

NEEDHAM ACTS:

**A Report to the School Committee from
The Needham Coalition for Suicide
Prevention**

*Suicide is preventable
if we all work together.*

Needham Coalition for Suicide Prevention

- Denise Garlick Needham Board of Health (co-chair)
- George Johnson Needham Public Schools (co-chair)
- Jon Mattleman Needham Youth Commission (group chair)
- Tom Denton Needham Public Schools (group chair)
- Joe Barnes Needham School Committee (group chair)
- Jim McCauley Riverside Community Care (group chair)
- Paul Buckley Needham Fire Department
- John Kraemer Needham Police Department
- Janice Berns Needham Health Department
- Jerry Wasserman Needham Board of Selectmen
- Gary Crossen Needham School Committee
- Donna Carmichael Needham Health Department

Coalition continued...

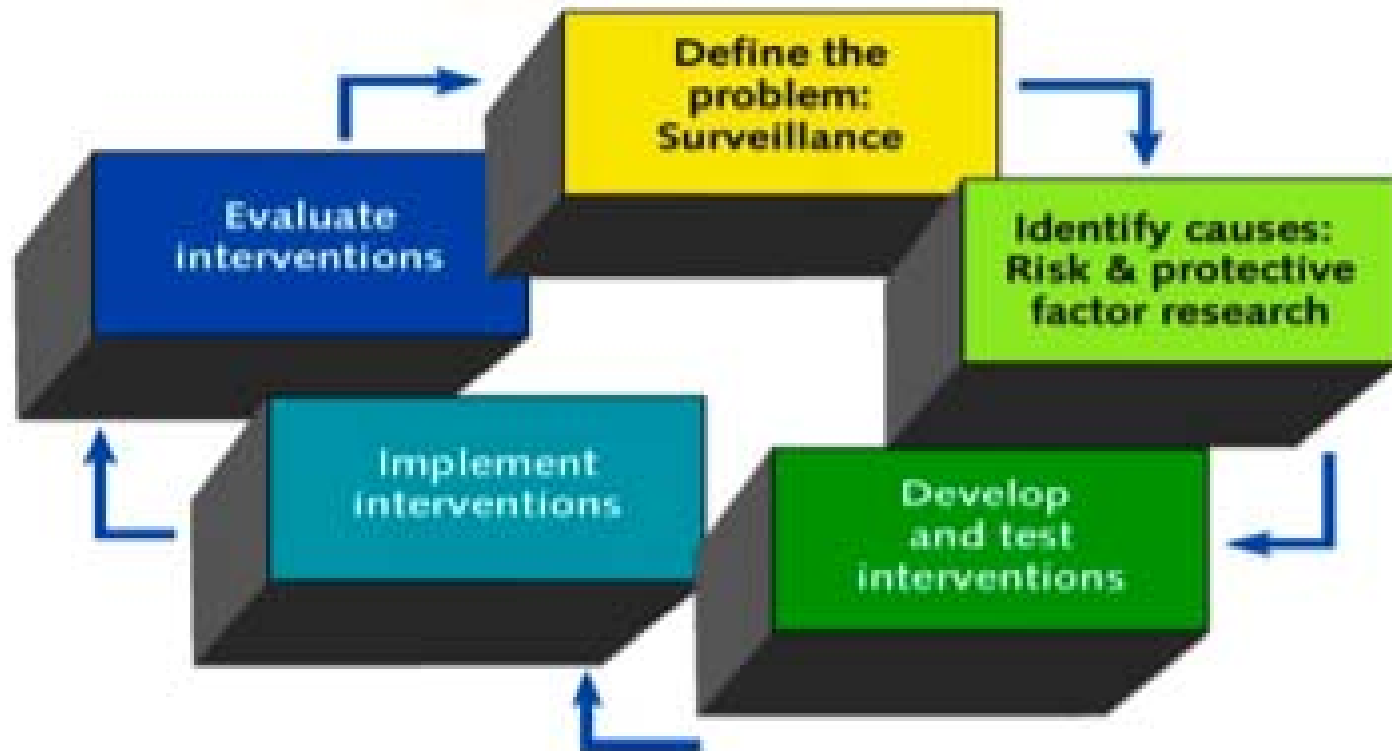
- Chris Coleman Town Administrator
- Michael Jackman Norfolk County D.A.'s Office
- Chip Wilder Parent
- Rosalie Fox Parent
- Deb Jacob Parent
- Jody Loeser Parent
- Lisa Higgins Parent
- Jay Perlman Needham Clergy Association
- Jennifer Hitt Needham Clergy Association
- Robert Windsor Needham Clergy Association
- Maddie Gifford Student
- Nithya Prabhala Student
- Nick Simmons-Stern Student

And still more...

- Alan Stern Pediatrician/School Physician
- Bill Tilburg Citizen
- Heidi Alpert Beth Israel Deaconness
- Deb Engler Prevention Coordinator
- Jane Ward Director, School Health Services
- Lori Goldenberg Teacher, Pollard Middle School
- Sandra Robinson Needham Community Council
- Merle Berman Pollard Middle School Administrator
- Paul Richards Principal, Needham High School
- Terri Larrabee PTC Representative
- Jamie Gutner Needham Council on Aging
- Ellen Barnes Citizen
- Carol Sullivan Preschools

The Public Health Approach

The Public Health Approach to Prevention



The Problem - Nationally

- There were over 30,000 deaths by suicide reported last year across all age groups
- There is an attempted suicide every two hours in the United States.
- There are as many as 23 attempts for each death by suicide.
- These rates increase every year.

The Problem in Massachusetts

- The latest rates indicate that 423 people died by suicide in a year.
- 13% of Massachusetts students had considered suicide.
- 12% had gone as far as to make a plan
- 6% had attempted suicide one or more times.

The Problem In Needham

- 11% (145) Needham High students had considered suicide
- 8% (102) had made a plan, and 4% (45) had made an attempt
- 67 Needham teens were evaluated for suicidality at Riverside or Newton-Wellesley Hospital last year.

Risk Factors

- Depression and other mental health disorders
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- History of abuse
- Being a sexual minority
- Serious bullying or victimization

Main Messages

- **Suicide is preventable if we all work together**
- Suicide is a public health problem that will require sustained focus and resources
- Suicide is a complex problem. Stress does not cause suicide.

Advocacy

- Discussions with local, state, and national government leaders
- Testified before Mass. Joint Committee for Public Health Oversight Hearing on suicide prevention
- Student speeches at Annual Leadership in Suicide Prevention at State House Day

What's different for the Needham teen?

What have we accomplished?

Training

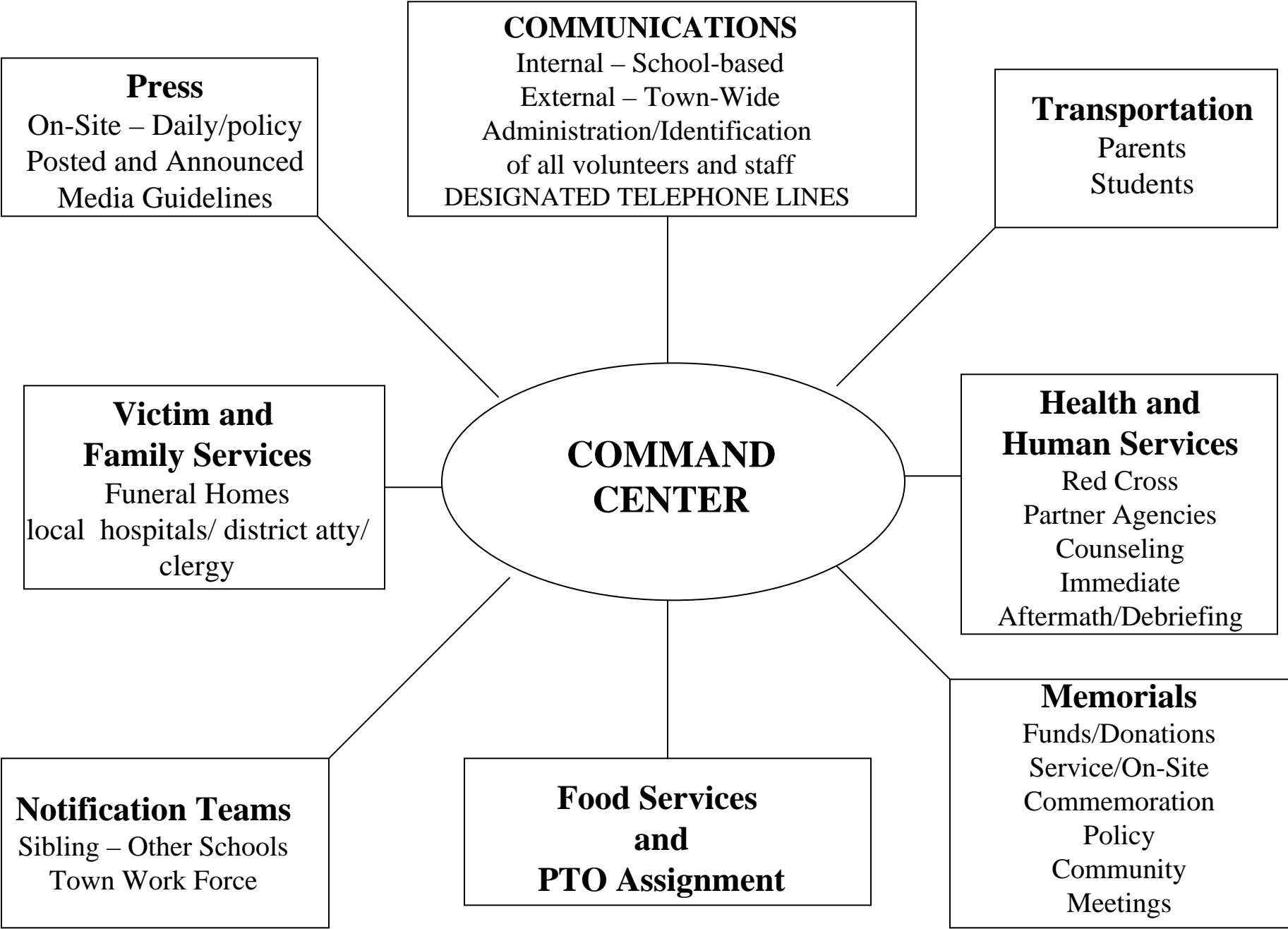
- Gatekeeper Training
 - QPR (Mental Health CPR)
 - Emergency Care Referral
 - Self-Injury
- Student Training
 - SOS (Signs of Suicide)
 - THTM (Teen Health Teaching Modules)
 - Senior program

Resources

- Fundraising to support programs
- Project SERV grant - additional staff
- Website
- Support for “Web of Safety” effort

What's different in the community?

- Flyer campaign
- “Out of the Darkness” campaign
- Creation of a library of suicide/depression related materials



Media

- Consulted about “Chronicle” program
- Consulted with local media, distributed guidelines
- Collaborated with Boston Globe about story

Postvention

- Developed summer crisis plan
- Established communication mechanisms
- Adopted a crisis-management model
- Developed recommendations for the media
- Made recommendations to update school protocols

Protective Factors

- Access to services
- Strong emotional connections
- Social and emotional skills
- Cultural and religious values
- Restricted access to lethal means

Recommendations

- Needham High School needs additional mental health resources.
- New efforts (SOS, QPR, THTM, protocols, etc.) should be evaluated and changed as necessary.
- Support the recommendation to the Town to hire a prevention specialist.
- Adopt postvention recommendations related to protocols and communications.
- Continue focus on SEL initiatives, particularly mentor homerooms at the HS.

**Suicide is preventable if we
all work together**

Needham Coalition for Suicide Prevention

www.town.needham.ma.us/NCSP/Index.htm

www.needhamacts.org (Under construction)