



Vet to Vet Tennessee 2018 Phase II Grants Health Initiative Proposal

1. PROJECT SUMMARY

This plan emphasizes the mental health initiative by encouraging mental wellness through suicide prevention, which is a major need identified within this spectrum as suicide is one of the leading causes of death in our country with rising death tolls in nearly all states including our own. The micro effects evoke individual and familial devastation raking economic costs of 93 billion dollars each year. Building from our Phase I project, we will serve veterans, youth, teens and young adults. Phase II will specifically focus on spreading awareness and increasing skillsets in those who are in optimal positions to influence high-risk individuals in our communities, including Knox County and other surrounding, rural areas. Clergy, youth pastors and leaders, employers and officers and personnel within community-based and veteran service organizations, will be educated using evidence-based QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper training to help identify, intervene and assist in recovery of suicide ideation and attempts. Trainers will become acquainted with resources to make appropriate referrals, which will aid in the treatment of mental health disorders including depression, which, untreated, is the main cause of suicide, as well as other factors contributing to a decreased quality of life for those considering self-harm or suicideⁱ. At the end of one-year, our instructors will train over 22,000 individuals at an average cost of \$2.40 for each Gatekeeper. The total project cost of \$47,849 will have an exponential impact, significantly eradicating suicide statistics.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in this country; thus, is a major public health concern as direct and indirect effects are extensive in magnitude, affecting individuals and families in a micro realm spreading to macro, economic costsⁱⁱ. The Suicide Prevention Resource Centerⁱⁱⁱ posits the cost of one suicide surmounts to over 1 million dollars with more than 93 billion spent on all suicides and suicide attempts in one year. Furthermore, the socio-emotional toll that it places on family members has immeasurable, lifelong effects. Suicidality is a primary concern for vulnerable populations including our nation's veterans. In fact, suicide surpassed war as the leading cause of death within the U.S. military in recent years. Veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide as non-veterans.^{iv} Many aspects associated with military culture and the loss of this identity following the transition into civilian life increase risk factors for suicidality. Additionally, protective factors, such as coping mechanisms, are greatly reduced by stigmas attached to this culture. Thus, one of the primary goals of our organization is to make great strides in decreasing suicide rates in veterans and reduce the devastation it has on family members, the community and society at large.

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Phase I addressed the goal of suicide prevention in veterans. Phase I^v goal was to prevent suicide by training at least 10 QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Instructors who will train approximately 2,000 individuals for free. To carry out the Phase I plan, our organization partnered with Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett and Rio Revolution Church to deliver QPR Gatekeeper training to 17 individuals. A gatekeeper is defined as an individual who is in an optimal position to identify and influence those considering suicide because they are in greater contact with vulnerable, high-risk populations; therefore, providing a rationale for training these individuals. The QPR, evidence-based training approach is structured to educate individuals to recognize those at risk for suicide, implement intervention skills in the presence of suicide ideation and to, not only be familiar with resources, but to also be able to make appropriate referrals. Our organization emphasized a faith component in training as faith communities not only add that element of hope, but also serve to nurture and connect people, which is powerful in continuing life of those who are considering self-harm or suicide.^{vi} Post evaluation surveys revealed that the faith-emphasis was well-received.

Following the training, all instructors felt competent in identifying, intervening and referring suicidal ideations and attempts. Furthermore, our gatekeepers feel confident in teaching these skills in small and large group settings; two of our gatekeepers have already hosted training sessions. Our now certified gatekeepers are of diverse backgrounds, including veterans, social workers, pastors, human resource management, law enforcement, veterans, business leaders and college students. Thus, their influence not only benefits the veteran population, but extends to many other populations. This reveals that our impact extends beyond what we originally conceptualized, which is important considering suicide touches all demographics. We feel that the knowledge, along with the partnerships gained during Phase I, helped us discover that we may have an exponential impact extending from our local communities into state and national levels. Our potential to have an influence on the individuals ranging from ages 5 to 24 is substantial, which creates a vision for Phase II implementation. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth and the most preventable and thoughts of suicide are highest among those ages 15-24.^{vii} Children and adults within this age group have a great deal of parental and peer influence, which compounds the issue. Therefore, our Phase II goals are to train 100 QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeepers within 12 months to curb suicide rates and ideation among these ages, while continuing to work to reduce suicide rates in veterans who are among the highest-risk. These goals are attainable because we have built partnerships with the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Covenant Health, Cornerstone of Recovery, Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council, the Military Chaplains Association, Helen Ross McNabb Military Services Center, Celebrate Recovery, Humana and our churches and within our organization, we have many dedicated individuals willing to advocate, network and assist in carrying out our vision. We will evaluate our plan throughout implementation with after-action reports (AARs), which will also help goal attainment in that they not only allow us to keep track of those trained but also help improve facilitation along the way. AARs will be sent to Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network and the VA immediately after each training session. Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network

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distributes the demographic information and evaluation surveys to federal organizations such as SAMHSA. This will allow our impact to be measured on a large scale. QPR is easy to learn and easy to remember. However, it takes courage and confidence to overcome fear to help those who are suicidal. According to research^{viii}, suicidal attempts and death are reduced in areas where QPR is widely taught. Once completed, this plan will have an impact that could reduce statistics related to suicides and suicide attempts significantly.

3. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/RESOURCE

After funding is secured, our initial task is to develop a detailed timeline to monitor progress throughout the year. Once complete, we will secure facilities to hold our training sessions; number of sessions will likely be 10-35, as we feel that small training sessions are most appropriate to ensure information is well-received. Our host facilities will come from our Veteran/Military Friendly Congregations and community partnerships; it is our plan to use strategy in locale to ensure that we are accessible within the area, which will save \$4,000 in facility rental. Following, we will continue to receive support and free materials from Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network and the Department of Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Coordinators. Then, along with our faith-based congregations, healthcare and community partners, we will recruit individuals who are in positions to impact our target population. Promotion outreach will assist in this as well as advocacy through social media advertisements; this will cost \$100 per month. We will train 100 individuals; at \$495 per person, this will total \$49,500; with our partnerships, we will reduce this cost by \$10,000 through a Vet to Vet Tennessee Master instructor discount promotion. The Gatekeeper handout printing provided to each trainee and shipping expenses total \$1,400; the handbook, totaling \$429, will be free to us through TSPN. As a veteran organization, we will provide challenge coins with our mission “Each One, Reach One, Teach One” as an award of completion totaling \$525. Breakfast and lunch will also be provided to trainees, which will cost \$1,500. Fuel/miscellaneous travel and lodging will be reserved for instructors and trainees. Therefore, instructor training cost represents 89% of the proposed budget, not including travel. Operating expenses, outreach and accounting expenses (to audit quarterly) account for the remaining balance. Our personnel are volunteers; therefore, no personal expenses are within the budget.

4. PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY PLAN/RESOURCES

The project we are proposing is self-sustaining without additional effort, although that is not our plan, simply because knowledge does not exist in a vacuum. According to suicide professionals, it takes hundreds to save ONE, it takes thousands to save HUNDREDS and it takes millions to save THOUSANDS. By training instructors, awareness is spread on an exponential basis as they instruct others who serve to do the same. At the end of Phase II, we will have trained at least 100 QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Instructors; these individuals will train at least 22,000 Gatekeepers per year, who could monitor over at least 300,000 individuals per year potentially reaching millions. Part of the training includes a session to help instructors set attainable goals including whom, how many and how to implement and monitor

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their progress. Along with this, Vet to Vet Tennessee will offer continued support and materials to the 117 QPR Instructors and Volunteers as they work to implement QPR training in the East TN region. We have and will continue to aid in referral, planning, organization and initial facilitation of courses to all instructors. Our website will also serve as on-going support through advocacy and training management, including schedules of up-coming sessions, resources for instructors to log attendance and evaluations to assess progress and impact. Our Suicide Prevention Committee's motto is "Do Something" and our organization pledges to honor this. The approval of the grant will allow us to "Do Something" by saving lives beginning with those closest to us in our local communities. Thus, we do not plan to stop after one-year. Our organization has always been funded by local counties, community and faith-based organizations and private donors, never the state or federal government. It is within our mission to continue to operate in this manner. We plan to continue to build partnerships and allocate local resources if need be to extend our vision by training instructors and gatekeepers following the initial year, revisiting our vision annually to specify goals to expand our impact.

Respectfully submitted,



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President

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ⁱ Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (2018). Suicide Prevention East Tennessee Resource Directory

ⁱⁱ Center for Disease Control (2018). Suicide rising across the U.S.: more than a mental health concern

ⁱⁱⁱ Suicide Prevention Resource Center (2018). Costs of suicide

^{iv} U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2018). Facts about veteran suicide: June 2018

^v Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee 2018 Vet to Vet Tennessee Small Grant Phase I Proposal

^{vi} Suicide Prevention Resource Center (2009). The role of faith communities in preventing suicide.

^{vii} American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2018) Suicide Statistics

^{viii} QPR 2016 – Intro to QPR – US