TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is delivered to anyone who is at least 16 years old and is intended to impact individuals who have suicidal tendencies.

SUMMARY

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), a community-based gatekeeper training program, is designed to teach participants how to recognize risk factors for suicide and how to identify and use strategies to intervene.

EVIDENCE

Results from two randomized controlled trials (RCTs) were mixed for those who participated in ASIST training. One study that examined the effects of ASIST on the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's crisis hotlines showed that 6 out of 23 counselor behaviors were significantly impacted by the training; however, the second study, conducted among individuals living in a First Nations community, showed no significant impact on any outcome, except for knowledge of risk. Callers to the crisis hotline were significantly more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful by the end of calls handled by ASIST-trained counselors. However, this outcome was not measured for sustained effects beyond the end of the phone call. Additional studies had a less rigorous study design and/or a lack of sustained effects, but these studies demonstrated some positive effects on various measures, including knowledge about suicidal behavior, self-reported identification of at-risk youth, and greater confidence in working with suicidal individuals and referring youth to treatment. Results tended to differ depending on the population (e.g., social worker, counselor, physician, nurse, teacher, church leader, coach, emergency responder, support staff). It should be noted that the RCT conducted in the First Nation community found a trend towards increased suicidal ideation (SI) among those who completed ASIST training at a 6-month follow-up.

COMPONENTS

ASIST is delivered as an interactive workshop and intends to raise participant's awareness regarding their attitudes about suicide and the impact these attitudes can have on the individuals they counsel. Participants are also taught how to recognize symptoms of suicide risk, utilize suicide intervention techniques, and guide individuals toward community resources that could help them. The program consists of 5 sections:

- Preparing - establish the tone and expectations of the workshop;
- Connecting - explore attitudes towards suicide and the impact that attitudes have on the intervention process;
- Understanding - learn what the needs of an at-risk person are, how to recognize risk, and create a plan to decrease the risk of suicide;
- Assisting - develop and practice intervention skills; and
- Networking - discover local resources.

Information is delivered through various formats, including mini lectures, role-plays, simulations, group discussions, and audio visuals. No formal training or education is required in order to attend ASIST workshops.

ASIST workshops are held in various locations across the United States and in Canada, or an organization may host their own ASIST training, which would be presented by Registered Trainers.

PREVIOUS USE

ASIST was created in 1983 and has been delivered around the world to more than 1,000,000 people. In addition, this program has been implemented and evaluated in the United States Army.

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April 2017

This material is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with Penn State University.
Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

**TRAINING**

ASIST workshops are led by at least two trained facilitators who typically have a master's degree in psychology or social work or are public health professionals. These trainers may work independently, or they may work for an agency or organization; however, all trainers enter a contractual arrangement with LivingWorks. Off-site, 5-day ASIST Training for Trainers (T4T) is available, or an organization may host their own T4T. In addition, there is a separate, 5-day, Military T4T. An Organizer's Guide is available on the program website and contains information and timelines to help facilitators plan and arrange for program implementation. Please visit [https://www.livingworks.net/training-and-trainers/](https://www.livingworks.net/training-and-trainers/) or contact LivingWorks using details in the Contact section for more information on training options and costs.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Considerations for implementing this program include acquiring participant buy-in and commitment as this program broaches sensitive topics; locating one large room with audiovisual equipment and at least one smaller room for small group discussions; providing refreshments; obtaining materials, such as name tags and markers; and making arrangements to pay for transportation, meals, accommodations, and other personal costs of trainers.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email [Clearinghouse@psu.edu](mailto:Clearinghouse@psu.edu)

**IMPLEMENTATION**

If you are interested in implementing ASIST, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email [Clearinghouse@psu.edu](mailto:Clearinghouse@psu.edu)

**TIME**

This is a 2-day, 14- to 16-hour workshop.

**COST**

Implementation cost information was not located; however, trainers or facilitators order and provide program materials for workshop participants. Please contact LivingWorks using the details in the Contact section for more information on implementation costs.

**EVALUATION PLAN**

To move ASIST to the Promising category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, at least one evaluation with a rigorous study design should be performed demonstrating positive effects lasting at least one year from the beginning of the program or at least six months from program completion.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email [Clearinghouse@psu.edu](mailto:Clearinghouse@psu.edu)

**CONTACT**

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program.
Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: [Clearinghouse@psu.edu](mailto:Clearinghouse@psu.edu)

You may also contact LivingWorks Education LP by mail P.O. Box 9607, Fayetteville, North Carolina 28311, phone 1-888-733-5484, +1-403-209-0242 (International), fax 1-910-867-8832, email usa@livingworks.net, or visit [https://www.livingworks.net/contact-us/](https://www.livingworks.net/contact-us/)

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