

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Trainings: Overview

Earlier this year, the Mitch Warnock Act (SB 1468) was passed which “requires school districts, charter schools, and Arizona teacher training programs to include suicide awareness and prevention training and directs AHCCCS to make suicide awareness and prevention training available.”

To meet these requirements, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) consulted with LeCroy & Milligan Associates to create a list of eight to ten suicide prevention evidence-based trainings. This final list, presented to AHCCCS and the Arizona Department of Education, contained eight, evidence-based/evidence-selected trainings including an online training option for communities with limited access and mobility.

LeCroy and Milligan Associates used a comprehensive and rigorous approach to identifying training programs included in this resource list. For more information on the methodology, please see pages 9-10.

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Trainings: Review

Training	Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention
Offered by	QPR Institute
Summary	QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention is a one to two hour educational program designed to teach lay and professional "gatekeepers" the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond. Gatekeepers can include anyone who is strategically positioned to recognize and refer someone at risk of suicide (e.g., parents, friends, neighbors, teachers, coaches, caseworkers, police officers). The process follows three steps: (1) Question the individual's desire or intent regarding suicide, (2) Persuade the person to seek and accept help, and (3) Refer the person to appropriate resources. Trainees receive a QPR booklet and wallet card as a review and resource tool that includes local referral resources.
Structure	The training is delivered in person by certified QPR gatekeeper instructors or online. Although the foundation for the QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention is the same for all audiences, the training can be customized for use with specific audiences in collaboration with the QPR Institute. Extended learning modules on specific topics are available to complement the basic one to two hour course (including a module specifically for school health professionals).
Additional Information	https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/qpr-gatekeeper-training-suicide-prevention

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Trainings: Review

Training	Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
Offered by	Living Works
Summary	ASIST is a two-day, two-trainer, workshop designed for members of all caregiving groups. Family, friends, and other community members may be the first to talk with a person at risk but have little or no training. ASIST can also provide those in formal helping roles with professional development to ensure that they are prepared to provide suicide first aid help as part of the care they provide. The emphasis is on teaching suicide first-aid to help a person at risk stay safe and seek further help as needed. Participants learn to: (1) use a suicide intervention model to identify persons with thoughts of suicide; (2) seek a shared understanding of reasons for dying and living; (3) develop a safe plan based upon a review of risk; (4) be prepared to do follow-up; and (5) become involved in suicide-safer community networks. The learning process is based on adult learning principles and is highly participatory. Graduated skills development occurs through mini-lectures, facilitated discussions, group simulations, and role plays.
Structure	Two-day training session by certified ASIST trainers.
Additional Information	https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/applied-suicide-intervention-skills-training-asist

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Trainings: Review

Training	At-Risk for High School Educators (Kognito)
Offered by	Kognito Interactive
Summary	Kognito At-Risk for High School Educators is a one-hour, online, interactive gatekeeper training program that teaches high school teachers and other educators how to: (1) identify students exhibiting signs of psychological distress, including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and thoughts of suicide; (2) approach students to discuss their concern; and (3) make a referral to school support services. Through role-plays with animated and responsive avatars, participants engage in simulated conversations with three students of concern with the help of a virtual coach. In these virtual conversations, users learn effective conversation strategies for broaching the topic of psychological distress, motivating the student to seek help, and avoiding pitfalls, such as attempting to diagnose the problem or giving unwarranted advice. This online course is available from Kognito Interactive for a fee.
Structure	One-hour online. Organizations can purchase yearly subscriptions to the simulation that include hosting, technical assistance, program evaluation, and usage reports.
Additional Information	https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/kognito-risk-high-school-educators

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Trainings: Review

Training	Youth Mental Health First Aid
Offered by	Mental Health First Aid
Summary	Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis. Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders.
Structure	The Mental Health First Aid program is an interactive session delivered by certified trainers. The program is 12 hours and can be conducted as one 1-day seminar, two 1-day events spaced over a short period of time, or as four 3-hour sessions.
Evidence	BPR, SPRC, Meta-analyses, Cultural adaptability
Additional Information	http://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/mental-health-first-aid-usa

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Trainings: Review

Training	Suicide Alertness for Everyone (safeTALK)
Offered by	Living Works
Summary	SafeTALK is a half-day training program that teaches participants to recognize and engage persons who might be having thoughts of suicide and to connect them with community resources trained in suicide intervention. SafeTALK stresses safety while challenging taboos that inhibit open talk about suicide. The 'TALK' letters stand for the practice actions that one does to help those with thoughts of suicide: Tell, Ask, Listen, and KeepSafe. The safeTALK learning process is highly structured, providing graduated exposure to practice actions. The program is designed to help participants monitor the effect of false societal beliefs that can cause otherwise caring and helpful people to miss, dismiss, or avoid suicide alerts and to practice the TALK step actions to move past these barriers. Six 60-90 second video scenarios, each with non-alert and alert clips, are selected from a library of scenarios and strategically used through the training to provide experiential referents for the participants. Note that there is another training called Start that may be a good fit for some districts as well and can be reviewed at the LivingWorks website.
Structure	4-hour training by a certified safeTALK trainer.
Additional Information	https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/suicide-alertness-everyone-safetalk

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Trainings: Review

Training	More than Sad- Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel
Offered by	American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Summary	Developed by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel is designed to help educators better understand suicidal behavior in adolescents, including its causes, treatment and prevention. participants, and other resources. An expert advisory panel guided the development of the program. The program answers the following questions: How big a problem is youth suicide? How can teachers help prevent youth suicide? What puts teens at risk for suicide? What treatments are available? How can teachers identify at-risk students? How else can schools decrease risk?
Structure	The program is built around two 25-minute DVDs: More Than Sad: Preventing Teen Suicide and More Than Sad: Teen Depression. The facilitator materials are downloadable from the AFSP website and include a Facilitator's Guide, slides for teacher trainers, instructional manual for program.
Additional Information	https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/more-sad-suicide-prevention-education-teachers-and-other-school-personnel

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Trainings: Review

Training	Be a Link! Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training
Offered by	Yellow Ribbon
Summary	Developed by Yellow Ribbon, <i>Be A Link!</i> is a two-hour adult gatekeeper training program. The program can be implemented in a variety of settings, including schools, workplaces, and community groups. The training provides participants with knowledge to help them identify youth at risk for suicide and refer them to appropriate help resources. Training includes information on risk and warning signs of suicide, community referral points for those who may need help, and crisis protocols for those who may be at risk.
Structure	Program toolkit with manual and PowerPoint (on CD). Specialized in-person training also available for school staff (2-1/2 hours).
Additional Information	https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/be-link-suicide-prevention-gatekeeper-training

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Trainings: Review

Training	ACT on FACTS (updated version of Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention)
Offered by	Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide
Summary	ACT on FACTS is an updated version of the school-based suicide awareness program “Making Educators Partners in Suicide Prevention.” Like its predecessor, ACT on FACTS is a two-hour online interactive training program, designed in a series of modules. It addresses the critical but limited responsibilities of educators in the process of identification and referral of potentially suicidal youth. It focuses on the practical realities and challenges inherent in the school setting through a variety of training formats that include lecture, question and answer with content experts, interactive exercises and role plays. In addition to its other content, the program highlights four categories of youth who may be at elevated risk for suicide: youth involved in bullying, LGBTQ youth, gifted youth, and students being reintegrated back into school after a suicide attempt. The training includes optional content that addresses suicide in elementary and middle schools. There is also an additional module that includes the stories of individual survivors of suicide loss as well as a high school that experienced an episode of contagion. The focus in telling these stories is to highlight the importance of emphasizing resilience and protective factors after a loss event.
Structure	Two hours online in a series of modules. In-person training also available.
Additional Information	https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/making-educators-partners-youth-suicide-prevention-act-facts

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Trainings: Methodology

The following summarizes LeCroy & Milligan Associates methodology to develop a list of evidence-based or evidence-supported suicide prevention trainings.

Literature and website review:

- *Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools*, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2012. We identified evidence-based training programs for staff education and training and/or gatekeepers. Per SAMHSA, programs were only included if in the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices ([NREPP](#)) for any additional suicide prevention trainings in a school setting (specifying “gateway” trainings).
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) [website](#) We identified additional suicide prevention trainings for school settings (specifying “gateway” trainings).
- Articles addressing cultural considerations in suicide prevention and implications for trainings, including specific trainings to consider for Native American populations. These met a basic standard of evidence and were appropriate for the target specific audience.
 - *To Live To See the Great Day that Dawns*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010.
 - *Suicide Prevention: Resources for American Indian/Alaskan Native Communities*, National Congress of American Indians Policy research Center, 2010.
 - *The Need for Culturally Tailored Gatekeeper Training Intervention Program in Preventing Suicide Among Indigenous Peoples: A Systematic Review* (Nasir, et. al 2016).

Selecting training programs:

- With reference to the literature and web-based review, we developed a master spreadsheet that included key information about each training: its purpose; population of focus; mode and setting; frequency and duration; features and core components; adaptations; and source/developer.
- We removed any trainings from the list that were not a good fit for this intended purpose based on the following exclusion criteria:
 - Not focused on training adults who interact with youth; e.g., peer training programs.
 - Difficult to implement in schools statewide because of duration or other characteristics; e.g., multi-week accreditation programs.
 - Not Tier 1 gatekeeper trainings; i.e., Tier 2 or Tier 3 programs targeting at-risk or identified youth.
 - Little or no evidence available; e.g., not listed in NREPP or BPR and no mention of supporting research on training website.

- To make the final determination of what trainings were included in the list, we searched the Academic Search Ultimate Database for meta-analyses of suicide prevention trainings, using terms including “suicide prevention,” “school-based,” “evidence-based,” and “gatekeeper trainings.” We used these to look for additional evidence in support of specific trainings on our list.
 - We only included those meta-analyses that identified specific training curricula, as opposed to those that analyzed results across studies of gatekeeper training programs without identifying the specific trainings.
 - The following meta-analyses were reviewed: *A Systematic Review of School-Based Suicide Prevention Programs* (Katz, et. al., 2013); *School-based Gatekeeper Training Programmes in Enhancing Gatekeepers’ Cognitions and Behaviors for Adolescent Suicide Prevention: A Systematic Review* (Mo, Ko, & Xin, 2018); *What Works in Youth Suicide Prevention? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis* (Robinson, et al., 2018); and *Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Behaviors: A Systematic Review* (Yonemoto, et al., 2019).
- We used this information to create a summative score of evidence for all remaining trainings on the list, with a point awarded for each of the following:
 - Included in the SAMHSA Suicide Prevention Toolkit for High Schools;
 - Included in NREPP and/or BPR;
 - Listed on the SPRC website;
 - Supporting evidence referenced in one or more meta-analyses OR specifically listed as culturally adaptable, including for tribal communities.
- All trainings with a score of 3 or 4 were included in the final list.