



AB Cares

Announcing AB Cares: a Community Response to Suicide

AB Cares is a community-based collaborative effort that seeks to prevent suicide across the life span and support all who are impacted by suicide. **AB Cares**, a community coalition, serves as a community response to suicide.

"Suicide is a major public health issue in Massachusetts. 642 deaths were ruled as suicides in 2015," said Larry Berkowitz, Director, Riverside Trauma Center.

AB Cares includes all residents of the community as youth, middle-aged men, and seniors are at the greatest risk of death by suicide. For Acton and Boxborough, the comprehensive 2016 Youth Risk Behavior survey revealed that: 15% of high school students seriously considered suicide in the last 12 months. For the middle school, 5% of sixth-grade respondents and 11% of eighth-grade respondents report having seriously considered attempting suicide during the twelve months prior to the survey.

"Our vision is a community that is resilient and responsive to the tragedy of suicide," said Rachel Sagan, Executive Director of the Acton-Boxborough United Way. "We hope to provide social support to fight stigma, provide resources on suicide prevention and mental health, and bring suicide prevention training to the community."

"Our mission includes supporting those bereaved by suicide," said Deborah Garfield, LICSW, Director of Outpatient Services, Eliot Community Human Services.

"We hope to create healthy connections for our consumers to counter isolation and depression," added Leslie May-Chibani, Assistant Director, Minuteman Senior Services.

"We hope to give all of our residents a sense of belonging," added Sagan.

Current Members of Core Group Include:

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Acton-Boxborough United Way
Danny's Place Youth Services

Eliot Community Human Services
Highrock Covenant Church representing Acton-Boxborough-Stow Clergy Association
Minuteman Senior Services
Riverside Trauma Center, a service of Riverside Community Care
Town of Acton Department of Health
Town of Acton Police Department – Youth Officer
Town of Acton and Boxborough: Community Services Coordinator

The program currently includes monthly meetings bringing this core group of experts together to discuss current issues and opportunities.

AB Cares is developing new resources on suicide prevention and mental health including on-line resources now available on the coalition member's websites. See [AB Cares Resources Document](#).

AB Cares will also develop community programs that support those who have been impacted by the suicide of a loved-one, friend or community member.

The AB Cares logo was created by Acton-Boxborough Regional High School junior Siraj Chokshi, whose design won a logo contest sponsored by the coalition. Explaining the thinking behind his design, Siraj shared, “When I was presented the challenge of making the AB Cares Coalition logo I focused on the aspects of caring and togetherness. The center image represents a sun rising on a field which while literally providing warmth and also serves to symbolize a new day with new experiences. From a design standpoint I attempted to use a limited palette of colors for an abstract design that contains an image in it.”

Thanks to Acton Rotary Club for their grant in support of AB Cares.

For more information contact:

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**Acton Boxborough
United Way**