

Be the light of hope
on their darkest day



L·O·S·S
TEAM

OF LEWIS & CLARK
COUNTY AREA

What is a LOSS Team?



- Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) Team
- Made up of community members who have lost a loved one to suicide & behavioral health professionals
- Teams go to the scene of confirmed suicides following notification from law enforcement or the Coroner's Office

They provide:

- Support from longer term survivors. "I lost someone too."
- Resources
- Hope for life after loss. "You won't always feel this way"

LOSS Team cont'd

- Created in 1999 by Dr. Frank Campbell to address survivor needs
- We are the light house in the storm, guiding ships to port
- Evidence-based for connecting/engaging survivors to support services quickly
- 40 teams across the U.S. & several international locations
- LOSS Team LCA is 1st in Montana
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atpZYoS5tdc>



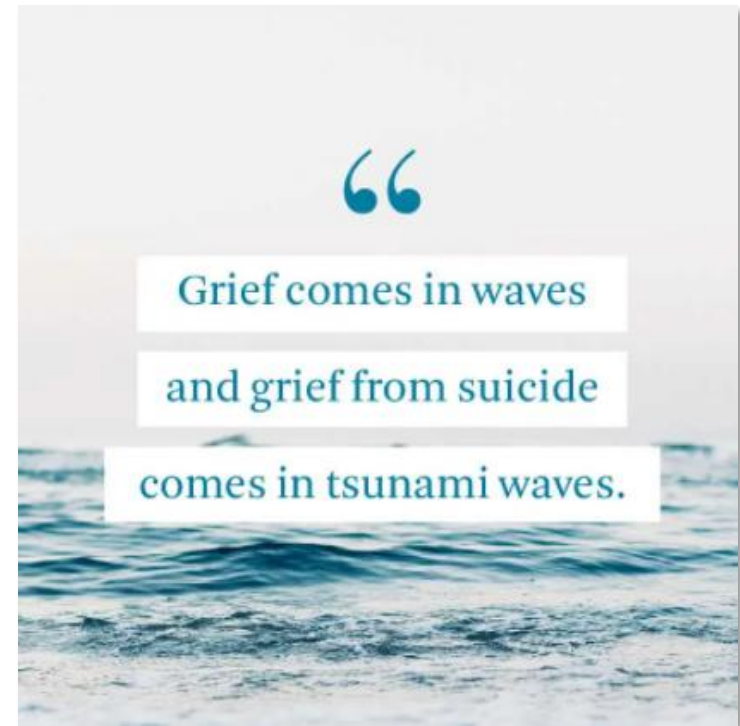
Suicide loss is traumatic



- Exposure to a suicide puts us at greater risk
- Intense emotional pain, and shock the ever-present question of “Why?”
- Common feelings of anger, shame, grief, confusion, hopelessness, self blame, denial, relief
- Sometimes in so much pain they want to join the loved one
- Concern about burial rights, sin and afterlife for the loved one who passed
- Family may be shunned by church, friends or friends don’t know how to help
- Stigma, stigma, stigma

Why LOSS Teams matter: Survivors need extra support

- Because of many of the reasons on the previous slide, they're not getting the help they need
- Increased likelihood of developing Complicated Grief (CG) Prolonged Grief Disorder (listed in DSM-5)
 - In CG, often stuck in most painful stages of grief
 - Can develop substance use, hoarding, other unhealthy behaviors to cope
 - 3x higher risk of suicide



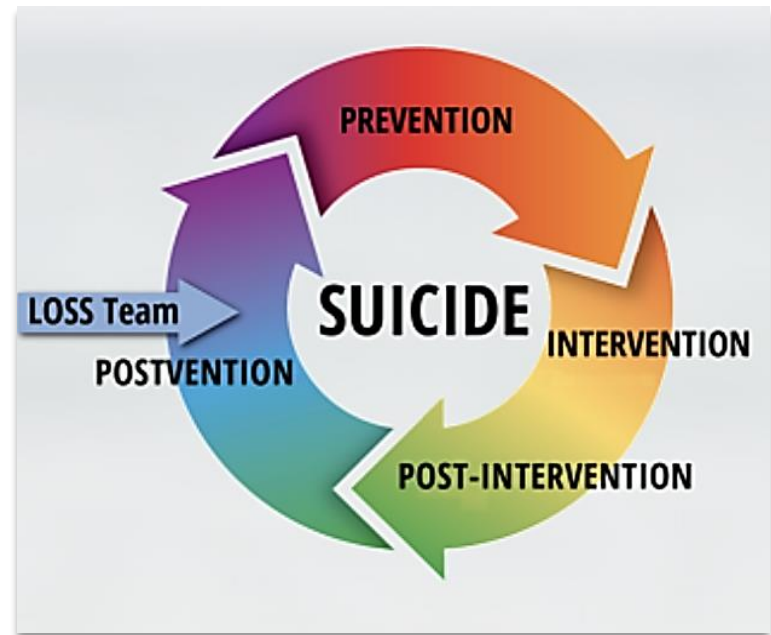
Postvention is prevention

Suicide postvention refers to an organized response in the aftermath of a suicide to facilitate healing associated with the grief and distress of suicide loss

- Reduces likelihood of suicide contagion & additional suicides
- Mitigates the impacts of a loss
- Facilitates healing

But most postvention services require survivor awareness to access

- Active postvention eliminates “the stumble effect”
- Drops typical service connection
From 4.5 years to 39 days



LOSS Team of Lewis and Clark County Area



L·O·S·S

T E A M
OF LEWIS & CLARK
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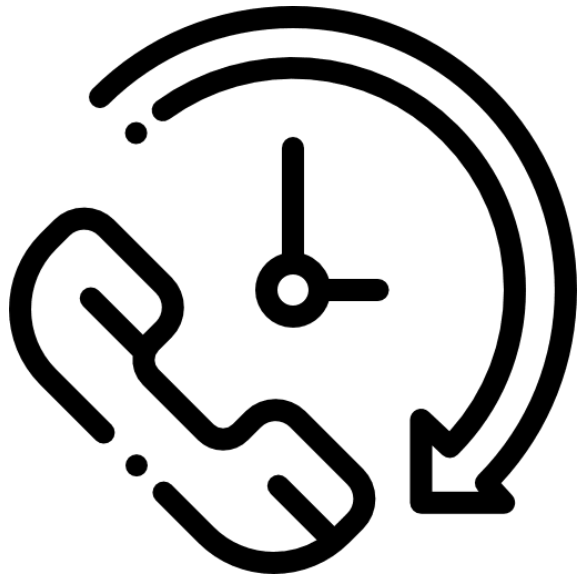
- Subgroup of Lewis and Clark Suicide Prevention Coalition and overseen by LCPH staff
- Funded by HB 118 via DPHHS (1-year grant)
- Partnership with LCSO coroner's office, which notifies the team of a confirmed suicide
- Leadership group of key stakeholders
- Consultant assisting with implementation – Brandy!
- Roll out began March 1, responded to several cases so far
- Plan to cover entire county and eventually expand to tri-county area (Broadwater, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark)

Services provided

- On-scene and delayed response
- Survivors who haven't received assistance can call coordinator to request a visit – 457-8970
 - Happy to assist past survivors who did not receive care before LOSS started
- Connection to services via CONNECT at scene and regular follow up calls
 - 1 week, 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 9 months & 1 year
 - Calls to show care, assess suicidality, connect to services, ID other survivors
- Two free sessions with a grief counselor via partnership with Awareness Network
- Resource materials, including activity books for youth to understand suicide grief



A typical day on call...



- Day shift or night shift (8 – 8)
- Clock-in/ Clock out
- Keep your phone nearby with ringer on
- Avoid alcohol and other substances
- Have childcare back-up
- Stay in town
- If the calls comes, be ready to respond

Even on call, you can still live your life!

- Want to go to the gym? Pack a change of clothes
- Going to dinner with your family? Take two cars or have a drop-off plan
- Need a nap? Go for it, just keep that phone nearby!

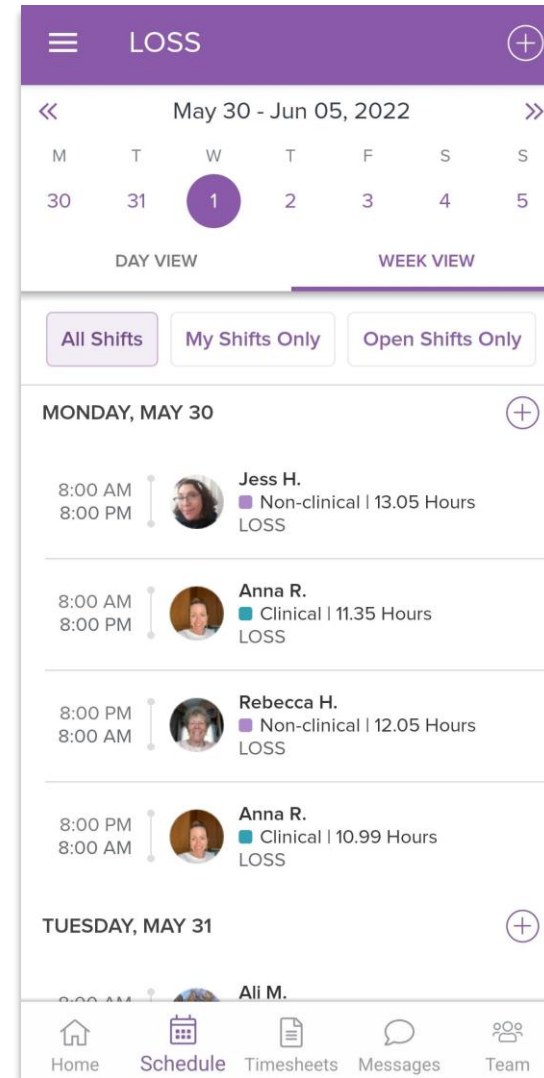
What happens at the scene

- Coroner's Office call goes to clinician on-call
- Clinician calls other volunteer on-duty, then meet up at pre-agreed location
- Arrive to scene together (strict buddy system!)
- Warm handoff of family from deputy coroner to LOSS Team
- Resources on-scene
- CONNECTION to other supports and therapeutic services
- This isn't therapy, also, clinicians who arrive to a particular scene won't obtain clients from there.
- Debrief after



Scheduling

- All scheduling, reporting and hotline can be accessed via your smart phone
- Flexible – based on your schedule. You choose your shifts
- Work around vacations
- 12 hours only for non-clinicians
- Clinicians can take bulk days/ weekends if they prefer
- Ability to trade shifts & chat function in Homebase to communicate with fellow volunteers



Volunteer support

- Strict buddy system for all calls
- Debriefing immediately after for non-clinicians
- Clinician to clinician support
- Monthly dinner meetings for learning, debriefing, problem solving together. All meals provided!
- Opportunities for additional training – QPR, MHFA, YMHFA, ASIST, Grief Institute, suicide bereavement, etc.
- CEUs for clinicians

We heal by helping others heal



- Turning hope and experience into action
- Those served often join LOSS later to assist other survivors
- Many find unexpected healing by serving on others

Volunteer with us!

- Complete application - <https://forms.gle/BkexMLXuiLnH4z9Y8>
- Training for volunteers, including on-scene etiquette
- Background checks
- Debriefing process to prevent re-traumatization
- Seeking volunteers now!
 - Clinicians, survivors (lived experience)
- Other volunteer roles:
 - Fundraising
 - Stuffing bags
 - Condolence cards
 - Follow up calls
 - Marketing
 - Outreach



Other volunteer opportunities

- Join the Lewis and Clark Suicide Prevention Coalition
- Become a trainer with us to educate the community about mental health and suicide
- Conduct outreach at events
- Help spread the word about safe storage with firearm-businesses, pharmacies and the general public
- Assist with planning the annual Tri-county Out of the Darkness Campus Walk or help on the day of!
- Help us plan the International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day in November



Other grief resources

○ Helena Area Suicide Bereavement Support Group

- fourth Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the St. Peter's Health Admin Building, 2500 E. Broadway St. Call Gloria (406)545-8645 or Jason (406) 490-3041

○ Charlie Health's Online Suicide Loss Support Group

- virtual support group meets first and third Fridays at 12 p.m.
<https://bit.ly/charliehealthsupport>

○ Tamarack Grief Resource Center

- Grief Support Groups, grief counseling, grief camps call (406) 541-8472

○ Healing Conversations

- gives survivors the opportunity to speak with volunteers, who are themselves loss survivors. Learn more at <http://pos.li/2h1q4e>

Questions?

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