

CASP

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NEWS

Canadian Association for
Suicide Prevention

Association canadienne pour la
prévention du suicide

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The CASP Blueprint business and implementation plan - post-election update

by Adrian Hill

The CASP Board is well positioned to take our National Suicide Prevention Strategy forward with the new Conservative Government following the recent federal election. Throughout 2005, Dr Paul Links, CASP President met with key government and opposition leaders to promote the CASP Blueprint. As a result, the Federal Minister of Health welcomed attendees at the CASP National Conference in Ottawa with the CASP Blueprint in hand and stated that he wanted to have "the best strategy in the world to deal with mental health issues". A series of further meetings with senior Conservative Members of Parliament resulted in an informal agreement to further meetings to continue dialogue and review of the CASP Blueprint. In a recent interview, Dr Links said, "CASP will continue to work hard to make our Blueprint a National Suicide Prevention Strategy for all Canadians. This remains our first priority and goal as we plan our time and effort into the next twenty-four months."

The CASP Blueprint for a National Suicide Prevention Strategy was prepared by the Board of Directors of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention with assistance from other organizations and individuals commencing in 2002. Themes, expectations, checklists for

goals and objectives, a framework for the Blueprint, and a process strategy for writing, review, rewriting and correction, publication and communication were developed in 2003 through strategy, planning and follow-up sessions by the CASP Board members with a group of invited participants. Together, the group represented a talent pool of clinicians, researchers, teachers, program administrators, consumers and survivors. All participants donated their time and expertise in what would become the most significant document in the development of a national suicide prevention strategy in Canada's history.

In 2004, a four person writing committee composed of a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social work teacher/researcher and a lawyer/addictionologist was given responsibility to write the initial drafts and submit them for rigorous peer review across Canada. Fourteen formal revisions saw hundreds of changes and improvements. The project editor then took over the task of pulling the pieces together into an integrated document and again rigorous peer review resulted in hundreds of further edits and changes. In October 2004 the CASP Blueprint was released for review by all Canadians and all levels of government and by members of the World Health Organization and the United Nations.

The CASP Blueprint has been favorably received and compares well with national strategies recently developed in England, Australia, Ireland, and the United States. It is the only national

Federal leadership, adequate funding, and collaboration are key

strategy in the world produced entirely by volunteers. It is the only national strategy in the world produced without government funding. Yet, it is as comprehensive, professional and, above all, as practical as any national strategy anywhere, and at any price.

Federal leadership and adequate funding are key to the successful implementation of this CASP Blueprint for a Canadian National Suicide Prevention Strategy. The success of this strategy also depends on the collaboration and co-operation of all levels of government and from all segments of Canadian society. CASP remains committed to help in any way we can.

(continued on page 2)

CRISE launches community of practice in suicide prevention

by François Chagnon Ph.D

On June 9, 2005, the Centre for Research and Intervention on Suicide and Euthanasia (CRISE) of the *Université du Québec à Montréal*, in collaboration with the *Association québécoise de prévention du suicide* (AQPS) officially launched a community of practice in suicide prevention. This innovative project, under the direction of François Chagnon Ph.D., Assistant Director of CRISE, involves the collaboration of CRISE researchers and 16 organisations involved with suicide prevention in Québec.

This project continues the work of our research team, which aims toward a better application of scientific knowledge in the environment directly involved with the prevention of suicide and intervention with persons at risk of suicide. The general objective is to test a structured intervention strategy and to continue targeting the actual use of scientific knowledge by organisations (ministerial, public, community) whose role it is to plan programs and interventions in populations with an elevated risk of suicide. The central element of this strategy will be the creation of a community of practice, which will connect organisations in suicide prevention with researchers, by way of web-based exchanges, in an intense process of interaction and sharing of research as well as practice needs and knowledge.

In the last few years, we have seen the emergence of networking among groups of players who share common objectives and who aim to better fulfill their missions by developing, sharing and applying targeted knowledge according to their fields of interest. Communities of practice are heterogeneous collections, made up of various organisations that have decided to combine their respective experiences in order to learn how to do better. Each organisation contributes to its field of activity and possesses, therefore, an identity of its own. These identities

become articulated and interconnected through mutual commitment. Communities of practice are characterized by the determination of common goals and the sharing of knowledge and expertise, which enable a continuous process of apprenticeship in the community. Networking provides a formative context, particularly interesting and complementary to our application model, for identifying needs and priority knowledge, accessing scientific knowledge and encouraging permanent interaction among researchers and users to increase the use of scientific knowledge in suicide prevention. In this way, communities of practice assist in the resolution of problems between peers, development and evaluation of better practices, improvement and distribution of daily knowledge, as well as innovation. An obvious advantage of the community of practice is that it enables the sharing of knowledge among researchers and organisations, regardless of their geographic distance.

... sharing of research as well as practice needs and knowledge.

Throughout the project (12 months), a “moderator” will support the development of the community of practice. He will moderate all bi-weekly online discussion groups on the Internet site. The frequency of these discussion groups may be increased if there is a need. He will also offer structural support in order to identify the interests and needs of members and to encourage the maximum use and sharing of knowledge and expertise. He will encourage the synthesis of needs identified by participants, access to knowledge, connections among re-

searchers and their integration into the practice community. Also, the moderator will encourage access to the activities inherent in the networking of partners as well as dissemination of knowledge by coordinating a group of parallel activities. He will keep a watch on the production of scientific knowledge in priority fields for the benefit of community members. He will facilitate access and dissemination of knowledge to community members. He will be supported by CRISE’s documentation centre and our documentalist, who can conduct documentary research in accordance with these needs.

This project has garnered great enthusiasm in our research group as well as within suicide prevention organisations. It is one of a series of CRISE activities supporting knowledge application in suicide prevention. With this aim, an online program offering information syntheses will soon be available on our website. In another project, in collaboration with 30 suicide prevention organisations in Québec, we examine the determinants of the use of scientific knowledge in the prevention of suicide in order to better understand which elements and processes are the most important for supporting a better connection between research and practice.

With a grant from the Québec Ministry of Economic Development, Innovation and Export, we will evaluate the introduction and effects of the community of practice on knowledge use by participating organisations. The results, if they prove to be conclusive, may stimulate the development of other communities of practice across Canada.

François Chagnon is Assistant Director of CRISE

Jumping on the bandwagon

by Jude Platzer

When a friend visiting from the U.K. mused on how popular charity bracelets had become in the U.K., it got me thinking. How much information could one get on those bands and what were the chances of youth in BC wanting to wear them if they had a crisis line phone number and a web site especially for youth. (YouthInBC.com) After all, many of these bracelets just had the name of a charity, a cause or simply a cute phrase. As director of the **Josh Platzer Society for Teen Suicide Prevention and Awareness** I took the plunge and embarked on a huge learning curve about dealing with business from China via the U.S.

My daughter Nisha, who has obviously had her struggles coping with her brother's suicide, volunteered that the bracelets should be orange since that was the unusual colour of Josh's hair. Already the bracelet idea was taking a positive spin. Suddenly my living room was a sea of orange. Volunteers armed with donation boxes that had a convenient compartment for the bracelets, launched the campaign by going from store to store with an information letter and the transparent boxes filled with orange bracelets. There were very few refusals and many businesses have had the bracelets for many months and continually call for the boxes to be replenished. At many high schools in and around Vancouver, students have set up tables during their lunch hour. With the aid of a counsellor

they have sold the bracelets and given out informational brochures and wallet cards from the local crisis centre. This strategy of the youth giving out the bracelets to youth has worked well.

On other occasions, I have been asked to speak to students at both high schools and colleges and after the presentation have made the bracelets available for sale.

Recently I was asked to attend a Walk-a-Thon for suicide prevention, organized by students at a school where I had spoken a few months earlier. The students told me that my talk had inspired them to organize the walk and each student was encouraged to walk around the track, make a small donation and receive an orange bracelet.

Through the Suicide Survivors Listserve I have sent bracelets not only across BC but also to other provinces. This project has enabled parents to use the bracelets as a teaching tool for their younger children who are curious to know what is written on the bracelet. Teenagers wear them proudly, as do many adults.

The resulting TV interviews and newspaper reports have served to promote dialogue and education on the difficult topic of suicide and for the Society it has been yet another step forward to achieving our mission.

Jude is Executive Director of the Josh Platzer Society. The society was founded after the tragic suicide death of her fifteen year old son Josh and its mission is to educate youth and the people around them

Book your calendar!

April 28 - May 1, 2006

Science and Practice in Suicidology: Promoting Collaboration, Integration and Understanding
39th Annual Conference of the AAS
Grand Hyatt Seattle, Seattle,
Washington. www.suicidology.org.

October 25-27, 2006

Complexity of Suicide: Prevention, Intervention and Aftermath,
Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) 2006 National Conference. Toronto, ON. Website: www.suicideconference2006.ca
Contact the Continuing Education office, Conference Secretariat. Tel: 416.978.2719 Fax: 416.946.7028 Toll Free: 1.888.512.8173 in North America
ce.med@utoronto.ca

about suicide prevention. Jude lives in Vancouver with her husband and daughter.

For more information about the bracelets, please contact Jude at judeplatzer@telus.net
www.teensuicideprevention.org

1. The Survivor Advocates Listserve <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SurvivorAdvocates> is an informal information exchange and forum for "respectful dialogue" amongst Canadian survivors interested in suicide prevention, researchers, clinicians and all others interested in suicide prevention.

In Memory of...

Gifts in remembrance of loved ones and friends can be made by sending a check to CASP.

Please include the name of the person in whose memory the gift is made, your name & address and the name and address of the family you would like us to notify about the gift.

We are grateful for the generosity of our many donors. We also would like to acknowledge the gifts that are directed

to us through the United Way.

\$10,000 and over

Andrew Ferrone Memorial Foundation

\$ 5000 and over

Dr. Adrian Hill

Other

Jackman Foundation

United Way- Alberta Capital Region

United Way Centraide - Ottawa

Marnin J. Heisel

Lorna Vibat

Our gratitude extends to "In Memory Of" donations received from:

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Ajax High School Staff

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