

Policy 4.4.1 Suicide Prevention

POLICY PURPOSE:

This policy pledges the City of Sunnyvale to promote community engagement that will result in planning, implementation and evaluation strategies for: suicide prevention and intervention through education; support and promotion of aftercare services; and support and promotion of a healthy and more accepting public perception of the importance of and need for quality mental health care.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States and in the State of California. The City of Sunnyvale has experienced the tragedy of suicide within its community. There are strategies that can be implemented to prevent suicide and suicide attempts. These include:

- Reducing access to means of suicide
- Initiating a healthy dialogue about the difficult topic of suicide throughout the community, for residents of all ages, races, gender and other social characteristics
- Responsible reporting by media and by City employees on social media;
- Reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and with seeking mental health care;
- Early identification, treatment and care of people with mental and substance use disorders, chronic pain and acute emotional distress;
- Training of non-specialized health workers, teachers, parents, etc. in the assessment and recognition of suicidal behavior;
- Follow-up care for people who have attempted suicide and identification of resources that will deliver needed support to individuals and families.

Suicide is a complex issue and a difficult discussion topic for most people; therefore, suicide prevention efforts require coordination and collaboration among a broad section of stakeholders in health care, education, the private sector, government agencies and the media. *These efforts must be comprehensive and integrated, as no single approach on its own can make an impact on an issue as challenging as suicide.*

- (1) Goal 4.4.1A: Advance the current strategies and best practices of the Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services, the National Council for Behavioral Health, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and the World Health Organization.
- (2) Goal 4.4.1B: Support the development and implementation of effective and relevant educational programs that promote healthy emotional and social development of residents. These programs may include, but will not be limited to:

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- A) Opening the dialogue about the impact of suicide on individuals, families and the community;
 - B) Helping individuals develop strategies for reducing stress, effective coping skills and effective methods for problem solving; and
 - C) Fostering resilience in community members who seek assistance or who are identified as at-risk.
- (3) Funds to implement this policy shall be provided when available, but will also be sought through donations, grants, partnerships, and other outside sources.

Adopted: RTC # 18-0676 (08/14/2018)

Lead Department: Department of Public Safety

For reference, see also: Santa Clara County Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan, revised March 2011