



## PC CARES Local Steering Committee Bulletin

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*November 3, 2020*

Hello LSC,

The past few months marked new beginnings for all of us: The beginning of colder, longer nights, a new school year, and the beginning stages of our re-imagined PC CARES project. Since pivoting to school-based virtual learning circles, we have some successes, progress updates and plans to share with you this month.

### PC CARES At School

School staff, mental health professionals, and social workers are the target audience for “PC CARES At School,” which will offer learning circles virtually, facilitated by Lisa Wexler, Diane McEachern, Roberta Moto, Tanya Kirk and Josie Garnie. The learning circles will be part of a master’s level UAF course (Rural Development 693) which will count toward certified school staff’s licensing and as Continuing Education (CEs) for therapists and licensed social workers.

Schools play an integral role in youth wellness and are one of the few places in our villages with the necessary infrastructure for remote learning possibilities. This new, smaller target audience was invited to take a survey before training was offered. The survey is extremely similar to the Steps toward Prevention Survey we collected in Savoonga, Gambell, Shishmaref, Brevig Mission, and Teller, but we made some improvements, and added in a few questions about school policy. At the end of the school year, we will follow-up with the same people and invite them to take the survey again. Comparing their answers “before” and “after” will let us see if and how their attitudes, knowledge and behavior about suicide prevention and youth wellness have changed. A total of 399 people took the baseline survey, with a little over half in the Northwest Arctic region. Preliminary results will be shared with the LSC once analyzed.

### Successful webinars with Northwest Arctic Borough School District & Bering Strait School District

Both school districts have been generous with their staff time, offering slots to PC CARES during all-staff inservice training and dedicated professional development time. Lisa delivered a webinar that covered: (1) What research tells us about suicide, nationally, statewide, and in Northwestern Alaska; (2) what works to prevent suicide; (3) prevention at multiple levels: universal, selective, and indicated prevention; (4) what each kind of prevention looks like in Northwestern Alaskan communities; (5) how the school can work to support each level prevention.

Diane also talked about the upcoming RD 693 course to encourage enrollment by school staff, and John Solomon from Maniilaq Association shared with NWABSD about the client options and on-boarding, building care teams for youth, and Maniilaq’s “no wrong door” policy. Tanya, Roberta, Josie and Lauren helped out during the training by answering participants’ questions in the chat. I have also enclosed the NWABSD’s de-identified questions and our answer. I will send the presentation we gave with the slides for our meeting together.

<b>PC CARES by the Numbers: School Trainings</b>	
<b>206</b>	<i>NWABSD staff from 11 communities logged in to the 4-hour virtual training we provided, titled “What Can Schools Do? Using What We’ve Learned to Prevent Suicide in the Northwest Arctic” on October 19th</i>
<b>164</b>	<i>BSSD staff in 14 villages attended the 2-hour virtual suicide prevention training and introduction to PC CARES At School on October 23rd</i>

### PC CARES At Home

PC CARES Care Packages are becoming a regular feature of the project—a way for us to stay together, even when we are apart. We have revised the budget to include the hiring of a person who can help us put the packages together. Local Steering Committee members and key partners on the project will help determine the concepts and content of the packages, and this person will put them together, address and send for us. We expect to hire the person in the next month. Care packages so far have covered:

- June 2020 – Small Acts of Kindness
- August 2020 – Talk with Youth
- October 2020 – VBC packages with Small Acts of Kindness
- November (Forthcoming) – Emotional Support

<b>PC CARES by the Numbers: Engagement from afar</b>	
<b>150</b>	<i>Care packages were sent to 11 different communities in August, encouraging people to have daily conversations with the youth in their lives</i>
<b>48</b>	<i>Number of active members the “PC CARES At Home” Facebook group (viewed, posted, commented in group). The group grew to 55 members after the social media giveaway for basketballs with Trickster Company design.</i>

### Publication Submitted

The past 2 years of collaboration and adaptation have taught us a lot. We catalogued the journey in an article, “Collaboratively Adapting Culturally-Respectful, Locally-Relevant Suicide Prevention for Newly Participating Alaska Native Communities” and submitted it for publication with the *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology*. The article was co-authored by Tanya Kirk, Roberta Moto, Diane McEachern, Lauren White, Caroline Bec, McGill University (in Montreal) Tara and Lisa. Here is the Abstract:

*Because suicide is deeply connected to local, historical, and relational contexts, effective suicide prevention strategies must balance between maintaining fidelity of evidence-based practices and adapting for the unique needs of diverse communities. Promoting Community Conversations to End Suicide (PC CARES) builds the capacity of local people in close-knit rural Alaska Native communities to take preventative actions based on their own relationships, roles, and priorities. In a series of learning circles, community members learn about different aspects of suicide prevention, apply the information to personal and cultural contexts, and develop plans for taking action—on their own terms—in their lives. Here, we describe the participatory process used to adapt PC CARES from one region of Alaska to another to maximize transferability, practicality and relevance in our partner communities. With the shared goal of promoting self-determined, evidence-informed, community-based suicide prevention, the adaptation process included balancing between comprehensiveness and understandability; subject appeal and utility; ease of use and comprehensiveness; and predictability and customizability, and negotiating agreements between researchers and community members. Lessons learned can be helpful to others working to navigate community-specific priorities and evidence-based approaches to develop interventions that can work across many different communities.*

For the full article text, contact us and we will mail or email you the manuscript. It is still under review by the journal's editors, and may or may not be accepted for publication. If accepted, we will mail you a copy of the article.

## LSC Meeting Monthly

Every first Thursday of the month, the LSC will meet over Zoom to cover the projects' progress and gain your input and insight as local leaders in the region. The next call will be: **Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, at 11 am Alaska Time.** To join:

Call 1-669-900-6833

Meeting ID: 991 3069 6699 Passcode: 021771

And/or email Tara at [pccares@umich.edu](mailto:pccares@umich.edu) for the Zoom link.

Future calls will be on the following dates:

2020

December 3rd

2021

January 7th

February 4th

March 4th

April 1st

May 6th

As always, thanks for reading, and thank you for your service on our Local Steering Committee.