



TRISTANA R. HARVEY
CAREER PLANNING & CONSULTING



ASIST

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training



What is ASIST?

ASIST is a two-day interactive workshop in suicide intervention skills. It...

- Teaches participants to identify people at risk of suicide and intervene to help them stay safe
- Offers something to every participant, no matter how experienced
- Is widely used by both professionals and the general public—over 120,000 attend yearly
- Is open to anyone 16 years old or older



Why is ASIST important?

Suicide is a community health problem that affects us all.

In each community, suicides we hear about are only the tip of the iceberg. There are also...

- Unreported suicides (5% to 25% more)
- Non-fatal suicide behaviors (40 to 100 times greater than the number of suicides)
- People with thoughts of suicide (3% to 5% of the population)
- People affected whenever someone dies by suicide





Suicide and suicide attempts affect communities in many ways...

- Bereavement and pain for loved ones
- Medical expenses and lost wages
- Loss of morale in organizations
- Increase in suicide stigma and silence

...so what can we do to help?



Together, we can prevent suicide.

Suicide is preventable. Anyone can make a difference.

ASIST empowers participants with the skills to intervene and help someone stay safe.

Many people worldwide have saved lives by using ASIST.





Who uses ASIST skills?



Community members



Counselors, social workers, and clinicians



Crisis line workers



Doctors, nurses, and medical professionals



Faith community



Firefighters



Military personnel



Police and corrections officers



Athletes



Teachers & Professors



EMTs and other first responders



Volunteers



Who provides ASIST?

ASIST is provided by registered community trainers. There are over 6500 trainers in more than 25 countries around the world. Each trainer...

- Must attend an intensive training course
- Must adhere to rigorous quality standards
- Must present the workshop regularly
- Must submit workshop reports to LivingWorks Education, the developers of ASIST



The ASIST experience

ASIST is an award-winning program based on adult learning principles. It also has components that can be customized for each participant group.

ASIST blends safety and challenge to explore the subject of suicide—and how to prevent it—in a dynamic, engaging way. ASIST includes...

- Trainer presentations
- Discussions
- Audiovisuals
- Simulations and practice



What ASIST participants learn

ASIST participants leave empowered to carry out a full intervention with someone at risk. They learn how...

- Their own attitudes and beliefs about suicide impact their role as a caregiver
- To recognize someone at risk of suicide, talk to them, and understand their situation
- To help a person at risk find a turning point toward life and help them stay safe
- To involve other caregivers and resources



Does ASIST work?

In a word...YES! Studies show that ASIST improves caregiver skills and outcomes for people at risk.

ASIST is the most widely used suicide intervention skills training in the world, and over 120,000 participants attend each year.

Here are the ways the program is proven to be effective...



1) Improves caregiver skills

Studies show that ASIST participants feel more comfortable and competent reaching out to someone at risk, asking directly about the possibility of suicide, and carrying out a life-saving intervention.

Studies also found that ASIST's skills are more likely to be retained for longer due to the interactivity and simulations present in the workshop.

SOURCE: ICF Macro. (2010) Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training: Trainee Experiences, Recommendations, and Post-Training Behavior. Calverton, MD: ICF Macro & Rockville, MD: SAMHSA.



2) Helps people at risk

In 2013, an independent national study looked at over 1500 calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Callers who spoke to ASIST-trained counselors were 73% less likely to feel suicidal after their calls, compared to those who spoke with non-ASIST-trained counselors.

The study also found that the ASIST method helped callers to feel more hopeful and less overwhelmed.

SOURCE: Gould, M. S., Cross, W., Pisani, A. R., Munfakh J. L., & Kleinman, M. (2013). Impact of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training on the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 43.6, 676-691.



3) A cost-effective way to help

In 2015, the RAND Corporation studied the California government's statewide implementation of ASIST.

They found that for every \$1 invested in ASIST, the government would save \$50 in long-term medical and productivity costs. California families would save \$1100.

This was in addition to the human factor, with each year of ASIST training projected to save at least 140 lives and avert 3600 suicide attempts.

SOURCE: Ashwood, J.S., Briscoombe, B., Ramchand, R., May, E., & Burnam, M. A. (2015). Analysis of the Benefits and Costs of CalMHSA's Investment in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).



Testimonials

“ASIST has changed my life. The training made me a better police officer but the greatest reward was I also became a better husband, father, neighbor, and friend. The skills I learned through ASIST have been life-changing.”

—Staff Sergeant Dwayne Heinsen (retired)
Sherwood Park, Canada



Testimonials

“The ASIST training I have received has given me a clear and definite path to follow. I feel much more secure and confident in what I can do now should a client present with suicidal thoughts.”

—Trevor Lazenby, Counselor
Blackpool, England



Testimonials

“Whether it’s educators, whether it’s clinicians, whether it’s community members, or survivors who’ve lost someone to suicide—wherever they are along the journey, they can pick up one aspect of ASIST or another and use that to make a difference.”

—Kathleen Snyder, MSW, ASIST trainer,
Walnut Creek, California, USA



Testimonial

“Even though I am often faced with people who present as suicidal, I found working through the model, the conversations, and the roleplays very helpful in gaining more confidence in my work.”

—Ann Tainsh, Counselor, Salvation Army, Lyneham
ACT, Australia

Questions?



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