Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS)

TARGET AUDIENCE
This program is for clinicians and professionals who treat adolescents and adults who have recently attempted to commit suicide or who are at high risk for doing so and their patients.

SUMMARY
Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS), a community-based program, is designed to modify clinician behaviors, strengthen the clinician-patient relationship, foster self-understanding in patients, and enhance patient motivation to take an active role in creating their treatment plan to reduce suicide risk.

EVIDENCE
CAMS has been studied in inpatient and outpatient settings in randomized controlled trials (RCT) and quasi-experimental trials, and the results of these studies are mixed. One internal RCT in an outpatient setting found that participants in the CAMS group showed greater reductions in suicidal ideation, overall symptom distress, and increased hope, compared to a treatment as usual (TAU) group, 12 months after the beginning of treatment. A second internal study in an outpatient setting found that, although the CAMS group resolved their suicidality significantly more quickly than a TAU group, there were no significant differences between groups in number of suicide attempts, hospitalizations, or number of days in the hospital. One external study conducted in an outpatient setting compared CAMS to dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and found no significant differences between groups in the number of non-suicidal self-injuries or number of suicide attempts. Finally, one internal study conducted in an inpatient setting found that, although CAMS participants improved significantly more than TAU on all measures from admission to discharge, there were no significant differences between groups at a 6-month follow-up.

COMPONENTS
CAMS seeks to change the way clinicians identify, engage, assess, and treat suicidal patients. The program utilizes a problem-focused treatment method, in which suicidality is viewed as an effort to cope or problem-solve, and is targeted as the central issue rather than as a symptom of a psychiatric illness. Collaboration between clinicians and patients is emphasized as clinicians practice honesty, empathy, and non-judgment, and patients provide input on what is or is not working and are actively engaged in developing their treatment plan. The program consists of assessment and interventions that seek to target direct and indirect factors that increase suicide risk. Clinicians utilize the Suicide Status Form (SSF) to assess risk, guide treatment, and track progress. CAMS focuses on five main components of collaborative clinical care:

- Collaborative assessment of suicidal risk - complete the SSF, which assesses a patient's psychological pain, stress, agitation, hopelessness, self-hate, and overall suicide risk, to deconstruct the patient's suicidality;
- Collaborative treatment planning - target and treat the factors that drive or prompt suicidality;
- Collaborative deconstruction of suicidogenic problems - explore relationship, vocational, and self-esteem issues and the general utility of suicidal coping;
- Collaborative problem-focused interventions - utilize cognitive therapy, mindfulness, or other approaches to address individual problems that are targeted as suicide risk factors and create alternatives to suicidality as a coping mechanism; and
- Collaborative development of reasons for living - create a life worth living, defined by purpose and meaning, and set goals for the future.

CAMS is generally implemented in an outpatient setting; however, it can be modified for use in inpatient settings.

PREVIOUS USE
CAMS was created in 1998 and has been implemented with a variety of patients and across different clinical settings. The program has also been implemented as part of The Warrior Resiliency Program at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas.
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TRAINING

CAMS is implemented by licensed professional clinicians, case managers, or paraprofessionals. Training is required and is disseminated by CAMS-care via textbook, online video course, a 1-day live role-play session, and six to eight phone consultations. The Managing Suicidal Risk textbook costs $40 each. Consultation phone calls cost $190 per hour. Please visit http://cams-care.com/foundational-training/ for more information and to contact CAMS about training and costs.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include hiring therapists with suitable education and credentials and who are willing to adopt the CAMS philosophy of working closely with patients during treatment, ensuring that therapists receive training, acquiring participant buy-in, and locating space to hold sessions.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing CAMS, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

TIME

Sessions are held weekly for 50 to 60 minutes. Program duration is variable and is determined by the length of time that it takes for suicidality to resolve (i.e., three consecutive sessions in which the participant experiences no suicidal thoughts, urges, or behaviors). Typical program length is 4 (i.e., initial session, two tracking sessions, and one outcome session) to 12 sessions.

COST

Please contact CAMS for information on implementation costs.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move CAMS to the Promising category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, at least one evaluation should be performed demonstrating sustained positive effects where there are significant differences in treatment outcomes between CAMS and a control group 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

CONTACT

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

You may also contact CAMS by email info@cams-care.com or visit http://cams-care.com/

SOURCE