

## **Memphis STEPS 2 - Suicide Prevention Grant (SAMHSA)**

Drs. Pamela Cogdal (Clinical Associate Professor in Counseling) and Theresa Okwumabua (Clinical Professor in Psychology) have received an additional three years of funding through a new grant from SAMHSA. Cogdal and Okwumabua's grant was one of 22 awarded this year across the nation for campus initiatives and includes \$300,000 over the grant period. (For more information on SAMHSA grants go to: <http://www.samhsa.gov/Grants/> .)

The initial Memphis STEPS Suicide Prevention Program (2006-2009) was a collaborative effort between the Psychology Department and the Counseling, Educational Psychology & Research Department, and Student Affairs Programs to:

- Inform students, faculty, staff, and the university community about suicide, as well as mental and behavioral health issues associated with suicide.
- Draw awareness to the prevention and intervention resources and services available within the university community to assist students who are suicidal or suffering from emotional difficulties often associated with suicide.
- Develop and implement training in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of individuals suffering with behavioral or mental health problems.
- Promote health seeking behaviors by promoting the removal of stigmas often associated with mental/behavioral problems. and providing referral sources for them.

During the first three years of funding, the co-directors and their student based research team comprised of graduate and undergraduate students have had over 12,000 contacts with students, staff, and faculty and community members. STEPS has also presented nationally and regionally at peer reviewed conferences such as APA, SEPA, & TCA. In response to their institutional assessments of campus resources and needs related to behavioral and mental health issues associated with suicide, Drs. Okwumabua and Cogdal submitted and received an additional

three years of funding for Memphis STEPS2 (Suicide Training, Education, and Prevention Services- Phase 2).

The program will continue to center around:

- Educating students, faculty, staff and the broader university community (i.e., parents, families) about suicide, mental and behavioral health problems (e.g., depression and substance abuse) associated with suicide;
- Training in the assessment, and treatment for individuals experiencing behavioral/mental health problems (e.g., suicidal ideation, depression)
- Evaluating the efficacy of training as well as programs and services that will continue to be offered as part of this initiative
- Planning for an organizational structure that will include coordinated programs and services to sustain these initiatives once the grant work ends and
- Continue presenting and publishing research related to the STEPS' initiatives and outcomes.

### **Latest Research from STEPS: Fall 2009**

Brandy Hunter (masters student in clinical mental health counseling) and Pamela Cogdal, Ph.D. submitted a proposal for presentation at the 2009 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) The topic, "Knowledge, Awareness, and Opinions of Suicide on a College Campus" was accepted for presentation.

Alicia White (senior in psychology) and Pamela Cogdal submitted, "Dispelling Myths about Suicide on a College Campus" and was also accepted.