% Hispanic, 3.9% Asian, 2.5% two or more races, 0.4% other. 15% residents are aged 65 and older. 63K is the median household income with 12.4% living below poverty line. Disparity exists between those living in urban areas as well as between dominant and minority populations. The county has a history in farming that has shifted to expansion and continued rapid development and is home to an abundance of treatment facilities, many hospitals, and five colleges and universities including Miami University.

Butler County is very responsive to the needs of the community as was evidenced by the response to COVID-19. The community quickly mobilized resources to meet the acute needs of residents. Because of these identified resources, Butler County presents excellent opportunities for learning and growth making it an attractive community for families and individuals.

Lead Agency or Convener Group

The task force began its work in January of 2018. Lori Higgins, CEO of Envision Partnerships (EP) led efforts to begin the coalition with Envision Partnership staff, representatives from more than 25 organizations, members from diverse sectors in the community, and loss survivors. Envision Partnerships acts as a fiscal agent or umbrella for the coalition coordinating a cross-sector approach empowering individuals, families, and communities to incorporate suicide prevention in multiple sectors of Butler County. Communications (email and webpage access) also are facilitated through the lead agency. The coalition is funded through the county MHARS Board and Ohio Mental Health Addition Services. Both entities provide funding to support Envision Partnership staff and is inclusive of initial funding provided to Community Development Professionals to facilitate creating a strategic plan with the coalition.

Coalition Membership

The coalition is currently comprised of 40 organizations and 14 individuals. Over 80 members are on our mailing list representing diverse sectors in the community. The coalition continuously invites new members expanding representation and diversity in membership. A consistent orientation for new members would improve this effort and is a goal for the coalition. Outreach to the Middletown and Oxford communities increase engagement and representation of the county. The coalition has approximately 15 members who attend meetings/functions on a regular basis with others joining in a specific points in time. Members with many professional certifications as well as lived experience strengthen the skill set of the coalition. The coalition Chair, through emails and individual conversations, encourages members to promote introductions and connection to the coalition process.

Coalition Operations and Processes

Participating coalition members are empowered to take tangible action to combat suicide and strengthen the community's awareness and prevention skillset. Website and printed materials are under development to increase community awareness of not only resources, but also to work of Coalition. The Coalition embraces a collaborative method and mindset to address the work and inform decision-

making, giving members an opportunity to experience synergy and participation in a larger process. Membership engagement is measured as Level 1 or Level 2 and is based on attendance, participation in events, resource sharing, and other volunteer efforts. Coalition communication with stakeholders occurs through social media, community events, email, local media and suicide prevention programming. At present the Coalition does not have a “Conflict Management” process in place but has identified this process as an emerging goal. Envision Partnerships, evaluates grant opportunities, events, and tasks (many of which are suggested via email by coalition members). These opportunities are presented to the membership for group consensus with the lead agency directing policy, procedure, and fiscal oversight. Member focus has not resonated in this area, however, should outside funding become available, requirements for more insight, ownership and development of policies will be needed.

Leadership and Staffing

Leadership is comprised of the Executive Director, Lori Higgins, the coalition Chair, Kristen Smith, and a growing number of engaged members.

Structures

The coalition’s strategic model is the formal guidance in place to inform its work. The coalition does not have by-laws and operates under the umbrella of the Lead agency which is a 501c3. Work groups are and will be utilized to create the coalition’s mission and vision statement, organizational chart, member handbook and to further initiatives such as “A Walk to Remember.”

Pooled Resources

We are connected to other organizations by involving them in the work, reaching out with volunteer opportunities and functioning as a think-tank to meet community challenges. Early in outreach efforts, the coalition’s fiscal resources have not been fully developed. We do a great job of including anyone doing similar work within the community. An excellent example of this is “A Walk to Remember,” not a fundraiser, but the coalition’s annual event for those touched by suicide.

Member Engagement

New members of the coalition are identified and recruited first by membership asking the intentional question: “Who are we missing that needs to be included or solicited for their expertise?” The value of a set mission and vision has been identified as a critical component that must be solidly established yet possess and makes clear its fluid nature. By narrowing focus then presentation for inclusion or exclusion of information, the process allows member identification, buy-in and commitment. The Coalition encourages the members to be active by offering the space to address the work of suicide prevention and contribute to community solutions. Member ideas are highlighted, communicated, and celebrated thus maintaining connection, belonging and reinforcement of communication. At each coalition meeting members introduce themselves with an explanation of job responsibilities and connection to the coalition allowing members to understand both their work and coalition commitments. This introduction provides the bridge for supporting “balance” and acknowledges each member will have a different level of involvement dependent upon what is needed and the level of commitment. The coalition actively seeks the opinions of a diverse membership with cultural competence informing capacity involving various sectors of the community.

Assessment and Planning

Initial efforts to develop the Suicide Prevention Plan, utilized the evidence-based Strategic Prevention Framework Model. The coalition builds leadership capacity for strategic planning by increased awareness and engagement in education, planning and validation/evaluation of outcomes. Data informs the work of the coalition. Coroner office data is used to identify trends in geography, gender, age, and

race. Data as one of the critical components and characteristics of the coalition serves to inform the problem of practice. Participation in the “Strengthening and Sustaining Ohio’s Suicide Prevention Coalitions Initiative” is also helpful in guiding strategic planning for the future. The coalition relies on the convening prevention agency’s expertise and practice as well as the expertise of partner agencies in the selection of evidence-based promising strategies.

Synergy

When organizations come together and combine resources, knowledge, skills, and different points of view, they create something new that can accomplish more than the individual organizations could have accomplished on their own (Taylor-Powell, Rossing & Geran, 1998). There is something powerful in this partnership which researchers and others call synergy (Lasker, Weiss & Miller, 2001; Taylor-Powell, Rossing & Geran, 1998). In the CCAT, synergy occurs through the combination of: pooled resources, member engagement and assessment and planning. Synergy is evident in our “Walk to Remember.” The event required coalition to be inviting, respecting different opinions and contributions of resources and skills. The expression of this process is larger community impact.

Implementation of Strategies

The coalition ensures it has enough members/volunteers/community membership to execute strategies to fidelity by a clear assessment of problems to be addressed, strategies to execute fidelity and ownership by those individuals or partners to specific strategies. The coalition is using a CRA to select strategies to increase the community’s capacity to prevent suicide. The coalition ensures strategies being implemented are of added value to the community by seeking continuous feedback from coalition members and the community. The coalition operates in a cycle of strategic development, implementation, and evaluation. The coalition embraces the reality of change and realizes static implementation only captures the pulse of a singular observation in time. The Coalition has a “debrief” of events and activities after implementation, by doing so, “course correction” may occur.

Community Change Outcomes

The coalition seeks to reduce stigma surrounding mental health and suicide. Our 2018 strategic plan was to decrease suicides by 10% by June, 2021. We plan to follow the state suicide prevention plan vision to ultimately get to zero suicides.

Health and Social Outcomes

The coalition must now respond to increased community concerns due to COVID-19, social unrest, and economic instability. The whole community must be involved by looking for suicidal warnings amongst these unique challenges. The coalition is committed to providing the community QPR Gatekeeper training. Just like CPR, QPR is an emergency response to someone in a mental health crisis and can save lives.

Community Capacity

The development of a Suicide Prevention Plan and Recommendations has established a more inclusive template to find solutions to complex problems. Community leaders who were drawn in to help create the plan gained greater awareness of suicide prevention. An example would be QPR Gatekeeper training as a strategy for recognizing warning signs and preventing suicide. The Coalition’s next steps will grow through utilizing the Community Coalition Action Theory and the results of a recent Community Readiness Assessment.

Community Coalition Action Theory – Shorter Narrative Butler County Suicide Prevention Coalition Butler County, Ohio

Community Context

Butler County is located in the southwest Ohio and is comprised of ten distinctly different school districts. Uniquely, the county is made up of urban, rural and suburban areas. Ethnic representation is 84% White, 9.2% Black, 3.9% Asian, 5.0 % Hispanic, 2.5% two or more races, 0.4% other. 15% residents are aged 65 and older. 23 languages are spoken. 63K is the median household income with 12.4% living below poverty line.

Lead Agency or Convener Group

The task force began its work in January of 2018. Lori Higgins, CEO of Envision Partnerships (EP) led efforts to begin the coalition with EP staff. EP acts as an umbrella for the coalition. The coalition is funded through the county MHARS Board and Ohio Mental Health Addition Services.

Coalition Membership

The coalition is currently comprised of 40 organizations and 14 individuals. Over 80 members are on our mailing list representing diverse sectors in the community. The coalition continuously seeks to expand representation and diversity. Members with many professional certifications as well as lived experience strengthen the skill set of the coalition.

Coalition Operations and Processes

Participating coalition members embrace a collaborative method to inform decision making. With group consensus the lead agency, EP, evaluates grant opportunities, provides the construct for policy, procedure, and fiscal oversight.

Leadership and Staffing

Leadership is comprised of the Executive Director of EP, Lori Higgins, the Coalition Chair, Kristen Smith, and a growing number of engaged members.

Structures

The coalition's strategic model is the formal guidance to inform its work. The coalition does not yet have by-laws and operates under the umbrella of the lead agency (a 501c3). Work groups have convened to further initiatives such as "A Walk to Remember."

Pooled Resources

Our connection to organizations occurs through outreach and volunteer opportunities. We encourage think-tank opportunities to further engage community involvement and organizations. An excellent example of this is "A Walk to Remember," not a fundraiser, but the coalition's annual event for those touched by suicide.

Member Engagement

New members of the coalition are identified and recruited through existing active members. The coalition encourages members to be active to address the work of community solutions. Members ideas from various sectors of the community are highlighted, communicated, and celebrated ensuring communication and connection.

Assessment and Planning

Initial efforts to develop the Suicide Prevention Plan utilized the evidence-based Strategic Prevention Framework Model. The coalition builds leadership capacity for strategic planning through increased awareness and engagement in education, planning and validation/evaluation of outcomes. Data is one

of the critical components and characteristics of the coalition serving to inform the problem of practice. Participation in the “Strengthening and Sustaining Ohio’s Suicide Prevention Coalitions Initiative” aids in guiding future planning.

Synergy

Members experience synergy by inviting and respecting different opinions and contributions of resources and skills. The expression of this process is larger community impact.

Implementation of Strategies

The coalition ensures it has enough members/ volunteers/ community membership to execute strategies to fidelity by a clear assessment of problems to be addressed. The coalition operates in a cycle of strategic development, implementation, and evaluation, and embraces the reality of change, realizing static implementation only captures the pulse of a singular observation in time.

Community Change Outcomes

The coalition seeks to reduce stigma surrounding mental health and suicide. Our 2018 strategic plan was to decrease suicides by 10% by June, 2021. We plan to follow the state suicide prevention plan vision to ultimately get to zero suicides.

Health and Social Outcomes

The coalition is responding to increased community concerns due to COVID-19, unemployment, social unrest, and economic instability. We focus especially on providing QPR Gatekeeper training. Just like CPR, QPR is an emergency response to someone in a mental health crisis. The more people who are trained, the more lives that can be saved.

Community Capacity

The development of the coalition’s Suicide Prevention Plan and Recommendations has established a more inclusive template to find solutions to complex problems.