

Addressing Suicide In Primary Care

Debra Brownlee, PHD

October 20, 2021



Mountain Plains (HHS Region 8)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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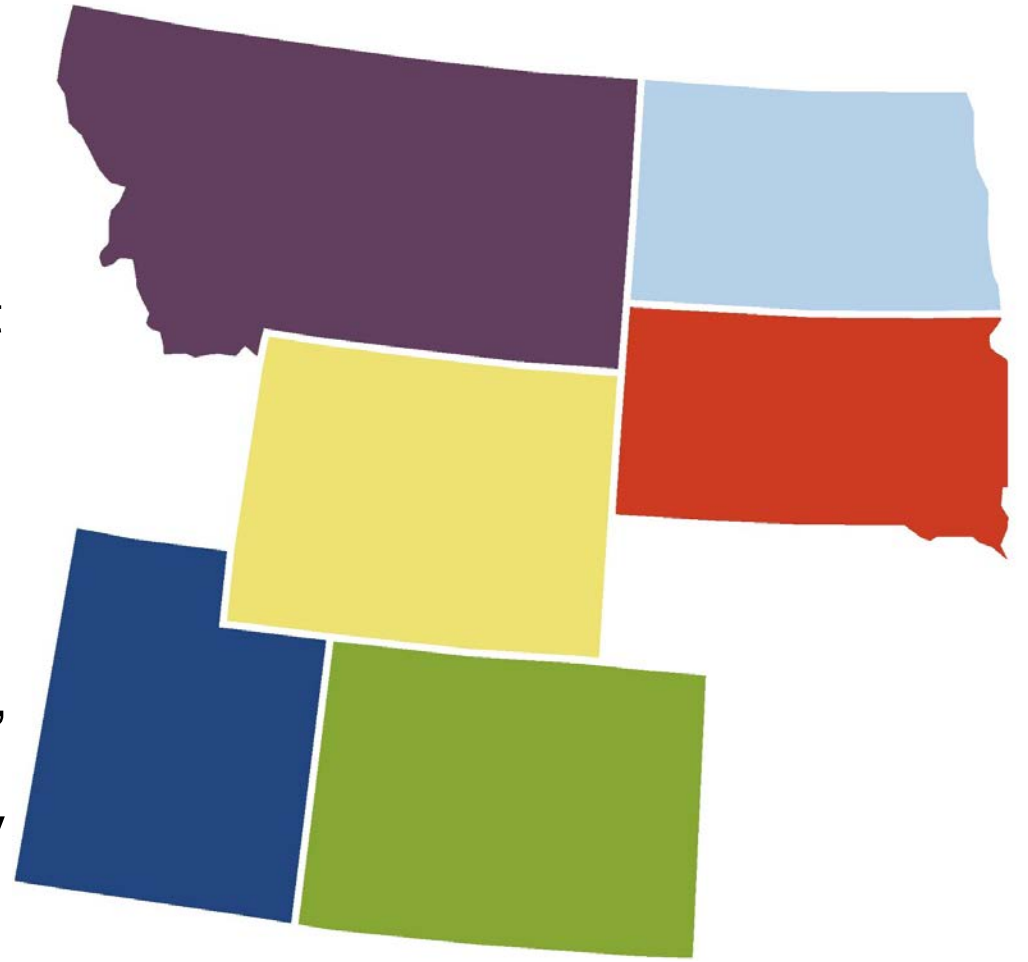
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The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (Mountain Plains MHTTC) provides training and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental health concerns throughout Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming).

We belong to the Technology Transfer Center (TTC) Network, a national network of training and technical assistance centers serving the needs of mental health, substance use and prevention providers. The work of the TTC Network is under a cooperative agreement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).



The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

**STRENGTHS-BASED
AND HOPEFUL**

**INCLUSIVE AND
ACCEPTING OF
DIVERSE CULTURES,
GENDERS,
PERSPECTIVES,
AND EXPERIENCES**

**HEALING-CENTERED AND
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE**

**INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR
OWN JOURNEYS**

**PERSON-FIRST AND
FREE OF LABELS**

**NON-JUDGMENTAL AND
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS**

**RESPECTFUL, CLEAR
AND UNDERSTANDABLE**

**CONSISTENT WITH
OUR ACTIONS,
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS**

The background features a dark blue gradient with a subtle pattern of white dots. Overlaid on this are several circular and semi-circular elements. A prominent feature is a large circular scale on the left side, with numerical markings from 140 to 260 in increments of 10. Other elements include various concentric circles, dashed lines, and arrows, some pointing inwards and some outwards, creating a sense of movement and complexity.

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SOURCE MATERIAL

Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Primary Care Practices

- <http://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/suicide-prevention-toolkit-ruralprimary-care>
- <http://www.wiche.edu/pub/suicide-prevention-toolkit-for-primary-care-practices>

Suicide Prevention Toolkit/American Indian Addendum

WHY PRIMARY CARE?

- People are more likely to go to their primary care provider or a spiritual leader to address depressive issues.
- They're also more likely to report physical symptoms than mental health symptoms.
- Suicide rates after visits to medical providers are high; and after discharge from hospital, even higher.

EFFECTIVE PREVENTION STRATEGIES – 0 SUICIDE MODEL

Suicide Prevention Strategies in Primary Care

1. Train staff to recognize and respond to warning signs of suicide (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training; Mental Health First Aid) (Pages 71-73)
2. Screen for and manage depression (Patient Health Questionnaire – 9; Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale) (Page 69)
3. Screen all patients for suicide risk
4. Educate patients about warning signs for suicide
5. Safety Plan/Temporarily restrict means for lethal self-harm (Page 70)

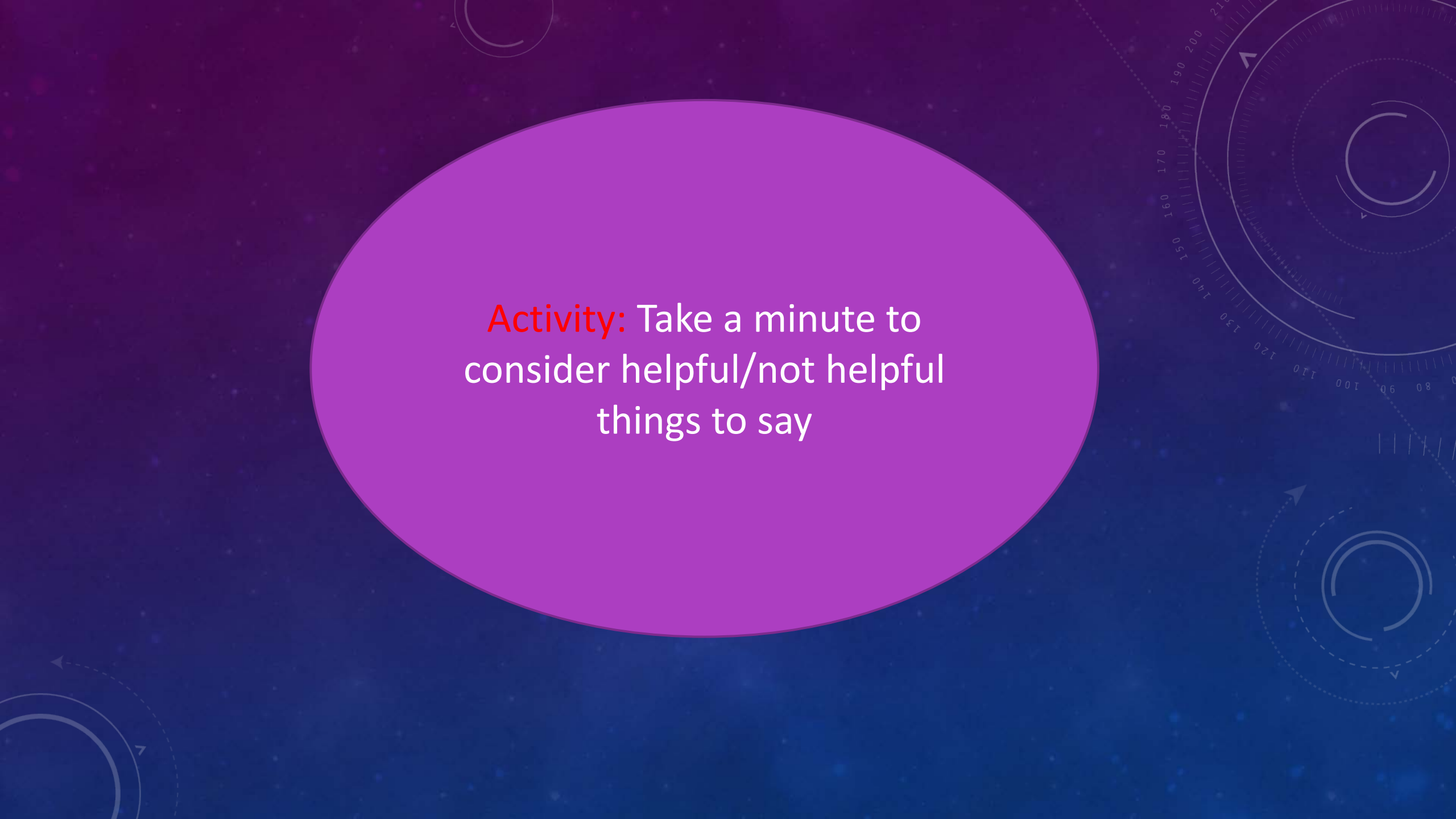
STATISTICS WORTH MENTIONING

- afsp.org (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention)
- sprc.org (Suicide Prevention Resource Center) — Suicide Prevention Toolkit/American Indian Addendum

THE APPROACH

- ❖ Communication is imperfect but mistakes in communication can usually be fixed.
- ❖ Be specific in describing what you are noticing and/or what your concerns are.
- ❖ Your best skills involve being genuine, compassionate, and respectful.
- ❖ The more ill someone is, the more clear you have to be (e.g., you may have to take more time explaining why you're asking the questions you are; what your intentions are, etc....)
- ❖ Take your time. Most decisions don't have to be made right away. (If they're talking, they're not acting)
- Remember, you are not the sole decision maker. You are able to access support through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, afsp.org (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention), sprc.org (Suicide Prevention Resource Center); and 911 is always an option if you aren't sure a person can keep themselves safe.
- ❖ Put the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Number in your phone contacts list (1-800-273-8255).
- ❖ If you do call 911, tell the operator that this is a mental health crisis and ask if they can send someone trained to help with mental health issues.

National Suicide
Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK
(8255)

The background is a dark blue gradient with a fine, starry texture. A large, solid purple oval is centered on the page. To the right of the oval, there are several technical-style graphics: a large circular scale with numerical markings from 80 to 210, a smaller circular scale with markings from 100 to 160, and various dashed and solid lines forming circular paths and arrows. The text is centered within the purple oval.

Activity: Take a minute to consider helpful/not helpful things to say

THE APPROACH

Examples of What to Say

- ❖ I'm concerned about you.
- ❖ It looks like you're having a hard time concentrating, focusing, getting to appointments on time, etc....
- ❖ You seem to be more anxious, sad, angry, etc... than usual (then give specifics: e.g., you look like you've been crying; you've been snapping/yelling more than usual; you're trembling).
- ❖ Would it help to talk? I'm here when you're ready to talk.

Examples of What Not to Say

- ❖ Get over it.
- ❖ You're making a bigger deal of this than you need to.
- ❖ Calm down.
- ❖ You just need to.... What you should do is...
- ❖ Have you done what we talked about before (e.g., taken your meds, stopped drinking/drugs, etc...)

RESTRICTION OF MEANS (PAGE 70)

- Lock It Up Campaign <http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/violence-injury-prevention/violence-prevention/gun-violence/LOKIT-UP.aspx> LOK-IT-UP raises awareness about the importance of safe firearm storage, informs the public about safe storage options, and promotes the availability of safe storage devices. The Public Health Seattle King County website contains information for healthcare providers, including brochures and answers to important questions regarding gun storage.
- Means Matter <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/> The Means Matter website, created by the Harvard Injury Control Research Center at the Harvard School of Public Health, contains information on means reduction and why it is important. Means reduction statistics and programs are provided by state.
- Safe Use of Prescription Pain Medication Brochure http://here.doh.wa.gov/materials/safe-use-of-prescription-pain-medication/33_PainMeds_E15L.pdf A 3.5 x 8.5 informational brochure describing how to use prescription pain medication safely, dangers of not following the directions, possible signs of overdose, and how to safely dispose of unwanted or expired medication. May be downloaded free of charge in English and Spanish.

Thank you for joining us today!

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