Adolescent Suicide in Grenada: What's Driving the Increase?

On behalf of the Drug Secretariat

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Agenda

1. Background
2. Objectives
3. Approach
4. Methods
5. Results
6. Recommendations
   - Awareness
   - Education
   - Social Support
   - Policy

Background

2017

Increase in suicides
- Up from nearly nonexistent
- ~10 adolescent suicide attempts
- 2 adolescent suicide completions

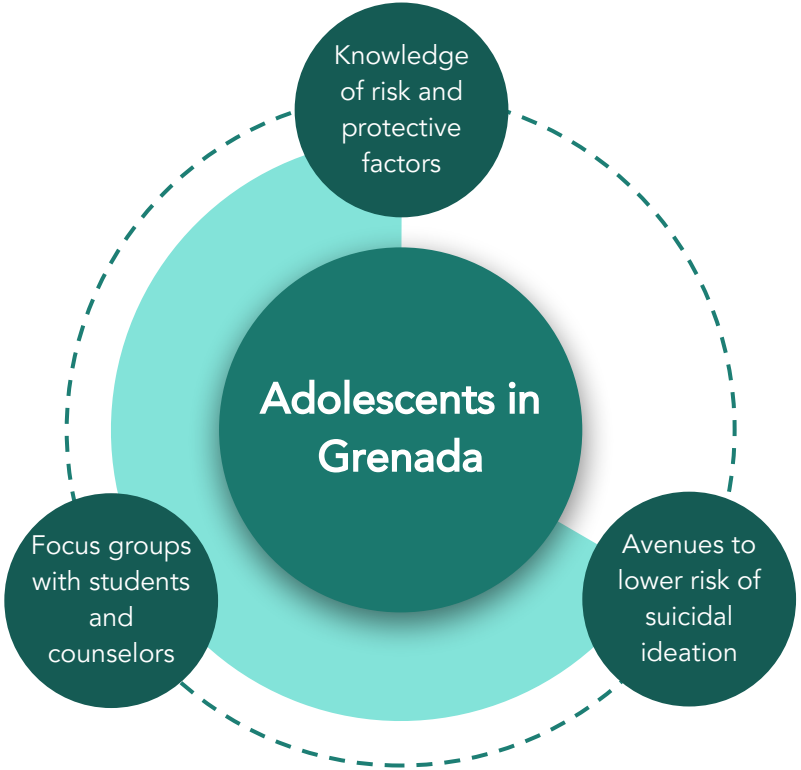
Insufficient data to address reasoning

Two types of suicide attempts:
- Serious
- Attention-seeking

Problem Statement

We know adolescents are attempting suicide at higher rates than ever before, but we do not know why. What makes an adolescent more likely to commit suicide? We need more information to develop programs tailored to the needs of this population.

Objectives


Knowledge of risk and protective factors
Adolescents in Grenada
Focus groups with students and counselors
Avenues to lower risk of suicidal ideation

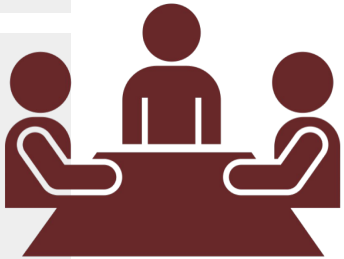
Approach: Mixed-Methods

01 Quantitative Survey

- Electronic
- Pre-focus group
- Anonymous
- Individual completion

02 Qualitative Study

- Focus groups/interview with key stakeholder
- In person
- Small groups
- Open dialogue



Methods

Quantitative

- 20 responses from students (excludes Bacolet)
- 19 questions
- Questions on sexual behavior, marijuana/alcohol, childhood sexual abuse
- Overall student satisfaction

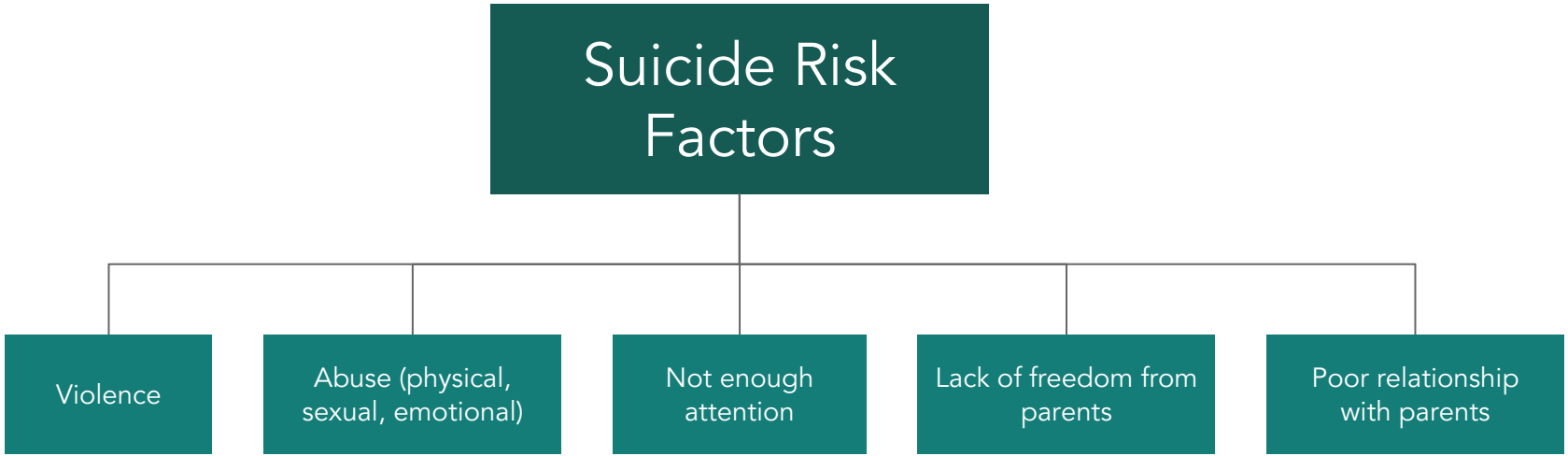
Qualitative

- 1 interview
  - Psychiatrist - Mt. Gay
- 5 focus groups (age 15-17)
  - 7 students (2 schools)
  - 10 students (2 schools)
  - 3 counselors (2 schools)
  - 8 students (Bacolet)
  - 2 counselors (Bacolet)
- Questions on social media, marijuana/alcohol, sexual behavior, suicide, childhood sexual abuse

Results

Domestic Issues - Lack of Support - Stress - Insufficient Training - Technology - Supportive Factors

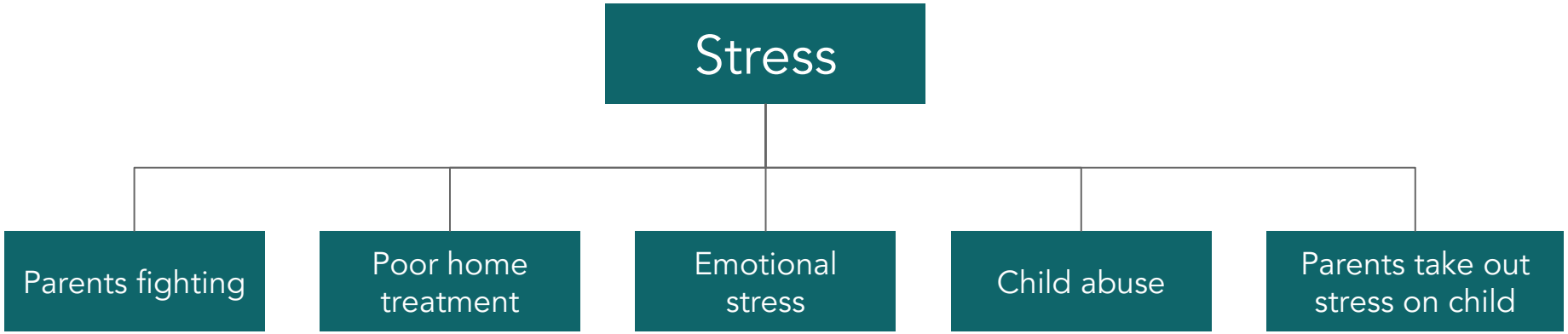
Domestic Issues



Lack of Support

Anonymity	Inability to talk to anyone in their community Fear of reprisals
Stigma	“If you go to a counselor, it means you’re mad.”
Attention	Attention-seeking: major reason for suicide attempts

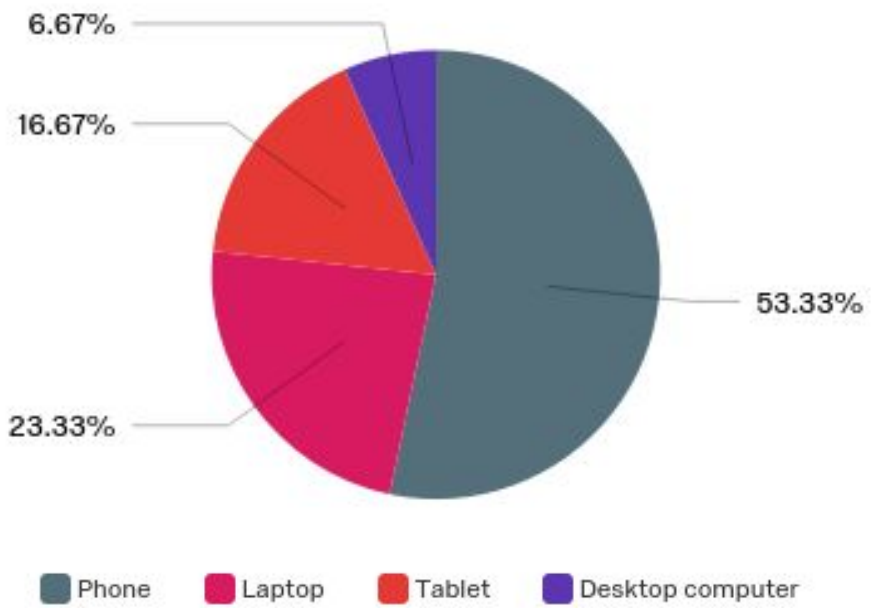
Stress


Stress
Parents fighting
Poor home treatment
Emotional stress
Child abuse
Parents take out stress on child

Insufficient Training

Technology

What electronic device(s) do you most typically use to access your social media account(s)? Please check all that apply.



Technology

01	Social Media	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp
02	Outside school activities	Social media, ‘communicate with friends’
03	Cyberbullying	Bullying on social media, especially Facebook, commenting on posts
04	Additional support	Proven success with media/online awareness campaigns

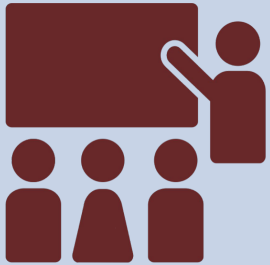
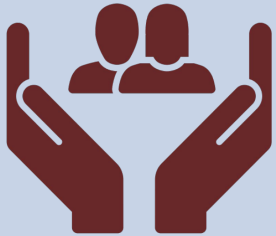
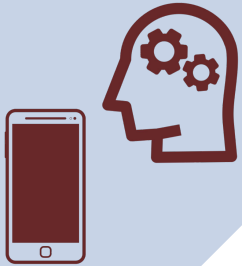
Supportive Factors

Focus Groups

- Students will go to counselors and teachers for help
- Many students felt they could go to their parents to talk about sex

Additional Research

- Parent/family connectedness
- Having adults (not only parents) to talk to decreases suicide risk

Recommendations

Awareness - Education - Social Support - Policy

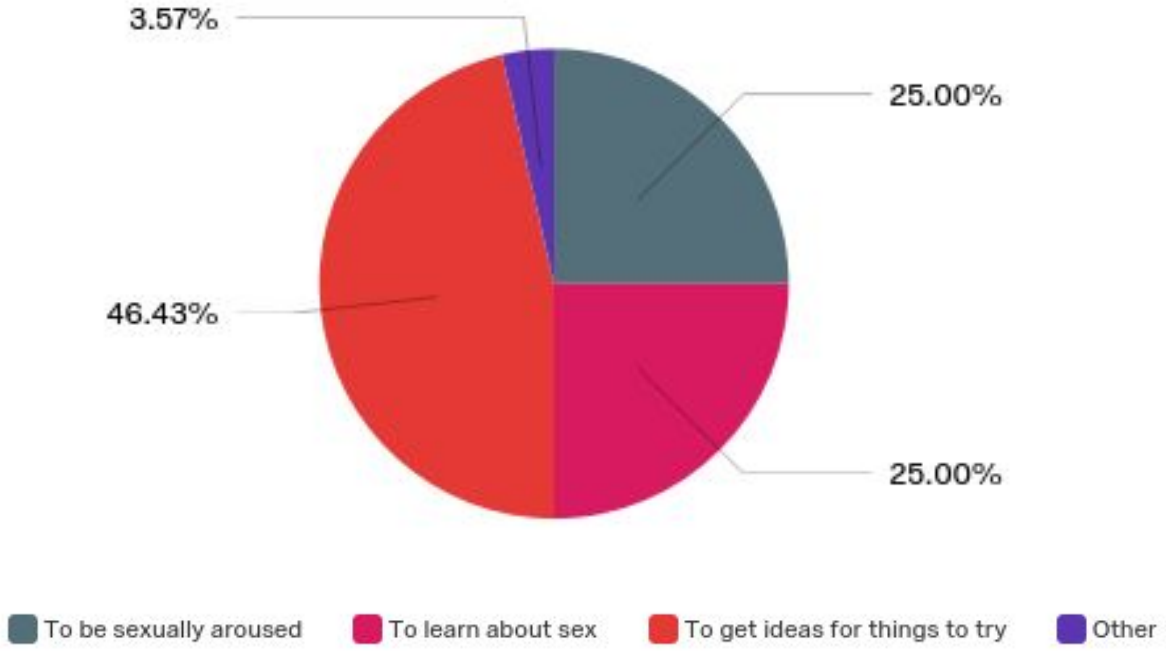
We need more awareness. [We] only speak about it when it happens.

Awareness Campaigns

- Campaigns to spread awareness and information on support systems
  - **Social Media**
- Destigmatize mental health issues
- Sex Education
  - Consent

Awareness Campaigns

Why do you think people watch pornography? Check all that apply.



Government should invest in having a few teachers specifically trained to do these sorts of assessments for students, to find mental health issues.

Education

- Teach **parents** how to best respond to various situations with their children
- Train **teachers** to recognize the signs of abuse and mental illness

Talking helps, [we] don’t always have the opportunity.

Social Support

- Crisis hotline
  - Phone or text in for suicide prevention and support
- After school programs
  - Separate from schoolwork or sports
  - Safe haven
  - Teacher rotation for supervision

We need to create a protocol for people, and write down what to do so that [teachers] are aware.

Policy Improvement

- Develop mandatory reporting protocol for when signs of mental illness are recognized at school
  - Identify an organization, (i.e. Child Protective Agency), as the designated contact for at-risk suicidal youth

Timeline

01	Short Term Goal	Awareness Campaigns
02	Mid Term Goal	Education Social Support
03	Long Term Goal	Policy Improvement

Ministry of Education Grenada
David Alexander
Arthur Pierre
Elizabeth Jaipul
Mt. Gay Psychiatric Hospital
St. Andrew's Secondary School
Bacolet Youth Rehabilitation Center
Grenville Secondary School
All of the students and staff who spoke with us this week!
Jason Noel
University of Michigan School of Public Health

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Thank you!

References

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