

# WHY UNIFORM DEATH REPORTING STANDARDS MATTER

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Project Zero

N.E.W. Mental Health Connection



# Currently in the Tri-County

- The Connection’s footprint is Calumet, Outagamie and Winnebago Counties
- Child Death Review, Overdose Fatality Review and Adult Suicide Death Review



County “A”	County “B”	County “C”
Paper files	Electronic files	Paper files
Coroner	Coroner	Medical Examiner
Very engaged	Minimally Engaged	Engaged
3 Review teams	2 Review teams	0 Review Teams

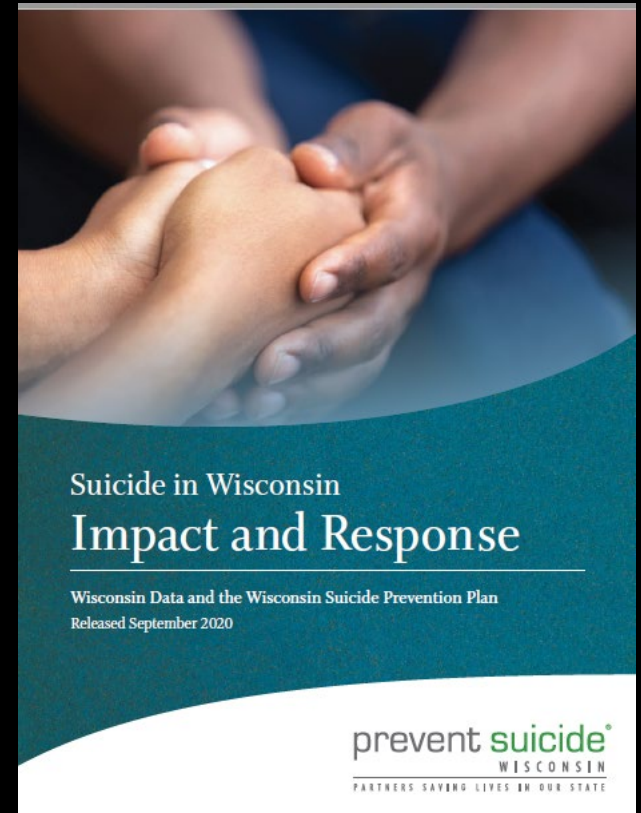
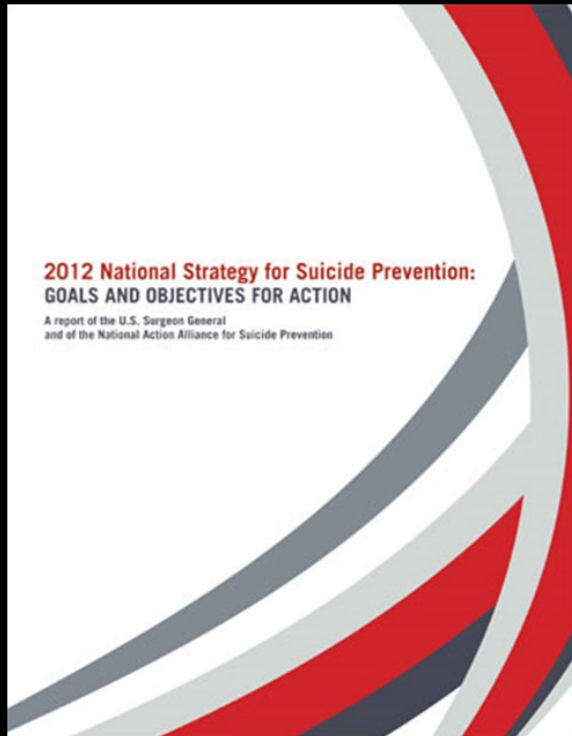
# Challenges



- Data collected on deaths requiring an investigation (suicides) vary greatly by County and office
  - The necessary data points to do effective suicide prevention work are not collected in a consistent way
  - Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System is not mandatory and tends to be a few years behind-delaying prevention efforts
  - Quality and comparability of data collected is hampered due to not having a standardized reporting/investigation tool
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# “Improve Data and Surveillance”

Richard McKeon PH.D, Chief, Suicide Prevention Branch of SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration-lead government agency) reports comprehensive [suicide prevention should be data driven](#) ....sustained by a strong state infrastructure.



**Strategy 4:** Improve Surveillance of Suicide and Evaluation of Prevention Programs.

**4B-Work in collaboration with existing organizations to standardize and enhance capacity for investigating and reporting suicide deaths.**

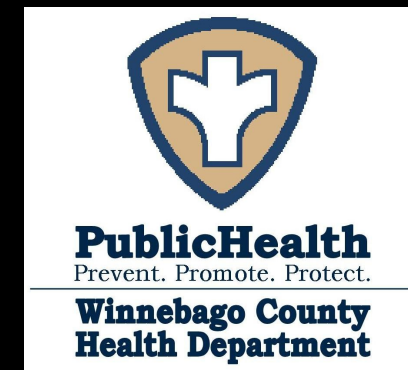
# Tools for Suicide Investigation

## Psychological Autopsy

An investigation into a person's death by reconstructing what the person thought, felt, and did before death, based on information gathered from personal documents, police reports, medical and coroner's records, and interviews with family and friends.



Suicide Investigation  
Forms that are used in a few different states (CO, UT) and communities (WI)

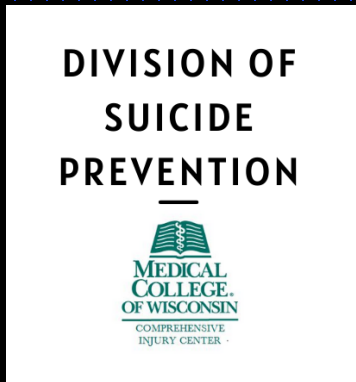


# History of the Suicide Investigation Form

- Winnebago County CDRT Suicide Prevention Recommendation
- Suicide data limited, incomplete and cumbersome to collect
- Current data resources like the CDC or WISH lag behind by years and may not adequately capture risk factors for specific populations.
- INVESTIGATIVE TOOL to guide the collection of data that will directly improve prevention efforts resulting reduced suicides over time; a better understanding of factors leading to a death by suicide.
- Develop a standardized Suicide Report Form which can be used by Coroner to record information that would be relevant to identifying risk factors with ultimate goal of effective prevention efforts.



# Suicide Investigation Form Supporters



**Suicide Prevention Resource Center**  
About Suicide Effective Prevention Resources & Programs Training News & Highlights Organizations

**SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE 1 (800) 273 TALK** 8 2 5 5

**New from the Weekly Spark**

**Veterinarians Work to Prevent Suicide as Study Finds Increased Risk: "There Is Absolutely Nothing Weak about Asking for Help"**  
March 01, 2019

**KANSAS: Task Force Recommends Adding State Coordinator for Youth Suicide Prevention**  
March 01, 2019

**CALIFORNIA: California Chef Aims to Help Restaurant Workers Prevent Suicide**  
March 01, 2019

**Prescription Opioid or Benzodiazepine Abuse and Suicidal Ideation in Older Adults**  
February 22, 2019

**The Corps' Suicide Rate Is at a 10-Year High. This is How the Marines Plan to Address It.**

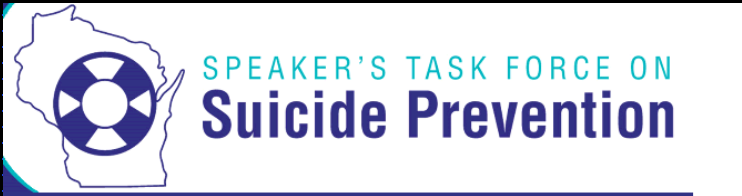
**WISCONSIN: Suicide prevention group creates action plan**  
March 18, 2016

**News Type:** Weekly Spark, Weekly Spark News  
**State:** Wisconsin

The Northwestern.com

The Winnebago County Child Death Review Team recently released 11 recommendations for ways that Wisconsin communities can help prevent suicides. The overall goal is to identify and reduce risk factors and increase available support. The recommendations address key groups in the community including educators, community organizations, and others who work with youth; parents; youth; and the media. Recommendations include creating a standardized suicide report form to help identify risk factors, with the goal of developing effective prevention strategies; educating educators, parents, and youth about risk factors, how to address them, and available resources; and developing interventions and safe messaging for dealing with the aftermath of a suicide. The recommendations were discussed at a town hall meeting, which was one of 10 forums held across northeast and central Wisconsin in February and March. Input from these 10 town halls will be used to help develop a statewide call to action to be held in Madison on May 5.

**Spark Extra!** Learn about the use of state-level Child Death Review Teams as a source of information for suicide prevention efforts.



# The Suicide Investigation Form

## How it is used

- Implementation of the form at the request of our coroner
- Interviews can be done in any fashion, anywhere. (Over the phone, in person etc.)
- A casual conversations versus an interview with the form as a guide
- Families may or may not be receptive.
- Elapsed time since event is a judgement call.





Sample:

\* Relationship problems; intimate and familial

\* Social Isolation

\* Issues with friends

<b>Intimate Partner Problems:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Last 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> Last 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> None  <input type="checkbox"/> Argument <input type="checkbox"/> Breakup <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<b>Intimate Partner Violence:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Last 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> Last 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> None  <table><tr><td><b>Type:</b></td><td><b>Victim:</b></td><td><b>Perpetrator:</b></td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Verbal</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Emotional</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Physical</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr></table>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Victim:</b>	<b>Perpetrator:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/> Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>														
<b>Relationship Problems with Family (other than intimate partner) -(decedent issue with family)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Last 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> Last 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> None																
<b>Family Circumstances (for youth primarily)-</b> <table><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Intact family</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Parent Divorce</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Incarcerated Parent</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Single parent home</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Parent Separation</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Parent in the Military</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Foster care/out of home placement</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Sibling taken out of home</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> On going family discord</td></tr></table>		<input type="checkbox"/> Intact family	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent Divorce	<input type="checkbox"/> Incarcerated Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Single parent home	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent Separation	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent in the Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Foster care/out of home placement	<input type="checkbox"/> Sibling taken out of home	<input type="checkbox"/> On going family discord						
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<b>Social Isolation:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In the last 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> In the last 2 weeks <b>Notes:</b>	<b>Relationship Problems with friends:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> In the last 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> In the last 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> None  <b>Type:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Argument <input type="checkbox"/> Rumors <input type="checkbox"/> Peer Pressure <input type="checkbox"/> Other															



# Sections of the Suicide Investigation Form

\* Religious  
Affiliation and  
participation

\* Education  
and School  
Concerns

\* Harassment/  
Bullying

\* Employment  
information  
and Concerns

\* Insurance  
and Financial  
concerns

\* Military  
Status

\* Chronic  
Medical  
conditions or  
life changing  
diagnosis

\* TBI

\* Mental  
Health  
diagnosis

\* Last seen by  
a healthcare  
provider

\* Mental  
Health  
Medication  
and history of  
commitments

\* ACES

\* Addiction  
Issues

\* Legal  
Involvement

\* Primary  
Means of Injury

\* Suicide Note

\* Firearm  
information

\* Signs prior to  
death

- **“Prevention is only as good as the data which is only as good as the questions asked.”**
- Guide investigators to ask relevant comprehensive questions to inform prevention
- Provides a ready to use tool that is consistent and captures suicide risk factors
- Produces information that can be used to develop suicide prevention recommendations/strategies for a specific population.

## Benefits of the Suicide Investigation Form





## Data Summary 2017-2019

- Men died at over 2x the rate of women
- Average age 34
- Only 30% left a suicide note
- Firearm was used in 60% of deaths
- Some college education or less had higher number of suicides
- 70% were employed
- Almost 50% had a physical health issue
- 70% had a history of problematic alcohol use

**Standardize use of the form across the Tri-County**

**Inform Adult Suicide Death Review**

**Intentional adult suicide prevention**

# Adult Suicide Death Review



- First review earlier this year; an expanding process and team
  - **Suicide Investigation Form (SIF)** provides valuable information to the review team that is NOT contained in the police reports, medical records or general coroner report
  - **Data Review** on every suicide (coroner file review guided by the SIF)
    - The data reviews provide high level trends across the County
  - **Case Review** on suicides that have a completed SIF (next of kin interviewed)
    - In depth look at events leading up to individual decedents death by suicide to identify opportunities for suicide prevention recommendations
-

# COLLABORATION MAKES THE MAGIC HAPPEN

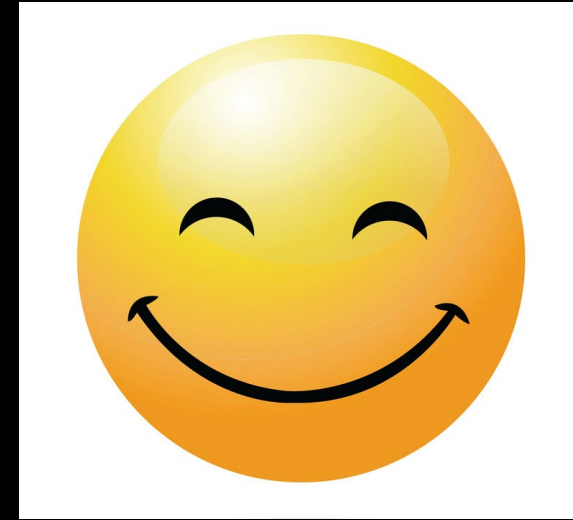


## Partners who created the SIF:

- New Mental Health Connection
- Winnebago County Coroner's Office
- Suicide Prevention: Community for Hope
- Suicide Prevention : Prevent Suicide Fox Cities
- Outagamie County Public Health
- Calumet County Public Health
- Winnebago Co. Human Services Prevention
- CHAW Data person
- Law Enforcement
- Public Health and/or local Suicide Prevention agencies can help with capacity for doing the work
- Utah and Colorado have standardized the use of a suicide investigation form
- Philanthropy to increase capacity

Questions???

Thank You!



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**Project ZERO**

EVERYONE MATTERS an initiative of



**The Connection**

N.E.W. MENTAL HEALTH