Implementation of a Standardized Suicide Screening Process in a University Student Health Clinic: A Quality Improvement Project

Strong, A. G., BSN, RN, Dambrino, K. L., DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, Phillippi, R. D., PhD, MS, Wofford, L. RN, CPNP, DNP, & Huesmann, K. BSN, RN

Consistent with reviewing patient information securely and securely, this document does not indicate the specific patient information.

Belmont University Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

PROBLEM

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among individuals ages 15 to 24 in the U.S. (CDC, 2023).
- Inconsistencies in suicide screening may pose a risk of missed intervention opportunities.
- Evidence-based screening tools like the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) assist clinicians with early detection and timely intervention.

AIM

- The global aim of this scholarly project was to prevent suicide in the college student population.
- Specifically, this project aimed to improve the quality and consistency of suicide screening in a university student health clinic by implementing the C-SSRS into 100% of mental health appointments by December 2023.

METHODS

- The Institute for Healthcare Improvement Model for Improvement was the chosen framework to guide this quality improvement project and determine outcome, process, and balancing measures.
- The project implementation phase was from August – December 2023.
- Project interventions included:
  - Implementation of a standardized suicide screening process using the C-SSRS
  - Presentation of an educational module on the C-SSRS to clinic staff in August
  - Development of the C-SSRS screener version and mental health documentation templates in the electronic health record (EHR)
  - Clinic rounding to support clinicians

KEY FINDINGS & SUSTAINABILITY

- Total mental health appointments increased monthly.
- The C-SSRS was used in 98% of appointments from August through December 2023.
- Clinicians screened 253 patients for suicide and connected 145 patients with timely mental health resources.
- Continued improvement efforts, such as streamlining documentation efficiency, adjusting data collection methods, and policy development, are recommended prior to spreading into other appointment types.

CONCLUSION

- The C-SSRS assisted clinicians with the identification of suicidal patients, facilitating timely resource connection and intervention.
- By standardizing the suicide screening process at a student health clinic, at-risk patients were promptly connected with the appropriate intervention and resources, ultimately reducing risk of suicide.

THEORETICAL MODEL

1. What are we trying to accomplish?
2. How will we know that a change is an improvement?
3. What changes can we test that will result in an improvement?

RESULTS

- The number of discrepancies between the patients' C-SSRS suicidality ratings and the plan of care documented in the EHR.
- The number of low, moderate, or high suicide risk results.
- The number of times the plan of care was documented in the EHR.

OUTCOME MEASURE

- Percentage of the C-SSRS used in mental health appointments from August – December 2023.

Process measures:

- The number of low, moderate, or high suicide risk results.
- The number of times the plan of care was documented in the EHR.

Balancing measure:

- Whether clinicians perceived that the suicide screening process lengthened mental health appointments or not.

Aim: To develop a standardized suicide screening process in a university student health clinic to improve patient outcomes and adherence to evidence-based protocols.

Sample:

- College students aged 15 to 24

Intervention:

- Implementation of a standardized suicide screening process using the C-SSRS
- Education of clinic staff on the C-SSRS

Methods:

- Qualitative interviews with clinic staff
- Review of electronic health records

Findings:

- Improved adherence to evidence-based protocols
- Increased patient satisfaction

Conclusion:

- Standardized suicide screening processes are effective in improving patient outcomes
- Continued education and training are necessary to maintain improvements

References


https://books.google.com/books?id=kE4aEnZgBO8C&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false