

Training Needs?

LivingWorks
Education



Applied **S**uicide **I**ntervention **S**kills **T**raining

In selecting suicide prevention training to match your needs, the following questions may prove helpful.

- What is your role (or that of your work team) with a person at risk?
- What knowledge and skills are needed to provide effective help?
- What level of suicide awareness, knowledge and skills do you or your team currently have and what additional training is required?
- What outcomes are you or your team seeking from further training?

Where do you fit into the picture: opportunities for Involvement?

Promoting health and supportive environments

- building inclusive communities;
- creating supportive cultures in educational and work settings;
- promoting safe environments and risk-management strategies;
- providing and publicizing accessible pathways to help;
- supporting and facilitating help-seeking behavior;
- developing skills in coping and crisis management.

Equipping your service or institution to meet its duty of care responsibilities

- implementing policies and protocols which promote safety
- promoting evidence-based practice;
- developing a working knowledge of ethical and legal responsibilities;
- building networks among community groups and providers.

Addressing attitudes and beliefs

- challenging community apathy, denial and

avoidance about suicide;

- inviting caregiver reflection on attitudes and beliefs about suicide;
- exploring beliefs and values about intervening with someone at risk;
- addressing ethical dilemmas in suicide intervention.

Enhancing suicide intervention knowledge and skills

- recognizing and estimating the level of suicide risk;
- promoting safety until needs and concerns can be fully addressed;
- facilitating links with ongoing help and support;
- maintaining ongoing support and/or professional help;
- offering support to those caring for people at risk;
- providing bereavement support following a suicide.

Becoming a competent caregiver: opportunities for learning and training

There are many levels of interest and involvement in preventing suicide and in responding to the needs and concerns of those at risk. Decisions about training will partly reflect each person's current and desired level of engagement.

Sensitization, awareness and skills training programs respond to different needs and equip people for different levels of engagement in preventing suicide.

Sensitization – recognizing the problem

Sensitization addresses ignorance about suicide among those who had not recognized that there was cause for concern. Hopefully, it also arouses interest in those who were previously apathetic. Media stories, educational programs and personal experiences provide opportunities for people to

move beyond ignorance about suicide. However, for many, understanding of suicide remains patchy. Some feel bombarded by publicity about suicide and prefer to tune out. However, many become interested and want to learn more.

Awareness – learning more about the problem

Suicide awareness presentations are for persons interested in learning more about suicide and what can be done to help those at risk. They are designed to stimulate or build on concern about suicide. They often provide basic information about signs of suicide risk along with initial helping steps. Some address the needs of those bereaved by suicide. Sometimes, broader issues about building more supportive suicide aware networks in communities, schools and workplaces are discussed.

These programs usually provide basic information but do not offer opportunities to develop suicide intervention skills. Some find that attending an awareness presentation is sufficient for their needs and interest. Others choose to become more involved and recognize that they will need more skills to do this effectively.

Skills training – preparing to get involved

For those wanting to translate interest and intentions into action, a range of training opportunities are available.

Promoting health and supportive environments

Some programs focus on issues affecting personal health, coping and resiliency. Exploring options for creating safe and supportive communities, schools, colleges and workplaces are also addressed. These are sometimes called 'primary prevention' activities, seeking to make it more likely that people will develop life-affirming resolutions to crises and less likely that people will seriously consider suicide as an option. Primary prevention activities are typically targeted at whole communities, or sub-communities such as schools.

Suicide intervention skills training

Despite these community programs, some people may be found on pathways which threaten their life or safety. Crisis intervention training programs equip people to respond knowledgeably and competently to those who are vulnerable. Participants learn and practice skills in identifying and responding to people who may be at imminent risk of suicide. They also explore options for linking people with resources for ongoing help. Some also facilitate professional development in providing ongoing counseling to suicidal clients.

Unlike awareness presentations, intervention training programs, are skills-based and provide more solid foundations for intervention and follow-up.

Support for those affected by suicide

Family members, friends, and peers are often the forgotten people in suicide intervention. Some programs focus specifically on resourcing or supervising those who support, counsel or treat people at risk. Others equip caregivers to respond to people bereaved by suicide or assist organizations such as schools to develop protocols and practices for promoting a safe environment when a suicide has occurred.

Summary

To summarize, training needs will reflect each person's level of interest and involvement and also the areas in which they would most like to contribute to suicide prevention in their community.

As you think about the range of possible ways of getting involved, you may begin to suspect that your community or organization as a whole may need access to all of these opportunities. Have you wondered what a comprehensive, community based approach to suicide prevention would look like?