Zero Suicide in Juvenile Detention

Zero Suicide (ZS) is a proven framework that helps organizations build effective, evidence-based suicide prevention systems. Grounded in the belief that suicide deaths are preventable, ZS provides practical strategies to improve care, strengthen safety, and save lives. Seven core elements drive the framework.

Implementation Elements



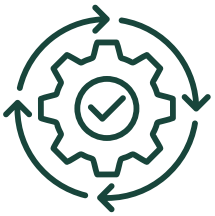
Lead

Create organizational culture change about suicide prevention.



Train

Equip members to identify suicide risk and support those in need.



Improve

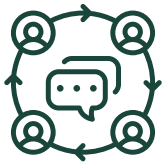
Create organizational culture change about suicide prevention.

Clinical Elements



Identify

Evidence-based screening and assessment of suicide risk for youth in detention..



Engage

Pathways to care for youth at elevated risk.



Treat

Use of evidence-based, suicide-specific interventions to treat suicidality.



Transition

Long-term support for individuals during transitions after discharge.

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This project is led by Michigan State University's CAPACITY Lab. To bring Zero Suicide to your detention center, email Brittany Rudd at bnrudd@msu.edu.

A Youth-Informed Approach

The Youth Ambassador Board (YAB) brought together Black young adults with relevant lived experience, including involvement with juvenile detention. Members partnered with our team to provide feedback on findings from our Zero Suicide study and help strengthen the model to better support Black youth in juvenile detention settings. They made dozens of recommendationss. Some examples are below.

Welcome Home Package



This package was a YAB recommendation emphasizing the importance of supporting young people transitioning out of detention by connecting them with essential resources such as food, transportation, employment support, medical and dental insurance, clothing, and hygiene products. A Welcome Home Care Package could include transportation funds, grocery or food pantry information, health insurance resources, hygiene supplies, clothing, and other necessities.

- **Assess suicide risk at multiple timepoints.**
- **Reassess risk at critical time points when emotions are elevated.**
- **Expand support to all youth, rather than only youth with higher risk levels.**
- **Create more one-on-one support opportunities.**
- **Increase opportunities to discuss feelings with therapists.**
- **Improve avenues (and, to the extent possible, anonymous options) for youth to ask for help.**
- **Ensure youth know about all available resources in and out of detention.**
- **Create peer support groups where young people can connect with other peers.**
- **Provide skills for stress management, identification of triggers, and related coping strategies.**
- **Change protocol for high-risk youth (e.g., those on suicide watch). Suicide watch can be traumatic and feels like punishment.**
- **Teach staff ways they can connect to and emotionally support youth (e.g., active listening skills, reflective empathy) to help build trust.**
- **Create more effective training for corrections officers to serve as mentors and identify youth struggling with mental health.**
- **Encourage more family interaction (e.g., visitation hours, weekly progress notes to families, more family meetings or check-ups).**
- **Assess for gang affiliation-related safety, trauma, or mental health.**

Youth Ambassador Board: *Anthony S., Chameika D., Christina D., Diamond, Emone, Quadeem, Hannah, Jay, Jay J., JR, Justin W., KING, Marcus, Tiajah R.*

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