

POSTVENTION PROGRAM

BEING PREPARED TO ACT IN THE EVENT OF A SUICIDE

AUTHORS

MONIQUE SÉGUIN
FRANÇOISE ROY
TANIA BOILAR



AQPS
Association québécoise
de prévention du suicide

UQO

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE
AT A GLANCE**

 **FRANÇOISE
ROY**

Regroupement
des centres de prévention
du suicide du
RCPS Québec

POSTVENTION DEFINITION

Postvention refers to the sum of all actions taken in response to a suicide, either in the immediate environment or in communities where the deceased was known.

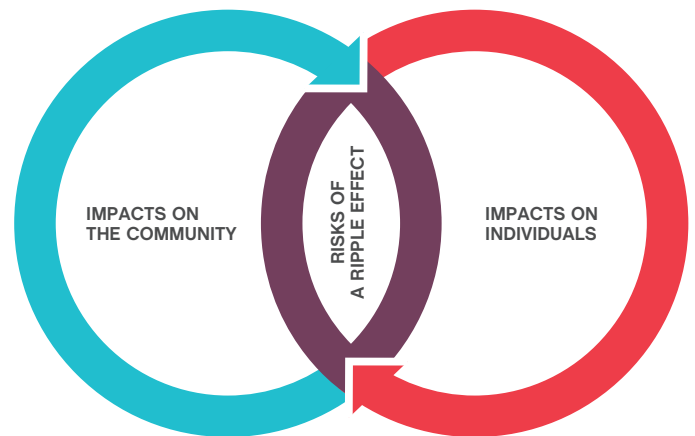
BEING PREPARED TO ACT IN THE EVENT OF A SUICIDE TO:

- Alleviate individual suffering
- Reduce risk of ripple effect
- Foster a feeling of safety in the community
- Promote a return to usual functioning
- Strengthen individuals' ability to face adversity

THE IMPACTS ON THE COMMUNITY

When a suicide occurs, it increases the likelihood of disorganization in the community.

How the impacts of suicide are managed is crucial. It is critical to instill a sense of trust and safety in those affected. The longer the disorganization lasts, the more it can contribute to maintaining, prolonging, or amplifying feelings of distress.



THE IMPACTS ON INDIVIDUALS

The suicide affects not only the deceased's family and social group, but also the entire community or institution. The intensity of the impact will vary from individual to individual, and be influenced by multiple factors: the degree of intimacy with the deceased, the proximity to the event (whether or not they witnessed the suicide), the pre-existing degree of vulnerability, and the impact of the suicide on the community in which it occurs. The postvention measures should include all individuals within the community; this is achieved by modulating the interventions according to the needs of three specific groups (individuals directly affected by the event, vulnerable individuals and the population at large).

POTENTIAL RIPPLE EFFECT: WHERE COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL IMPACTS MEET

At the individual level, people who are already vulnerable are most at risk to identify with the deceased (their suffering or the means of suicide). At the community level, suicide tends to cause sudden structural disorganization. To minimize the risk of a ripple effect, it is important to help the community resume normal functioning while ensuring that those affected get the support they need.

GROUPS AND APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

INDIVIDUALS DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE EVENT

Individuals for whom the reactions will include grief, trauma, and crisis

INDICATED INTERVENTIONS

Detection and early interventions to reduce the complications of grief and limit the acute stress or post-traumatic stress disorder

VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

Individuals who, despite having no direct contact with the event, could become increasingly vulnerable as a result of its occurrence

SELECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

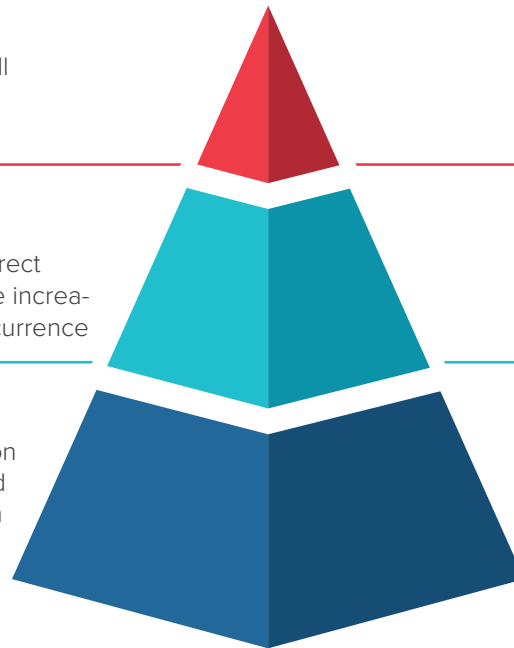
Detection and interventions with individuals who present risk factors or might develop them

THE POPULATION AT LARGE

Individuals from the general population (without known risk factors) who could manifest some distress in the medium or long term

UNIVERSAL INTERVENTIONS

Interventions aimed at reassuring, promoting social wellbeing, and enhancing the resilience of individuals and the immediate and broader communities



CLINICAL MANAGEMENT STEPS OF THE EVENT

ANALYSIS OF THE EVENT

- Verify the accuracy and truthfulness of the information
- Gather information on the individual characteristics of the deceased and the community
- The analysis of the event is ongoing throughout the postvention activities

CHOOSE PRIORITY MEASURES AND ACTIONS

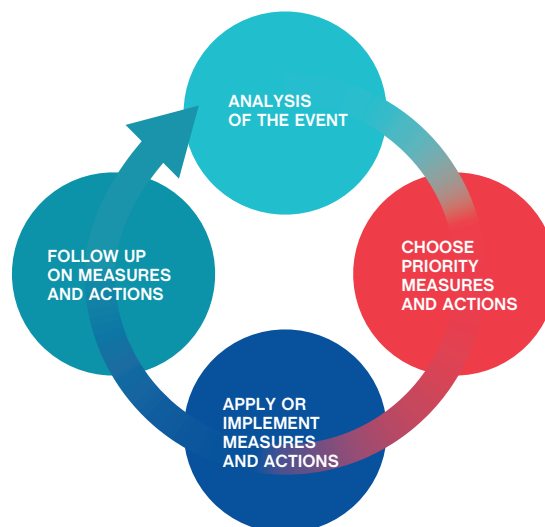
- Identify priority sub-groups in need of intervention
- Choose the measures and the actions to be prioritized
- Decide who can carry out the actions and/or provide the services required
- Mobilize other resources

FOLLOW UP ON MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- Review measures, actions, and interventions carried to ongoing analysis of the event

APPLY OR IMPLEMENT MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- Intervene with directly affected or vulnerable individuals
- Sequentially implement postvention measures according to each phase



4

SEQUENTIAL PHASES

AND

10

MEASURES TO HELP THE COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUALS

PREPARATION BEFORE THE EVENT

Actions that prepare the community to respond.

AT THE TIME OF THE EVENT



Urgent interventions and protective measures.

AFTER THE EVENT

Rapid deployment of interventions to address the impacts on the community and on people directly affected by the suicide (bereaved individuals and witnesses).

MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM FOLLOW-UP

Interventions designed to help identify mental health issues in individuals with multiple risk factors and activities to raise awareness about mental health and decrease stigmatization around seeking help.

		Objectives	Preparation before the event	At the time of the event (if suicide occurs in the community)	After the event (up to 2 weeks)	Medium and long-term follow-up (up to 1 year)
10 MEASURES	COMMUNITY LEVEL	 <p>Reduce risk of ripple effect, foster a feeling of safety in the community, and promote a return to usual functioning.</p>	1- Organization of the community			
				2- Urgency and protection		
					3- Analysis, clinical management, and postvention coordination	
				4- Communication and information		
					5- Memorials	
					6- Support for interveners	
						10- Review of the postvention activities
	INDIVIDUALS LEVEL	 <p>Alleviate individual suffering and strengthen the ability to face adversity.</p>		7- Detection and indicated interventions		
					8- Detection and selective interventions	
						9- Detection and universal interventions
						10- Review of the postvention



WINNING CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- Secure the support and commitment of the institution's management
- Define the roles and responsibilities of internal actors and external resources
- Use the program to leverage existing postvention protocols in the community
- Ensure the availability of internal and/or external resources who are trained to intervene
- Implement the ten measures designed to help the community as well as individuals
- Follow the four sequential intervention phases
- Continue to implement actions beyond the initial period of shock

PROGRAM AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

- www.aqps.info

Document citation:

Séguin, M., Roy, F., and Boilar, T. (2020). *Postvention Program: Being Prepared to Act in the Event of a Suicide. Program Structure at a Glance*. Québec, Association québécoise de prévention du suicide.

ISBN: 978-2-922710-56-4

Funded by

**Secrétariat
à la jeunesse**

Québec 