

Bartenders as Gatekeepers Interim Evaluation Report



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Overview/Introduction

Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) developed the Bartenders as Gatekeepers project to provide targeted suicide prevention for males between the ages of 45-64. This population exhibits the highest suicide rate at both the national and local level in Ventura County and are also one of the most difficult populations to reach for prevention efforts. The project consists of a targeted media campaign and mental health gatekeeper training for bartenders and alcohol servers. The Gatekeepers project is funded with Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovations funding.

Program Components

Mental Health Gatekeeper Training

Employees and bartenders at participating sites are trained by a nationally recognized suicide awareness and prevention program known as Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR). Trainings are facilitated by certified instructors and cover numerous topics including recognizing the signs of suicide risk and engaging a potential victim in conversation to offer hope and persuading them to seek help.

Media Campaign

The multi-modal media campaign is comprised of targeted advertisements for males between the ages of 45-64 including print and visual media, social media ads, coasters, and posters. See sample campaign materials on the right. Campaign materials are distributed at participating sites and other locations that serve alcohol. All campaign materials utilize literature-based messaging promoting hope and share information on local suicide prevention websites and helplines. Additionally, the campaign includes an interactive website, *Not Alone VC*, that includes:

- Testimonials of family members affected by local suicides in men aged 45-64
- Links to other websites for resources on suicide prevention
- Information for phone and text suicide prevention hotlines

Goals and Objectives



Increase traffic to local suicide prevention resources and utilization of the crisis line by men aged 45-64



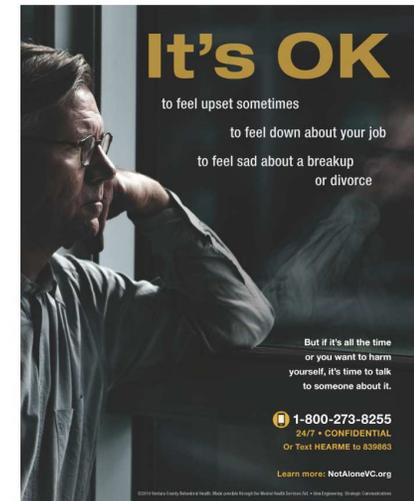
Increase knowledge, skills and abilities of alcohol vendors who complete QPR suicide prevention training, for intervening when patrons show signs of suicide risk.



Reduction in completed suicides by men aged 45-64 in Ventura County



Determine if alcohol servers are an appropriate population to target in suicide prevention training.



Data Collection and Evaluation

A mixed methods approach including interviews with key stakeholders, surveys, and quantitative data analysis was developed to evaluate the extent to which the Gatekeepers project is meeting its intended goals and objectives.

The primary evaluation questions addressed through the evaluation are as follows:

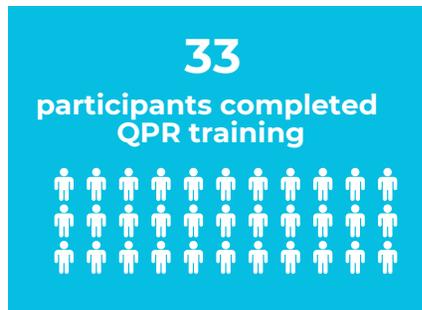
1. To what extent was the program carried out as intended?
2. To what extent were each of the objectives achieved?
3. What challenges/obstacles were experienced, and how were they overcome?
4. What successes and/or lessons learned can be utilized for informing future initiatives?

Table 1. Overview of Data Analyzed in Report

Data Source	Timeframe Included in the Report
Project Tracking Tool	January 2019 - June 2020
QPR Training Surveys	January 2019 - June 2020
Key Stakeholder Interviews	January 2019 - June 2020
Training Follow-Up Survey	January 2019 - June 2020

Findings: Program Reach

QPR TRAININGS



Not Alone VC Website Metrics



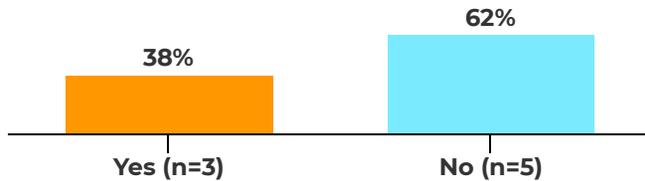
* Unique website visitors represents the total number of non-returning visitors to the website.

** Website sessions represents the total number of distinct visits to the websites and includes visits from returning visitors.

Findings: Program Impact

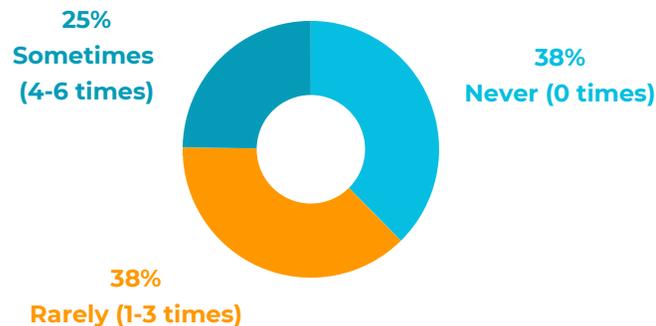
Follow-up surveys were sent to individuals who participated in a QPR suicide prevention training to assess satisfaction and outcomes.

Since attending the training, have you had a conversation with someone who expressed suicidal thoughts? (n=8)



Among respondents who reported having a conversation with someone who expressed suicidal thoughts, **100% (n=3)** indicated that they **utilized the QPR method** and felt that the **intervention was effective** and **helped save a life**.

How often have you used the techniques you were taught? (n=8)



76% (n=6) reported utilizing skills learned in the training in a **bar or establishment serving alcohol**, or in their **personal life**.

Increased knowledge, skills and abilities for intervening when patrons show signs of suicide risk. (n=8)

Percent of respondents reporting that they strongly agree or agree with the following statements:

- 100%** I am more comfortable interacting with persons displaying signs of mental illness.
- 100%** I can more effectively communicate with persons displaying signs of mental illness.
- 100%** I am better able to recognize the signs, symptoms and risks of suicide.
- 100%** I am more willing to reach out and help someone if I think they may be at risk of suicide.
- 100%** I know more about how to intervene
- 88%** I am more knowledgeable about professional and peer resources that are available to help someone at risk of suicide.

Have you shared any of the skills/information learned from the training? (n=8)

- 75% (n=6)** reported sharing information with other bartenders, staff, or members **at their bar or establishment**.
- 88% (n=7)** reported sharing information with friends or family members **outside of their bar or establishment**.

Engagement with Target Population (n=8)

50% (n=4) of respondents reported utilizing skills learned in the training with men aged 45-65.

Findings: Program Impact (cont.)

Following the QPR suicide prevention training, surveys were completed by participants. Below is a summary of key findings.

QPR Training Content and Structure

Instructors knowledge on subject matter

100% above average or outstanding (n=25)

Instructors presentation of course materials

100% above average or outstanding (n=25)

Program Presentation

92% above average or outstanding (n=24)

Program Content

88% above average or outstanding (n=24)

Participant Satisfaction

Training Overall

88% above average or outstanding (n=24)

Overall Value to Participant

84% above average or outstanding (n=24)

To What Degree Did the Course Provide Practical Application to Participants

84% above average or outstanding (n=25)

How Well Course Met Participants Expectations

84% above average or outstanding (n=25)

Implementation Successes, Challenges, and Recommendations

Key stakeholder interviews were conducted with staff at participating sites and the program training facilitator to better understand program implementation, successes, and challenges. Below are key findings from the series of interviews.

Program Value and Successes

Across all interviews, stakeholders stated that the Gatekeepers program is valuable and recommended the training be required by alcohol establishments, similar to the ServSafe training.

Equipped bartenders with the knowledge and confidence to intervene when they notice customers struggling and in need of suicide prevention resources. Many bartenders prior to the training had seen customers struggling but did not feel comfortable stepping in to help. With the training, they felt a sense of relief to have resources to share with customers in need.

Providing materials such as coasters and posters for the bathrooms was found to be very helpful in reaching customers. Some customers may feel self-conscious reading information about suicide prevention resources in the open, providing discrete materials was found to be a positive way to do outreach and start the conversation without being too direct.

Challenges

Difficult to engage bars in the initial conversation to discuss the program without a previous connection. Following the initial conversation many bar owners expressed interest in the program but oftentimes it was challenging to engage sites without a connection to the establishment.

Recommendations

Provide tailored examples and practice scenarios during the QPR suicide prevention training for bartenders. Walking participants through situations that may arise and appropriate responses will increase confidence among bartenders to engage customers in need.

Continue online QPR trainings during COVID-19 stay at home orders. The online training format was found to be very successful and for many attendees it was easier to attend an online training due to scheduling conflicts.

COVID-19 Impacts and Adaptations

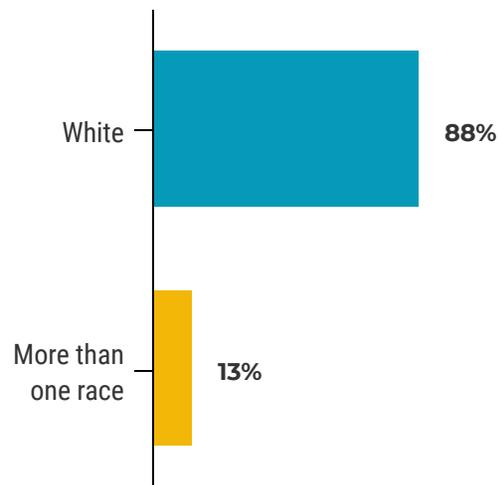
Following stay at home orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was challenging to engage bars in the Gatekeepers program and QPR suicide prevention training. Because of this, the program made adaptations to minimize impacts. Changes included:

- Increased emphasis on website advertising and social media engagements in order to reach people at home.
- The QPR suicide prevention training was transitioned to an online format via Zoom in order to continue trainings.
- Program materials were distributed to restaurants in the busy downtown Ventura district to reach individuals at restaurants rather than bars as many were forced to close.

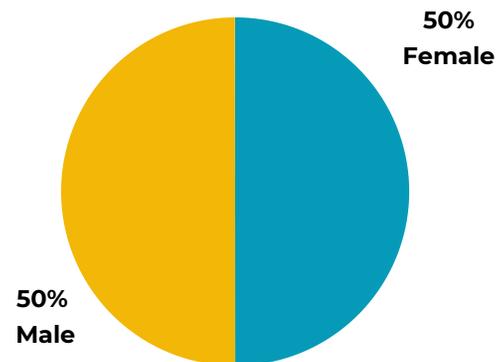
Participant Demographics

Demographic responses are obtained from participants in a follow up survey.

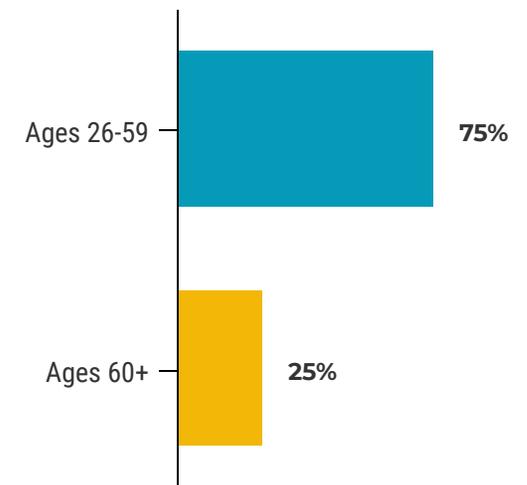
Participant Race (n=8)



Participant Gender (n=8)



Participant Age (n=8)



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