

# **The role of the International Safe Community Movement in preventing suicidal events.**

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## **Safe Communities movement**

The “Safe Communities” movement was developed by a number of communities around the world in order to enhance safety, but its formal consequences were developed by the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion at the Karolinska Institutet of Sweden under the auspices of World Health Organization. This movement aims at supporting communities in their safety enhancement activities. At first it was involved in safety promotion through unintentional injury prevention activities and is now developing many projects with a *special focus on violence or suicide*.

Currently, more than one hundred and eighty communities are officially designated a “Safe Community”. To be part of the movement a community must put forward a program fulfilling different explicit principles and criteria. These are based on the theoretical and practical knowledge concerning safety promotion and community mobilisation. The effectiveness of such programs has been demonstrated on several occasions

## **Community suicide prevention within the framework of “Safe Communities”**

Community suicide prevention and interventions to ease the pain of suicide within a community are wider concepts than just suicide prevention as traditionally interpreted by the health and psychological establishments. More so, mental health promotion and promotion of safe, healthy communities where people do not commit suicide or if they do or attempt and fail, societal responses go beyond of what has been traditionally offered by health institutions.

Safe Communities is a specific structured model to work in communities with the purpose of preventing injuries and violence, and promoting safety. In this particular case the model has to do with what we do to prevent suicide and promote safety in relation to suicide and suicide attempts. But it also means interventions to strengthen communities that have been affected by suicides. The fundamental idea behind developing a Safe Community is to address all kinds of safety issues and prevent injuries in all areas, encompassing all ages, environments and situations, and involving both non-governmental and governmental community sectors. This includes suicides and suicide attempts, and also dealing with the suffering created by them in a way that communities, when those events occur, may strengthen themselves.

### **Difficulties faced in preventing injuries and suicide and promoting safety**

The tasks of the society, including those of the States, have become more complex, and the size of politics larger and more heterogeneous than the institutional forms of liberal democracy developed in the nineteenth century. Representative democracy, along with its techno-bureaucratic administration, seems increasingly ill-suited for the novel problems we face. Injury prevention, suicide prevention included, is still struggling to lean on those institutional forms.

Based on a new mobilising strategy developed by the international Safe Communities movement some community suicide programs have been developed around the world- they look encouraging for a new direction of suicide prevention.

#### Literature

Osorno J, Svanström L & Beskow J. Community Safety Promotion. Karolinska Institutet, Div Social Medicine. March 2010. Can be downloaded from:  
[http://www.phs.ki.se/csp/pdf/Books/community\\_suicide\\_prevention\\_2010.pdf](http://www.phs.ki.se/csp/pdf/Books/community_suicide_prevention_2010.pdf)