



safeTALK®

suicide alertness for everyone

Focus

safeTALK is a half-day presentation to increase suicide alertness.

This program alerts community members to signs that a person may be considering suicide. It acknowledges that while most people at risk of suicide signal their distress and invite help, these intervention opportunities are often overlooked. Participants learn to recognise when someone may have thoughts of suicide and to respond in ways that link them with further suicide intervention help.

Suicide alert helpers contribute to a suicide safer community.

Goals and objectives

It is intended that safeTALK participants will be better prepared to:

- recognise that invitations to help are often overlooked;
- move beyond common tendencies to miss, dismiss and avoid suicide;
- notice and respond to situations in which thoughts of suicide may be present;
- apply basic TALK steps (Tell, Ask, Listen, and KeepSafe);
- connect the person with thoughts of suicide to suicide first aid help and further community resources.

Suicide alert community members are better prepared to become a vital link in connecting persons at risk with further help.

safeTALK presenters

The program is presented by a registered safeTALK trainer.

Trainers use internationally standardised learning materials - tailoring examples and applications to local needs as appropriate. safeTALK presenters have completed an orientation in program facilitation. Those who attend the program are encouraged to talk with their presenter about their response to safeTALK.

safeTALK participants

Many things, personal and professional, stimulate interest in safeTALK. Improved suicide alertness may be applied in many settings - with family, friends, co-workers and in more formal helping relationships.

The fact that safeTALK is a half-day program that can be given to larger groups increases opportunities for improving suicide alertness on a community scale.

Lifeline, accessible in Australia on 13 11 14, is one of many community resources available to persons at risk of suicide.

Program process

The program is more presentation-oriented than ASIST. Presenters seek to facilitate participants' involvement, although the level of interaction and engagement will vary with the nature and size of the group.

Key features

- Taught by one trainer - recommended group size up to 30 people.
- Powerful video clips illustrate both non-alert and alert responses to persons with thoughts of suicide. Discussion, questions and practice stimulate learning. Basic steps that contribute to saving lives are provided.
- A pocket card helps recall the suicide alert steps when needed.

safeTALK and ASIST

safeTALK is designed to complement the LivingWorks ASIST workshop (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training). The programs share the same beliefs about suicide and preventing suicide. However, each has a specific role.

safeTALK is a brief program that shows how alertness to suicide risk can be followed by basic (TALK) steps that facilitate links with further suicide first aid help. The emphasis is on fulfilling this vital linking role with community resources rather than full engagement in a suicide first aid intervention. It is a presentation rather than workshop format. It will stimulate people to think and hopefully act differently when signs of potential suicide risk are present.

ASIST is a 2-day interactive workshop which provides an opportunity to learn more about what is involved in suicide first aid intervention. Participants learn how to develop a collaborative helping relationship focused on suicide safety. Frameworks for understanding the needs of a person at risk are offered, along with a suicide intervention model that features risk assessment and safeplans. Opportunities for practice to build confidence and skills are provided.

These programs complement one another. The roles of both the suicide alert and ASIST helpers are valued. ASIST caregivers complete the process that safeTALK helpers start. The more people who are suicide alert, the more the skills of those trained in suicide intervention will be used.

Program attendance

Some organisations may choose to train a large number of people in safeTALK, while inviting key people, designated as suicide first aid resource persons, to attend ASIST. In our experience, some people who attend safeTALK want to learn more skills in suicide first aid and go on to also attend ASIST.

To find out more

While less widely available than ASIST, the number of safeTALK trainers throughout Australia is growing. To find out when and where presentations will be held, visit the LivingWorks website www.livingworks.org.au or contact the national office for the name of a trainer near you (see contact details below).

For more on ASIST, read the ASIST brochure or fact sheet on the website.

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