

Alliance December 8, 2023
Quarterly Meeting VIRTUAL
Meeting: 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Optional Orientation: 8:45 AM – 9:15 AM

THIS MEETING WILL BE RECORDED

Our Mission: The Alliance advocates and works to inform and strengthen Oregon's suicide prevention, intervention and postvention policies, services and supports to prevent youth and young adults from dying by suicide.

Our Vision: In Oregon all young people have hope, feel safe asking for help, can find access to the right help at the right time to prevent suicide, and live in communities that foster healing, connection, and wellness.

Equity Statement: To achieve our vision, we acknowledge the impact of white supremacy, institutionalized racism, and all forms of oppression. The Alliance endeavors to make Oregon a place where suicide reduction and prevention is achieved for people of all ages, races, ethnicities, abilities, gender identities, sexual orientations, socioeconomic status, nationalities and geographic locations.

Quarterly Attendance

December 8, 2023

Orientation

1. Annette Marcus
2. Emi Doumerc
3. Hunter Moen
4. Jenn Fraga
5. Jonathan Hankins

6. Justin Potts
7. Kelie McWilliams
8. Lois Tari
9. Megan Miller
10. Tim Handforth

Meeting:

1. Aaron Townsend
2. Aditi Khanna
3. Angela Perry
4. Annette Marcus
5. Carlos Benson Martinez
6. Catherine Bennett
7. Christina McMahan
8. Claire Kille
9. Coltra Lierman
10. Craig Leets
11. Deb Darmata
12. Del Quest
13. Emi Doumerc
14. Erin Porter
15. Feli Songolo
16. Genevieve Castle
17. Gordon Clay
18. Hunter Moen
19. Ishawn Ealy
20. Jamie Gunter
21. Jenn Fraga
22. Jill Baker
23. Jonathan Hankins
24. Julie Scholz
25. Justin Potts
26. Karen Cellarius

27. Kaylee Menefee
28. Kelie McWilliams
29. Kirk Wolfe
30. Kris Bifulco
31. Laura Rose Misaras
32. Linda Hockman
33. Lois Tari
34. Maria Gdontakis Pos
35. Megan Miller
36. Meghan Crane
37. Monica Parmley-Frutiger
38. Paige Hirt
39. Pam Pearce
40. Rachel Howard
41. Rosanna Jackson
42. Sage Franklin
43. Sandy Matthewson
44. Scott Vu
45. Shanda Hochstetler
46. Siche Green-Mitchell
47. Stephanie Willard
48. Suzie Stadelman
49. Tim Glascock
50. Tim Handforth



Agenda and Minutes

9:30 – 9:50 **Welcome, Introductions, Group Agreements, Agenda Overview**
Annette Marcus, Suicide Prevention Policy Manager

Review, Preview, Big View

Annette welcomed everyone and shared co-chairs Galli and Charlette are not available to join us today. Business items will move forward to the March meeting. Today we will be hearing from youth/young adults and organizations providing services to youth/young adults. There will also be opportunity in our small groups to talk about what we've learned and how it informs our work. Considering today's agenda, Annette reminded attendees of our **Group Agreements** and rather than reading all of them, focused on the highlighted ones below:

- We value being a community of care. Reach in and reach out.
- Be in the growth zone. All Teach and All Learn.
- Challenge oppression and racism.
- Intent does not always equal impact.
- Replace judgment with wonder.
- Be aware of how much you are speaking.
- Create space for others.
- Check for understanding.
- Speak your truth and be aware of the ways you hold privilege.
- Strive for suicide-safer messaging and language.

Annette reviewed the agenda: Jenn will report on the Alliance Youth Think Tank; guest speakers will share information about youth work in Clackamas County and YouthLine, and Jill will update the Alliance on YSIPP initiatives for 2024.

Capitol Days, February 12, 2024 – Alliance will partner with AFSP (sponsors of the event). This event is an excellent opportunity to meet with legislators, encourage interest in suicide prevention policy, and advocate for suicide prevention. The short session starts January 2024 and there will be far less legislation than in the



2025 long session. Kelly reported the Oregon Firearm Safety group is in the process of drafting safe storage of firearms legislation. The Alliance will closely follow this piece of legislation. If anyone is interested in attending Capitol Days, please contact Annette; there are 40 slots available.

National CDC Data News

Annette briefly reviewed the CDC data below and provided a link for additional information.

- The new provisional data show the number of suicides was 3% higher in 2022, increasing from 48,183 in 2021 to 49,449, the highest number ever recorded in the US. The previous all-time high was 48,344 in 2018. The rate of suicides per 100,000 increased from 14.1 in 2021 to 14.3 in 2022, the highest since 1941
- Rates for people in age groups 10–14, 15–24, and 25–34 declined 18%, 9%, and 2%, respectively, from 2021 to 2022

<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/disparities-in-suicide.html>

At the September quarterly meeting, Jill Baker, OHA, helped us look at Oregon data and helped us see how small numbers doesn't mean small impact.

One area that stood out in the data was that the 2021 rate of youth suicide went down: in 2028, the number was 95 and in 2021, the number was 59. So overall the numbers show a decrease.

Source: CDC WISQARS & OPHAT & WONDER data sets

Year	Number of youth suicides	Suicide death rate per 100,000	Rank among 50 states (50 is the lowest rate)
2014	97	12.9	12
2015	90	12	16
2016	98	13	15
2017	107	14.1	17
2018	129	16.9	11
2019	116*	15.3	11
2020	101†	13.3	18

Race/Ethnicity	2018	2019	2020	2021
	Deaths	Deaths	Deaths	Death
No-Hispanic Am Indian/ Alaska Native	3	2	2	1
No-Hispanic Asian / Pacific Islander	3	1	4	2
Non-Hispanic Black	5	3	1	7
Non-Hispanic two or more races	1	2	4	5
Non-Hispanic White	95	88	76	59
Hispanic, All races	19	17	13	16
Unknown Race	1	0	0	2
Total	127	113	100	92
2021	95	12.4	22	

*In addition to these deaths among youths in Oregon age 10-24, there were two suicide deaths among children younger than 10 in 2019

† In addition to these deaths among youth in Oregon age 10-24, there was one suicide death among children younger than 10 in 2020.

However, if you look at the numbers for non-white and Hispanic there isn't the same decrease. Annette reminded that Jill has challenged the Alliance to think carefully about this data and asked how to reduce suicide for all Oregon young people. When we hear from our guest today, one consideration is to think about how the Alliance can promote strategies that make a difference for all youth/young adults. Two follow-up questions were posed: Dr. Wolf suggested that we look at Oregon data over the last 10 years to get a fuller picture of the trends. Kelly suggested we take a look at who were most helped and those more negatively affected by Covid. Both suggestions are on the list for follow-up.

The following table displays the number of suicides among youth aged 24 years and younger by year and race/ethnicity, Oregon 2018- 202.

Source: CDC Wonder



Note: Oregon residents who died out of state are not included. Hispanic includes all races.

Annette announced that next up on the agenda is to turn our attention and focus to learning from youth and young adults who are joining us today to share their experiences, what they are seeing, and what they have learned. Today's presentations are not intended to be a comprehensive view from all youth in Oregon. The presentations are specific examples, we will continue to hear from groups throughout the coming year.

9:50 – 10:00 Small Group Introductions

Jenn introduced the small group breakout session, today's questions:

- What do you want to hear or learn about from youth and young adults to help inform our work around suicide prevention?
- If you are a youth or young adult, what do you think it is important for adults to know about supporting young people?

Jenn reminded attendees to maintain confidentiality, make the space safe for everyone, especially youth/young adults attending your group. Laura Rose added that within the group, honor who and what is shared, do not share outside of group without permission. We don't want people to experience trauma, so we don't share specific details about an experience. It's ok to talk about your experience without specific detail; do not share about someone else's without permission. What's said here stays here.

10:00 – 10:10 Small Group Report Out

Jenn facilitated the report out from the small group session, the following also includes highlights from chat comments:

- What would youth want to hear about resources?
- What would help students feel purpose and meaning in their life? How can we help students better figure out a career path, especially if their passion isn't what others think is best.



- What helps students feel trust and safety?
- How to help youth see their world worth living in?
- Is it more helpful to compensate youth with a monetary payment instead of a gift card?
- Meaningful involvement – more opportunity to be engaged.
- Respect and safety concerns; confidentiality and safety - not having to go to parents/family. Important to respect safety concerns within the family.
- Ask youth directly what they need not assume what they need.
- Peer support is important, really helpful to lots of youth.
- We talked about teen who are engaged in some of the prevention/intervention projects are able to share and how that feedback is used in program enhancement.
- We talked about how to support youth via social media since it is a big part of their lives while balancing the need for in-person connection/opportunities.
- How can we reach kids upstream, just more spaces to hear about what they need and how they are impacted by current programs.

10:10 – 10:20 Alliance Youth Think Tank Review, High Level Feedback, and Next Steps

Jenn Fraga, Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator

Jenn provided a high-level report on the information gathered during youth focus groups. She shared that Youth want to be involved and engaged in this work, however, attending monthly committee meetings is not accessible or feasible for many. Attending a one-time focus group provides an opportunity for youth and young adults to share their input and experiences in a meaningful way. To date, focus groups have provided:

- HB 3090 input on what youth, parents, and providers should know about the legislation.
- Student’s perception of Adi’s Act implementation and availability School Mental Health Resources
- Messaging for Crisis Lines – what’s working and what can be done better



Nikobi Petronelli with OHA co-created a focus group model that we use to engage youth and young adults. Youth and young adults ages 11-24 were recruited for the groups, primarily those currently in K-12 including peer specialists. We are also interested in hearing from recently graduated students. Recruitment included: email, flyer, social media, youth and young adult leadership groups, and youth and young adult serving agencies.

Jenn shared sample size is small, partially due to budget as we compensate focus group attendees for their time, however, the voices and stories shared in this space are still valid and matter. We can learn a lot from them. Keep in mind:

- Even if changes have been made, student perception of things impact their ability to reach out and utilize the services and resources.
- Some may say that only students with negative things to say come to these focus groups. However, we have had positive stories and good experiences shared in this space. We also do have engagement from many who feel that their voice and their life experience has been silenced or they haven't had the opportunity to share their experiences. I want to help give them space to share their truth.

Summary of 2023 focus groups:

School Mental Health Resources Group: purpose was to gauge student awareness of their school's suicide prevention plan/policy to gather antidotal information about Adi's Act implementation.

High level findings:

- Teacher / student interactions impact student's perception of safety and connection
- Important to have a space to go when feeling escalated / dysregulated.
- Training and education is vital
- Resources are difficult to access both at school and in the community
- Universal mental health and suicide intervention screenings could be beneficial.

Crisis Line Messaging Group: purpose was to learn how youth have heard about different crisis and help lines, which ones they have reached to, hear concerns



they have or difficulties in using the lines and use this information to create recommendations to OHA on messaging and advertising of lines.

High level findings:

- Inconsistent sharing practices of resources between schools
- Who shares the resources matter
- Calling it a ‘crisis’ line can lead to some not reaching out
- Would be helpful to have an idea of what happens when you use a crisis line
- Not everyone was aware of the SafeOregon Tip Line
- Students are more likely to talk with one another than ask for outside help

The information gathered during the focus groups is used to amplify student voice. It was shared through a presentation given at the OHA System of Care State Agency Committee and with the School Safety Task Force, Alliance committees, and today’s quarterly meeting. We will be creating an infographic / small packet to be shared with schools to hopefully disseminate beginning of 2024. The next round of focus groups will be held in March/April. Join the Alliance email listserv to receive notification about future groups and contact Jenn about holding groups at your school.

10:20 – 10:50

Youth Work in Clackamas County

Carlos Benson Martinez, Youth Housing Coordinator
Megan Miller, Assistant Suicide Prevention Coordinator,
Clackamas Suicide Prevention Coalition

Carlos and Megan provided background information on the Suicide Prevention Coalition, Clackamas County (SPCC), YouthLine, and the Youth and Young Adult Action Team (YYAAT), highlights from the presentation follow.

- **SPCC:** Launched October 2018 to bring community voice to the county suicide prevention efforts. The suicide prevention strategic plan was published in 2023, informed by input from over 200+ community members including those with lived experience. The plan establishes priority areas, strategic directions,



and action items. The priority areas are supported with action teams, one of which is the Youth and Young Adult Action Team (YYAAT).

- The **YYAAT** is comprised of volunteers, county staff, and community partners, the goals are to:
 - Increase student ability to identify a peer who may be struggling, knowledge of how to be of support and when to involve a trusted adult.
 - Increase parent/caregiver awareness of suicide prevention, including knowledge of warning signs, intervention, postvention, and how to navigate accessing help.
 - Increase education and implementation of effective suicide prevention activities/strategies for young people.
 - Increase the number of youth partners on our team.

YYAAT current projects are:

- Member **recruitment** (especially youth) includes promoting at in-person events, (recently Youth Town Hall, Happy Valley); distribution of information via professional networks and listserv; and social media (supported by Clackamas Co. Youth Action Board). YYAAT has seen a recent surge in membership.
- Two **apps** that will serve as educational resource hubs for suicide prevention and related issues. First, one inspired by Deschutes County's First Step app, the YYAAT is creating one app for youth and one for parents/caregivers to ensure these different populations receive relevant information in an accessible and appealing manner. The goal is to have the apps ready for the 2024 school year.
- Youth-oriented suicide prevention **trainings** that engage both youth and those who serve youth. Phase 1, partnership with Lines for Life, West Linn High School, and Oregon City Service-Learning Academy will provide QPR training for students and school staff. Phase 2, train QPR-certified youth to become trainers.

Carlos shared what it's like working with youth and how YYAAT partners with youth to elevate youth voice. We are learning side by side with youth, learning



and growing together. We support youth leadership and partner with youth to create pathways for youth to share what they have learned. We also support youth with finding jobs in this work if they are interested.

Jenn thanked Carlos and Megan for their presentation and the work they are doing.

10:50 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – 11:30 YouthLine Panel

Craig Leets, Kaylee Menefee, Genevieve Castle, Rosanna Jackson, and Aditi Khana

Craig introduced panel members and gave a brief overview of the presentation before handing over to Kaylee who shared. He also shared that the presentations will include responses to the questions posed by the Alliance about what staff and volunteers are hearing from youth and barriers to youth reaching out. Kaylee opened the panel presentation with background information on YouthLine:

- **YouthLine** is a teen-to-teen youth crisis and support service provided by Lines for Life. It operates a national helpline that provides crisis support and referrals via call, text, and chat and is answered by volunteers (age 15-24 years old) daily from 4pm-10pm PST and by adults at all other times. YouthLine was conceived and launched by youth volunteers in 2000. From 2000-2013 it was open 4 days a week, from 4-10PM, and staffed by 2 full time staff and 9 volunteers who answered 1400 contacts.

Today's Youthline has call centers in Portland, Bend, Warm Springs Reservation and will soon open at McDaniel High School. In 2022:

- Approximately 25,000 contacts
- 192 youth dedicating over 23,500 volunteer hours
- 20 staff supporting youth crisis response, youth development and mentoring, and classroom education and community outreach



Gen, supervisor for youth volunteers, shared about the most frequent concerns from youth who are contacting YouthLine and noted there is a great deal of overlap and these areas are interrelated:

- Mental Health Concerns: anxiety, depression, panic
- Family Issues: feeling unloved, unwanted, unaccepted; can't be themselves around family, divorce – these issues overlap with MH concerns
- Loneliness/Isolation: feeling misunderstood; feel they can't go to people around them for help
- Relationship Issues: how to navigate romantic relationship, what's health/unhealthy; is this normal, how to handle conflict; this also ties into MH concerns
- Friend Issues: healthy/unhealthy relationships, similar to family and romantic relationships; being left out plays into feeling loneliness
- Suicide: all of these topics overlap and contribute to feeling overwhelmed;
- Academic Stressors: can feel like a MH concern as well; pressure of balancing academic life is a huge stressor for youth
- Self Harm: not coping well with stress from the issues above and feeling lonely/isolated and no one to talk with about stressors

Craig introduced Aditi Khana, a member of the Alliance and a volunteer for YouthLine. She shared her perspectives about the most common themes she sees and concurred with Gen's presentation on the various areas. The biggest concern Aditi sees is stressors related to school. Academic issues (for example, grades or worrying about getting into college). Another is familial issues (for example, no one to talk with or not wanting to be a burden to family.) In the last year, Aditi has seen more openness to sharing and talking about MH. Youth are feeling better about reaching out and being more open to talking about mental health. When it comes to youth suicide, accessing resources can be a challenge. No access to health insurance or parental barriers can make it more difficult to find support. The heavy load of school counselors is a barrier as well. School counselors generally are responsible for so many students it makes it hard for an individual students to get the help they need when they need it.

Craig thanked Aditi for her thoughts and perspective. Craig shared that a YouthLine volunteer who was unable to join us today, also shared her thoughts to



the questions posed by the Alliance. Tanvi Vemulapalli shared that on the line they hear both feelings of loneliness and feelings there is no one they can trust as big concerns, which is super difficult to hear. Tanvi believes if more resources were available, it would really help particularly at schools. It would be comforting to students to know there are trusted professionals/adults and peers on campus. Students would benefit from safe places on campus as well.

Craig introduced Rosanna from Warm Springs and central Oregon and asked her to talk about what she is experiencing/observing. In going into schools to talk about suicide prevention Rosanna realizes that not all students take suicide seriously until something happens to their family. Rosanna sees that youth want to talk to youth and acknowledged the Clackamas Co QPR training as an excellent way to have youth available to talk to youth. She wonders how we will reach youth who do not take suicide seriously, it is so important. One way is youth camps, youth find it easier to share with peers and this setting makes it possible.

Gen added that what she finds hopeful is if we work with young people who still have so much life ahead of them, it makes a huge difference. Gen has worked with adults and sees if they had gotten help when they were younger it could have changed the trajectory of their lives. What needs to be different: peer support is powerful and it is clear that upstream education and support is the key. Talking about MH early on makes a big difference. Roseanna agreed with Gen and added that her own experience with both youth and adults tells the story of how earlier support makes a difference across the lifespan.

Craig echoed that YouthLine is so fortunate to have youth volunteers and acknowledged the power of the peer-to-peer support they provide. Those at YouthLine understand they are not the only resource for our community and shared a list of other services which is included in the YouthLine PowerPoint presentation as part of the meeting materials. For more information about YouthLine and materials, see www.theyouthline.org

Craig thanked the Alliance for the opportunity today and many thanks to the panel. Annette thanked them for today and the work they do every day and asked: For those of you answering the phones, are you finding that youth identify their



cultural identity or does it gradually unfold during the call? And, how does that impact the call?

Gen responded that generally it only comes up if the caller identifies ethnicity, race, and sexuality when it is relevant to the reason they are calling. For example, if the caller indicates being bullied because of race. For the most part they don't get that information. We do encourage volunteers to ask about pronouns, so we do have general information about gender. The volunteer prioritizes talking about why a caller has reached out and if the information about ethnicity, race, and sexuality is shared it is related to why they are calling then it becomes part of the conversation.

Craig added that YouthLine funding from OHA requires gathering of demographic information. Because we're focused on attending to the reason youth has contacted us rather than asking about race, ethnicity, and gender, we ask the caller to complete a survey after the call to gather demographic information. Our return rate on the survey isn't high so we don't have as complete a picture as we would like.

Annette thanked Aditi for sharing about seeing more openness to talking about MH and appreciates that MH care is becoming more normalized. Aditi shared it seems MH conversations are a more common topic than before and acknowledged that she attends a very good school. The openness she is seeing may not be the same across other schools.

Annette thanked the panel and introduced Jill Baker for an update on the YSIPP. Annette asked attendees to complete a quick Zoom poll that will be going out about 11:50..

11:55 – 11:50 YSIPP Initiatives Update
Jill Baker, OHA

Jill shared that goal for today is to update the Alliance on progress of the 2023 YSIPP initiatives including a highlight of areas of strength and barriers we



encountered. The table below is a “by the numbers” of the 160 initiatives for 2023.

Status	Number of Initiatives	Percentage of Total
Ongoing Work: on track	99	62%
Ongoing Work: not on track	9	5.5%
Time Limited: achieved	19	12%
Time Limited: not achieved	8	
More Work to Do (on track)	21	
Not Continuing in 2024	4	2.5%

Jill was clear that we have a lot to celebrate, a great deal went well in 2023. Where we wanted/expected to be: 138 initiatives (86%) are on track or completed (for example, Big River training, Alliance). There are 9 or 5.5% that still need work. Time limited, 19 of the 160 total (12%) are complete and will come off the list; 8 of the time limited have not been achieved and need additional work. There are 21 initiatives that are on track and need more work. Jill summarized the numbers:

- Where we wanted to be / expected to be: 138 (86%)
- Not where we want to be: 18 (11%)
- Not continuing: 4 (2.5%)

A lot went well in 2023. Jill asked that attendees write one thing they are most excited about or proud of in 2023. Write it in the chat and to not send until she gives the signal. The completed exercise created a “Zoom waterfall” of 2023 accomplishments when Jill gave the signal to “send”. Schools, Latinx, conference, LGBTQ mini grants, collaboration, ASIPP, expansion of YYAAT, and so much more. Jill reminded us that so much went well, 86%! She walked through the following (stop, start, continue).

Initiatives that experienced barriers and why.



- Policy Options Package (request from OHA for funding) was not included in the 23-25 legislatively approved budget. What that means is the request for full funding for suicide prevention, adult plan not funded and a barrier for full implementation.
- Not able to find staffing/contractor for youth engagement work; haven't found a contractor for the funding available (some funding but not enough).
- Youth SAVE went out for competitive bid – caused delays particularly for child welfare department, caused delays.
- Caring Contacts work continues to experience barriers in trying to figure out getting payment to hospitals for follow up to BH crisis in ER. Barrier since 2017 and continues.
- Other initiatives are not on track due to staff bandwidth.

Initiatives that are not continuing

- 1.2.3.2 Safe + Strong Website will continue to be a reliable place to find Oregon resources and supports. (COVID funding has run out so this is off list)
- 2.3.3.2 School Suicide Prevention and Wellness Specialists (also called the Adi's Act support team) provides support to school districts for writing, implementing, and updating Adi's Act plans (5.0 FTE) (OHA funding support will move from 5 to 1 FTE)
- 3.1.1.2 The Alliance will pursue involvement and seek representation on the Oregon Health Policy Board's Behavioral Health Committee and monitor OHA's efforts to implement recommendations of the HB 3090 report. (Alliance request)
- 3.3.2.1 Emergency Department guide for children and families is available and distributed regularly to hospitals in Oregon. (hasn't been updated in 4 years, it is a print document that will no longer be printed)

What will look different in 2024

- SSPW initiative (change from 5.0 FTE to 1.0 FTE + changing scope)
- Adding culturally specific suicide prevention initiatives
- Adding youth-serving state agency initiatives
- Adding more Child and Family Behavioral Health initiatives
- GLS initiatives ending in June 2024 (OHA will apply for new GLS grants)



Annette thanked Jill and reminded Alliance committee members that their work will show up in these various initiatives.

11:55 – 12:00 Adjourn

Before adjourning the meeting, Annette wished everyone a happy and restorative season no matter what you holiday celebrate. Thank you for joining us today.