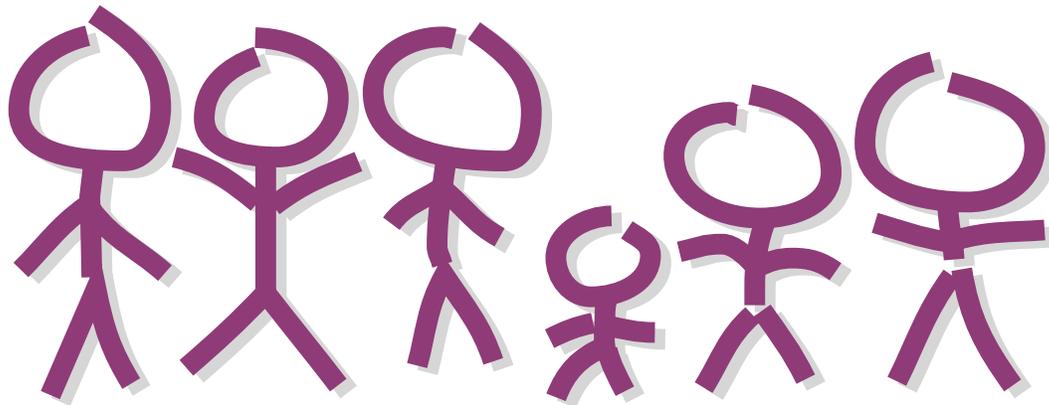


ASIST

Organizer's Guide





Introduction

purpose of the Guide

The *Organizer's Guide* is intended for persons responsible for the administration aspects of organising, promoting and presenting *Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)*. It provides most of the information needed to organize *ASIST* in your area or for your organization. If you are interested in being, or have been asked to become, a workshop organizer, you will need to be thoroughly familiar with this *Guide*.

important tasks for you to perform

The success of any *ASIST* workshop depends on excellent team work between trainers and workshop organizers. Workshop organizers generally perform a number of important tasks:

- 1) advertising and marketing the workshop;
- 2) making arrangements for facilities, equipment and refreshments;
- 3) helping arrange for the travel, meals and accommodation of trainers;
- 4) collecting fees and managing financial matters;
- 5) registering participants and introducing trainers;
- 6) serving as a resource to participants and trainers;
- 7) coordinating media inquiries and events;
- 8) helping close the workshop.

important role

Although the participants will feel that the workshop is conducted with a great deal of flexibility, this atmosphere is in fact facilitated by a highly organized infrastructure. You play an important part in creating this supportive infrastructure. Attention to detail during the organizational stage will add greatly to the overall success of the workshop.

organization of the Guide

This Guide has three parts. First is a check list of all organizational tasks with time-line guides for their completion. Space is provided to indicate completion as well as to do initial costs estimates. Your trainer may be in a better position to perform some of these organizational tasks. Thus, there is also a space to indicate who has assumed responsibility for a task. Superscript numbers attached to tasks indicate where you can find additional information about the task. This detailed information follows the check list. The third part of the Guide provides background information on LivingWorks and *ASIST*.

LivingWorks
Education



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Check List

organizer
trainer

completed

		contact and discuss ¹	3 months
		possible dates	
		number of participants ⁴	
		LivingWorks related costs in general ¹	
		trainer fees and costs in general ²	
		promotional information ³	
		facilities, equipment, materials in general ^{5,6,7}	
		request <i>Organizer's Guide</i>	
—		review the <i>Organizer's Guide</i>	3 months
—	—	estimate costs	3 months
—	—	per participant support fee ¹	_____
—	—	trainer fees and expenses ²	_____
—	—	facilities ⁵	_____
—	—	equipment ^{6,13}	_____
—	—	participant materials from LivingWorks ^{1,7}	_____
—	—	advertising and marketing ³	_____
—	—	refreshments ⁵	_____
—	—	lunches, if provided ⁵	_____
—	—	name tags ⁷	_____
—	—	flip chart markers/chalk ⁷	_____
—	—	masking tape ⁷	_____
—	—	participant folder to hold materials, if used ⁷	_____
—	—	administration ^{8,10}	_____
		total	_____
—	—	set dates	3 months
—	—	check and reserve facilities	3 months
—	—	large and small group rooms ^{5,13}	
—	—	acoustics ⁵	
—	—	chalkboards ^{5,13}	
—	—	food services ⁵	
—	—	seating, tables ^{5,13}	
—	—	equipment availability ^{6,13}	



organizer
trainer
completed

—	promote	2 months
—	estimate number of participants ⁴	6 weeks
—	contract with trainers ² identify trainers fees and costs finalize travel and other arrangements request information on trainers	6 weeks
—	order participant materials from LivingWorks ⁷	6 weeks
—	book facility	1 month
—	order equipment ⁶ overhead projectors screens flip charts video projection system or VCR, monitors, splitter, coaxial cable	1 month
—	get remaining materials ⁷ copies of certificate and participant list form name tags flip chart markers/chalk masking tape participant folders, if used	2 weeks
—	if pre-registered collect fees gather certificate and participant list information ¹⁰ prepare certificates and participant list ¹⁰	2 weeks
—	allocate assignments, plan and prepare resources coordinator ^{15, 16, 17} trainer introductions ¹² registration desk ¹¹ refreshments and lunches ¹³	1 week

organizer trainer	completed		
—	—	room rearrangements ¹³	
—	—	press and media contact ¹⁴	
—	—	closing remarks ¹⁶	
—	—	follow-up activities ^{17,18}	
—	—	arrange facility and equipment ¹³	evening before
—	—	during registration ¹¹	day 1, morning
		greet participants	
		collect fees, if not pre-registered	
		gather certificate and participant list information, if not pre-registered	
		distribute name tags	
		distribute <i>Your Day One Workbook</i>	
		direct to instructions on page 2	
—	—	during the workshop	days 1 and 2
—	—	introduce trainers ¹²	
—	—	prepare participant lists, if not at preregistration ¹³	
—	—	prepare participant certificates, if not at preregistration ¹³	
—	—	have trainer sign certificates ¹³	
—	—	attend workshop, if possible	
—	—	arrange refreshments ¹³	
—	—	arrange lunch ¹³	
—	—	rearrange rooms ¹³	
—	—	coordinate media contact ¹⁴	
—	—	help distribute lists and certificates ¹⁶	
—	—	close workshop ¹⁶	
—	—	after the workshop	shortly after
—	—	help arrange resources for persons in need ¹⁷	
—	—	finalize financial matters	
—	—	send evaluations and report to LivingWorks ¹⁸	
—	—	send cheques to LivingWorks ^{1,18}	

Detailed Information

1. LivingWorks

per participant support fee is \$ _____ per participant (usually includes applicable taxes)

the cost of participant materials from LivingWorks is \$ _____ per participant (usually applicable taxes; usually does not include postage and handling)

LivingWorks is ultimately responsible for the workshop. We train and certify trainers, modify and update workshop materials, distribute trainer materials, review workshop feedback, maintain records, make referrals, provide consultation and facilitate communication among trainers. Trainers and LivingWorks enter a contractual arrangement with each other to ensure the quality and integrity of the workshop. Several elements of this arrangement have a direct impact upon the organization of a workshop. To help maintain LivingWorks' services, trainers send a per participant support fee to LivingWorks. To maintain the integrity of the workshop, trainers follow the workshop's standard procedures, use standard participant materials and protect these materials from use in other types of presentations. (Trainers have other materials for shorter presentations.) To help maintain the quality of the workshop, trainers send participant feedback on each workshop to LivingWorks.

While LivingWorks is ultimately responsible for the workshop, your primary contact is usually a trainer or a regional coordinator. In many regions, there are local organizations that provide additional support to trainers. Arrangements with these regional organizations sometimes modify the relationship between LivingWorks and trainers. Sometimes, the regional organization reviews participant feedback before sending it on to LivingWorks. In a few cases, the regional organization administers the workshop and is the primary contact.

your primary contact is:

2. trainer's fees and expenses

trainer fees are: \$ _____

trainer expenses are: \$ _____ consisting of:

There are also various arrangements regarding trainer fees and expenses. LivingWorks does not set guidelines in this area. Some trainers do not charge fees because their employers are, in effect, paying for their services. Other trainers work for themselves and thus should be adequately compensated for their efforts. In some regions, fees are controlled by a local agreements. Trainer fees may or may not include costs associated with obligations to LivingWorks. Trainers may request per diem fees for both travel time and workshop time at the same rate although adjustments are made on occasion. When more than one workshop is scheduled in a time period, a paid preparation day between each workshop should be allotted. When more than two workshops are scheduled consecutively, higher per diem rates may be charged. All transportation, meal, personal incidental expenses and accommodation costs of the trainers are usually borne by the sponsoring organization. Typically, workshop sponsors will have their own guidelines for these costs. In most cases, trainers will be able to adhere to these guidelines. Additional fees may be charged for workshops when trainers are required to make a number of pre-workshop arrangements or where special statistics and graphs have to be developed to make the workshop more relevant to a particular audience.

3. marketing and advertising

A pamphlet and poster is available to advertise the workshop. Your trainer can customize these materials by contacting LivingWorks. A number of different types of information material is available at LivingWorks' web site. You can develop additional marketing materials from the contents of this *Guide*. It is important that all advertising and marketing materials accurately reflect the nature of *AS/ST*. While the workshop can be modified to meet special needs, the workshop has a definite curriculum. Some prospective participants will assume that they already know the content of the workshop and press for a more specialized content. Resist these pressures. The competencies which this workshop addresses are neither common or evident in practice.

first show "real" costs to participants and then show subsidies

Participants should be made aware of the "real" costs of the workshop. Most workshops are subsidized in one way or another. Facilities are obtained at a reduced cost. Trainers fees are subsidized by their employers. Trainers lower their normal fees. Organizers waive some or all of their costs. Equipment is borrowed. Refreshments are donated. The costs of training the trainer initially were paid by some organization. As best you can, estimate the real cost of the workshop first and then indicate the level of the subsidization and give credit to the benefactors before indicating the price to the participant. For comparison purposes, we estimate that the real costs of a workshop are at least \$200 per participant for a 24 participant workshop done by local trainers who thus have minimal travel costs.

encourage everyone to be on time!

Late arrivals play havoc with the registration process. Workshop information should stress the importance of arriving on time.

4. size of workshop and number of trainers

Each workshop requires at least 2 trainers to conduct the large group sessions and 1 trainer for each small group. Small group numbers must not be less than 7 nor more than 15. A small group size of 12 participants is optimal. It is highly recommended that large group sizes not exceed 48. If you wish to accommodate more than 48 participants at one time, consider conducting two or more *AS/STs* simultaneously. The following table shows combinations using the optimal small group size and the recommended large group limit.

there are always at least 2 trainers

Trainers	Small Groups	Large Group
2	2 at 12	24
3	3 at 12	36
4	4 at 12	48

5. facilities

acoustics: each small group needs a sense of privacy

The facility must have one room large enough to accommodate the large group and enough small rooms in reasonable proximity to the large group room to accommodate the required number of small groups. The large group room can also double as a small group room although this should be avoided if at all possible. The acoustics of the large group room are of particular importance as the number of participants increases. During the morning of the second day, the large group presentations encourage a great deal of discussion. It is essential that the comments exchanged among participants and the trainers be heard. Proximity of food services is another important facility consideration. Refreshment breaks with coffee, tea, fruit juices and milk options are called for twice each day at a minimum. Food services within the facility will make the provision of these breaks easier. Because there is only one hour allotted for lunch and the time schedule is very tight, it is fairly important that services to provide lunch are available within the facility or at least very close to the facility.

food services near by

lunch on-site is almost essential!



6. equipment

Following is a list of all the equipment for a workshop:

- overhead projector for each small group room
- overhead projector for the large group room (can also be used in one of the small group rooms)
- projection screen for each small group room
- screen for the large group room (can also be used in one of the small group rooms)
- video projection system or VCR and sufficient colour monitors with splitter and coaxial cables for Day 1 video, *Cause of Death?*
- chalkboard and/or flip chart for each small group room (preferably both)
- large chalkboard for the large group room (preferred) or 2 flip charts (can be moved from small group rooms)
- video projection system or VCR and sufficient colour monitors with splitter and coaxial cables for video for Day 2 video, *It Begins with You*

A video projection system is preferred. If you have to link monitors, you need a splitter and sufficient coaxial cable to position the monitors so that all of the participants in the large group room can see a monitor. Since some of the more expensive equipment (video projection system, or VCR and colour monitors) is only needed in the morning of each day (see 13), you can save money by renting it only for the half day that it is needed.

7. materials

7. Following is a list of all the materials for a workshop:

- chalk and/or flip chart marker pens
- name tags
- folders for workshop materials and other information, optional
- copies of form to gather information for participant lists and certificates
- 1 roll of masking tape for each small group
- *Background Poster(s)* (1 for 24; 2 for more)*
- *Suicide Intervention Model Posters**
- *Resources Poster**
- participant materials from LivingWorks (*My ASIST Workbook, Suicide Intervention Handbook, laminated pocket card, participant certificates*)*

only registered trainers can order participant materials

*The items marked with an asterisk are supplied by trainers since only registered trainers are eligible to acquire them from LivingWorks.

Each set of participant materials has a unique serial number. A workbook guides workshop activities. The *Suicide Intervention Handbook* summarizing workshop learning is distributed at the end of the workshop along with participant certificates.

Phrases like the following might be used on the form you develop to acquire information for the participant list and participant certificate: "Most all of you will discover by the end of the workshop that you want to keep in touch with other participants. In anticipation of this need, please carefully print your name and phone number. A work phone number is usually best. Also please carefully print your name exactly as you wish it to appear on your certificate of participation."

8. administration costs

Costs of organizing a workshop are often borne by the sponsoring organization but some or all may be passed on to participants. While the cost of your time is clearly the greatest factor, you should consider long-distance telephone charges, mailing and photocopying costs. You may need to call LivingWorks or answer questions of various prospective participants who live in outlying areas. You will need a form to collect participant list and certificate information as well as some means to issue receipts. Trainers normally assume responsibility for

mailing workshop evaluations to LivingWorks since they need to include a report on the workshop but you may also want copies of workshop feedback as part of a report to your sponsoring organization. You will need to photocopy sufficient copies of the participant list. Checks will usually have to be issued and mailed.

9. workshop schedule

a Must!

Minor variations in the starting and ending times, in the scheduling of refreshment breaks and in the amount of time allotted to lunch are permitted. The two consecutive day format and the amount of time allotted to each module must be maintained. See 13 for details and discuss any deviations with your trainer.

10. preregistration

highly recommended

It is highly recommended that the full amount of any registration fees be collected in advance of the workshop. Given the requirements on small group sizes, it is important to estimate the number of participants who will be attending the workshop fairly accurately. Preregistration fee payment helps to ensure that those who indicate a desire to attend do attend.

encourage participants to be on time

Preregistration also provides another opportunity to stress the importance of arriving on time to the workshop.

participant list facilitates future coordination efforts

You will need a list of the participant's names and phone numbers. One of the expected outcomes from the workshop will be an increased motivation on the part of the participants to help improve community coordination of resources to prevent suicide. As a first step in this process, participants will typically want to have a list of the other participants who attended the workshop. Gather this information during preregistration and you will be able to create the list and complete the participant certificates before the workshop begins.

11. registration, morning of day 1

first name in large letters on name tag

Registration on the morning of day one is often one of your busiest times. Team work with the trainers is essential. There are usually some late-registering participants. Name tags need to be filled out with the first name of participants written in large print on the tag. Even when a list of participants is available prior to the workshop so that names can be filled out in advance, some last minute changes will be necessary to get the preferred first name of participants on their name tag. Even with a preregistration fee payment policy, a no-show rate of 5% to 10% is fairly common. As is the case generally, the taboo that surrounds suicide also has its effect on attendance.

taboo also affects attendance

If you have not already done so at preregistration, gather information to complete the participant list and certificates. Next give participants a copy of their workbook (called, "My ASIST Workbook") and ask them to look at the instructions on page 2.

12. trainer introductions

participant list and certificates

Typically, you introduce the trainers and provide a brief statement on the local history leading up to the presentation of this particular workshop. You also usually close the workshop at the end of day two. As a result, you come to be identified as the local networking and coordinating resource. The identification of a person in this role enhances the participants' motivation to network with other resources. Introduction of the trainers should be brief. While it is important to mention the credentials of the trainers, these should not be overly stressed. Humour often helps to create the appropriate balance.

If not already completed at preregistration, compile and photocopy participant list and fill-in participant certificates. Have a trainer sign the certificates prior to the end of day 2.



13. during the workshop

timing of refreshments is important particularly if large group room is used for small group

review charts and figures with your trainer; record adjustments; make notes

off-hours commitments not recommended

14. media contacts

limit access; keep media out of small groups

pre-workshop news release blueprint

During the remainder of the workshop you will need to make sure refreshments are provided on time; make arrangements for the movement of tables and chairs for the different modules; and coordinate contacts with the press and other media, if required. It is essential that refreshments are provided on time, particularly if the refreshment area is also being used by one of the small groups. If you are short on people-power, trainers can ask their small group to help with the rearrangement of the small group rooms. The rearrangement goes much smoother, however, if there are only a few people in the room. Thus, the lunch hour is the best time to rearrange the rooms. Trainers will help with the rearrangement if necessary.

Charts and figures on the following pages show activities, materials and equipment requirements, and room arrangements for each module of the workshop. Trainer activities are outlined so that you can follow the progress of the workshop. Review times and options with your trainer. Record any changes for your workshop and note any reminders on the charts and figures. You may wish to copy the pages showing the room arrangements and distribute them to your helpers. Items marked with an * are supplied by trainers.

You should not expect trainers, or feel obligated yourself, to be available for off-hour social or hosting purposes. Conducting the workshop is a demanding experience which involves lengthy review and preparation meetings by the trainers during off-hours. Likewise, you may have other responsibilities to attend to in the off-hours.

Contacts with the press and other media may occur through either the media's instigation or your desire to publicize the workshop. Contacts during the workshop must be carefully managed. The confidentiality of all of the small group activities as well as some of the large group activities must be maintained. If media contact is required, trainers can provide information about the workshop through interviews conducted during non-workshop hours. Access to some parts of the workshop may be granted under very special circumstances. Media personnel, who are acting in that capacity, must not be allowed to attend the entire workshop under any but the most controlled of circumstances. Trainers and organizers should always agree on media contacts prior to their occurrence. While considerable benefits can result from contacts with the media, there are also a number of dangers. The following pre- and post-workshop news release blueprints may help you in your contacts with the media.

(ORGANIZATION) SPONSORS

APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING

(Name), head of (Organization), announced today plans to sponsor a two-day suicide intervention skills training workshop for (its members or other audience) next (time period).

The workshop will provide participants with the necessary attitudes, knowledge and skills to recognize and assess the risk of suicidal behaviours and to undertake appropriate management or referral of a person who is at risk of suicide. (Include at this point any information about the special appropriateness of the training for this organization. For example, its members may be particularly likely to encounter suicidal behaviours.)

Suicide and non-fatal suicidal behaviours, ranging from gestures to suicide attempts, (name) explained, are far more common than most people think. Almost everyone will come into contact with suicidal behaviours in some significant way during their life. Many people have been trained to administer first aid to people having a heart attack, but very few know "emergency first-aid" for preventing suicide.

Introduction Module

morning, day 1, large group

Time Required 1 hour and 15 minutes

Format large group

Timing *Activities*

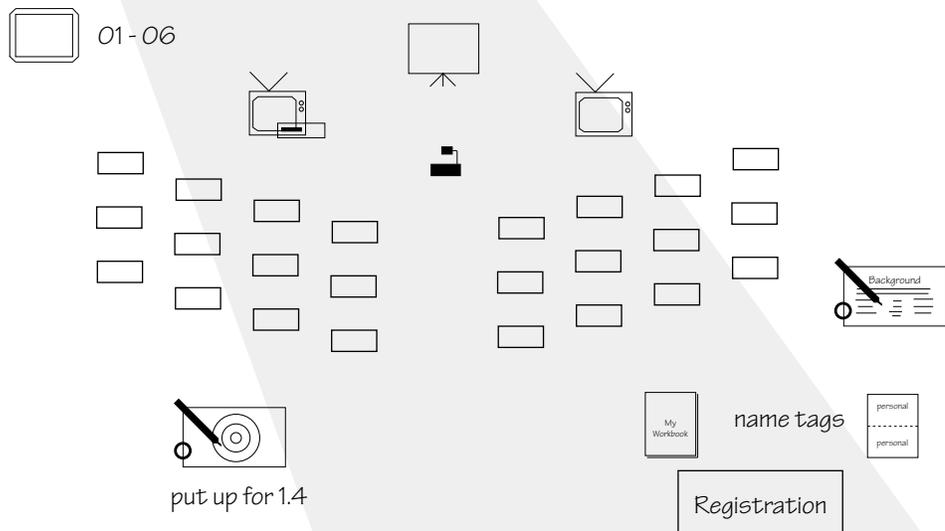
8:30 am **large group; theatre style**

- 20 min. 1.1 Registration; collection of background information about the participants; and, completion of the *Attitudes Survey and Facts and Notions Questionnaire* in *My ASIST Workbook*.
- 5 min. 1.2 Introduction of trainers and workshop organizers, and presentation of background information on workshop.
- 15 min. 1.3 Presentation of background information on participants.
- 15 min. 1.4 Introduction of the workshop.
- 20 min. 1.5 Show video, *Cause of Death?*

9:45 am **15 minute refreshment break**

Materials and Equipment Required

- Form to gather information for participant list and certificates
- Personal Background Information** form
- My ASIST Workbook**
- Name tags (first name large)
- Background Poster(s)**, masking tape and non-permanent marking pen(s)
- Resources Poster**, masking tape and non-permanent marking pen(s)
- Cause of Death?** — video in various formats
- Video projection system, or VCR and colour monitor(s), splitter and cable for extra monitor(s)
- Background transparencies and non-permanent marking pen
- Overhead projector, screen



Attitudes Module

morning, day 1, small group

Time Required 2 hours and 30 minutes

Format small group

Timing *Activities*

10:00 am **small group; chairs in circle**

25 min. 2.1 Opening discussion of video and/or personal experiences including participant introductions near the end.

65 min. 2.2 Focused discussion of personal experiences and/or the video vignettes.

11:30 am **5 minute refreshment break**

60 min. 2.3 Discussion of *Attitudes Survey*.

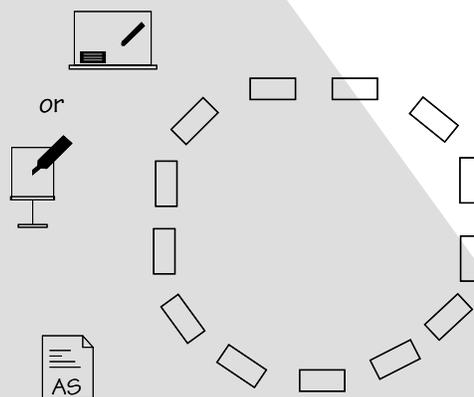
12:30 pm **1 hour lunch break; return to small groups after lunch**

Materials and Equipment Required

*Attitudes Survey** (filled out during Introduction Module)

Flip chart or chalkboard to record responses to *Attitudes Survey*

Flip chart marker pens or chalk



Knowledge Module

afternoon, day 1, small group

Time Required 3 hours

Format small group

Timing *Activities*

1:30 pm **small group; semicircle with tables, if possible**

12 min. 3.1 Intervention's part in prevention activities.

18 min. 3.2 Thoughts of suicide require an intervention.

20 min. 3.3 Magnitude and impact of suicidal behaviours.

10 min. 3.4 Introduction to risk estimation.

20 min. 3.5 Exploration of demographic information.

2:50 pm **15 minute refreshment break**

25 min. 3.6 Exploration of indicators of suicidal risk.

35 min. 3.7 Exploration of estimators of suicidal risk.

20 min. 3.8 Risk estimation practise and discussion.

5 min. 3.9 Discussion of *Facts and Notions Questionnaire*.

collect participant workbooks; ensure that their name is on front

4:30 pm **end of day one**

Materials and Equipment Required

*My ASIST Workbook**

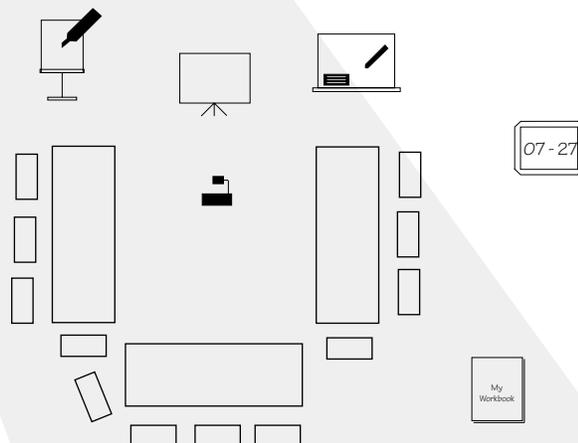
Knowledge Module transparencies*

Overhead projector and screen

Chalkboard and/or flip chart (preferably both)

Chalk and/or flip chart marker pens

*Facts and Notions Questionnaire** (filled out during Introduction Module)



Intervention Module

morning, day 2, large group

Time Required 4 hours

Format large group

Timing *Activities*

lay out participant workbooks for pickup

8:30 am large group; theatre style

35 min. 4.1 Presentation of the structure and phases of the suicide intervention model.

30 min. 4.2 Illustration of the model with the video, *It Begins with You*.

40 min. 4.3 Presentation of process elements of the intervention model.

10:15 am 15 minute refreshment break

20 min. 4.4 Discussion of the video and the presentations.

15 min. 4.5 Shotgun simulation.

15 min. 4.6 God simulation.

55 min. 4.7 Bridge simulation.

15 min. 4.8 Nick Walker simulation.

12:30 pm lunch break

Materials and Equipment Required

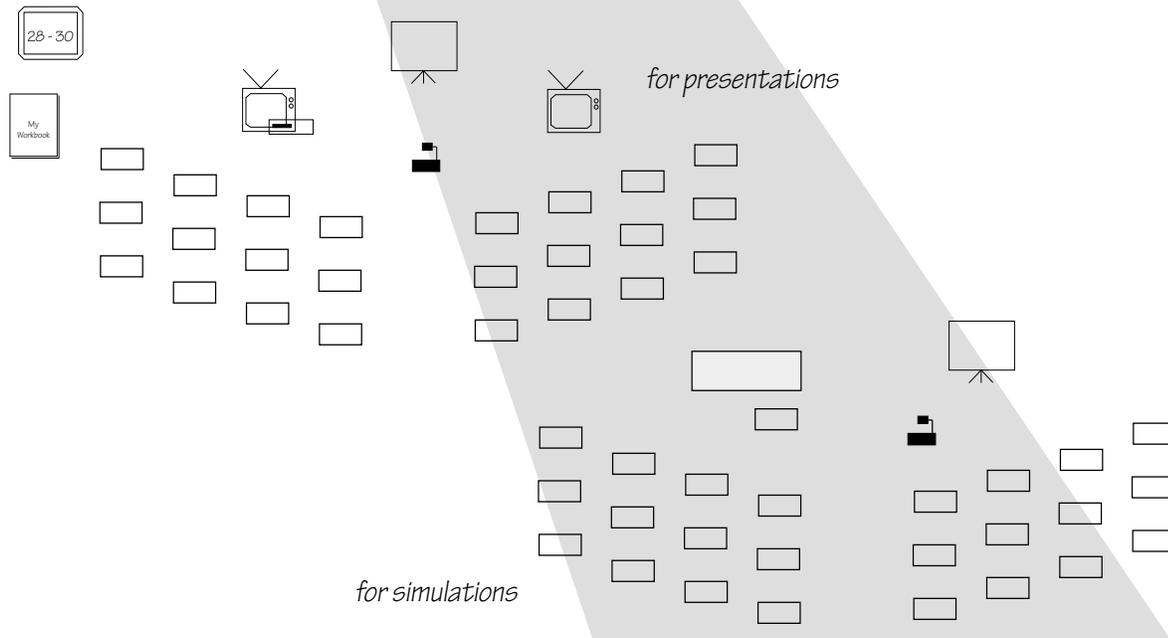
Intervention Module transparencies*

My ASIST Workbook*

Overhead projector and screen

*It Begins with You** — video in various formats

Video projection system, or VCR, colour monitor(s), splitter and coaxial cable



Intervention Module

afternoon, day 2, small group

Time Required 2 hours and 30 minutes

Format small group

Timing *Activities*

12:30 pm **small group; chairs in circle focused upon two chairs face to face**

15 min. 4.9 Setting of ground rules and start of roleplays

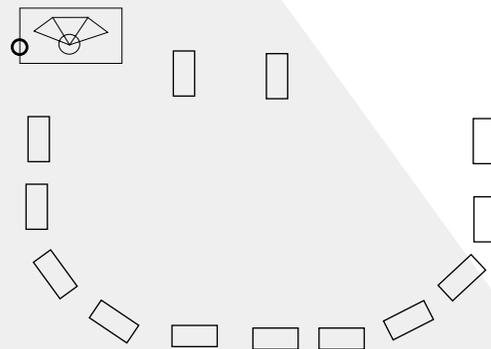
15 minute refreshment break some time in next section

135 min. 4.9 Continuation of roleplays and conclusion of small group activities.

4:00 pm **move to large group for Resources Module**

Materials and Equipment Required

*Suicide Intervention Model Poster** and masking tape



Resources Module

afternoon, day 2, large group

Time Required 35 minutes

Format large group

Timing *Activities*

4:00 pm large group; theatre style centred on Resources Poster

12 min. 5.1 Reviewing resources, brainstorming additional resources and identification of participant's new role as caregivers.

18 min. 5.2 Development and sharing of participant's ideas for improving communication and collaboration among resources.

5 min. 5.3 Closing comments for the workshop and the completion of *Your Feedback* hand out. Hand out certificates, participant list, *Suicide Intervention Handbook* and laminated pocket card showing model and risk estimation framework.

4:35 pm end of workshop

Materials and Equipment Required

*My ASIST Workbook**

*Your Feedback** handout

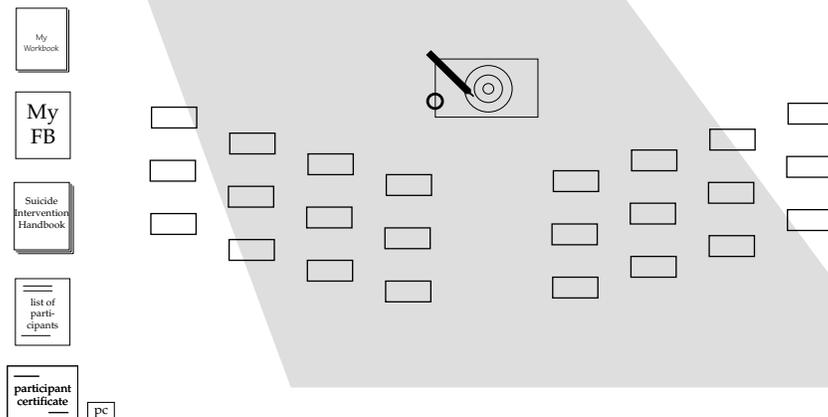
Resources Poster, * masking tape and non-permanent marking pen

Copies of participant names and phone numbers

Participant certificates*

*Suicide Intervention Handbook**

Laminated pocket card*



The workshop, presented by, (name and credentials of trainers), will deal directly with attitudes about suicide prevention. Participants will learn to recognize and estimate the risk of suicide. The major signs that indicate the possibility of suicide, according to (name), are sudden changes in behaviour or personality; feelings of desperation, helplessness, hopelessness, aloneness, loss and depression; a previous suicide attempt; and suicide threats or statements expressing a desire or intention to die. One of the most important first-aid skills to have, (name) emphasized, is to ask directly about the suicide intentions of someone you are worried about. Skill development exercises and community coordination activities will take up the entire second day of the workshop.

(Name of head) and (name of trainer) both encouraged other organizations to consider suicide intervention training for their members. They invite interested people to call (appropriate contact usually including the workshop organizer).

**post-workshop news
release blueprint**

(ORGANIZATION) COMPLETES
APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING

On (dates), (number) people completed a two-day suicide prevention intervention workshop sponsored by (organization).

We are very pleased with the results, (name), head of the organization, said. Participants were enthusiastic, worked hard and enjoyed themselves. If more organizations sponsor this workshop, I have no doubt that suicidal behaviour can be prevented and many lives saved.

The main stumbling block to suicide prevention, he/she added, is the taboo nature of the subject. Only sensational suicides or those involving celebrities are publicized. Many others are kept quiet to protect family survivors. This leads the general public to believe that suicide is rare and only affects certain kinds of people. Nothing could be further from the truth. Suicidal behaviours, in some form, are likely to affect everyone in a personal way. They may be suicidal themselves or be close to someone who makes an attempt or completes suicide. Suicidal behaviours are common to all people — young and old, male and female, rich and poor.

(Name and title), who served as one of the trainers for the workshop, added that learning to recognize the signs that indicate a possibility of suicide and how to ask directly about the suicide intentions of someone you are worried about are two of the key aspects of emergency first-aid in suicide prevention. The major signs of suicide danger, according to (name), are changes in behaviour or personality; feelings of desperation, helplessness, hopelessness, aloneness, loss and depression; previous suicide attempt; and suicide threats or statements expressing a desire or intention to die.

Whenever these signs or other indicators of danger are seen, immediate first-aid action is necessary to prevent the risk of suicide. Locally, information and advice on suicide prevention is available through (organization) at (phone number).

**15. attendance at
workshop**

Since many of your tasks either occur during non-workshop time or can be pre-planned, you should attend the workshop if possible. This will help you to better perform your network/coordination role following the workshop. Participation also helps to establish your network/coordination role in the eyes of the other participants. Participants develop considerable camaraderie as a result of attending the workshop. Those who do not attend will have a hard time breaking into and feeling a part of the group of participants who

did attend. Note that if you plan to attend, you need to be there most all of the time. Movement in and out will likely be judged negatively by the other participants, although some disruption will be tolerated, given your role.

**16. networking/
coordination role**

The network/coordination role has been mentioned several times previously. The need for the workshop typically arises out of a larger concern in an organization or geographic area, with the workshop being appropriately seen as meeting only some of those needs. Workshop organizers, for example, may be concerned with crisis services generally or suicide crisis services specifically. A workshop may be seen as a vehicle for stimulating local interest in the area of suicide prevention or as a vehicle to train a core group of people. The workshop will create awareness of the need for two types of follow-up activities. First, there will be a consensus that the workshop should be given to others in a local area or a particular organization. Second, a desire to list and coordinate suicide prevention resources in the local area will emerge. These two motivations are compatible in the sense that future workshops provide a common knowledge base upon which collaboration efforts can be built. Organizers who anticipate the emergence of this awareness can be prepared to take advantage of it. As mentioned previously, participants will typically want a list of the other participants. The end of the workshop is also an excellent time to obtain volunteers to work on follow-up activities. You should also help to hand out certificates and the *Suicide Intervention Handbook*. Your participation here symbolizes your importance to the success of the workshop.

since you were important to the success of the workshop, take an active part in closing the workshop

17. resources for participants in need

Another type of follow-up activity may occasionally be required. Some of the participants who attend the workshop may be at risk of suicide. Other participants may become more aware of the possible suicidal intent of people whom they know outside the workshop. Trainers are very aware of these possibilities and will undertake initial steps to help. Because trainers are frequently nonresidents of the local area, however, they will not be familiar with local resources. Organizers should endeavour to be as informed as possible about local resources to help with the development of appropriate action plans should the need arise.

18. finalize

use the form, please!

If at all possible, give or send the cheques to the trainer and let him or her include them with the evaluations and report. Trainers use a standard report form which requires all of the information necessary to properly record your workshop. Using the form and including everything with it, greatly reduces the likelihood of extra correspondence to sort out administrative details. If you must send cheques directly to LivingWorks, write the dates and location of the workshop on the cheques or, in the case of participant materials, the number on the invoice that was sent with the materials. Decide on the procedures with your trainer prior to leaving the workshop.

discuss who is mailing what with trainer

notes on finalization procedures

Background Information

origins of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

the phrase, "the Alberta model" has often been associated with the workshop exclusively. That phrase should really be associated with the comprehensive suicide prevention plan developed in Alberta of which the workshop is an important part

LivingWorks offers a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated package of suicide prevention programs

Self-inflicted injury and death are part of the human condition. Suicide has been part of the history and literature of different cultures from ancient times. However, only in the 20th Century, beginning with Durkheim and then Freud, has the prevention of suicide been identified as a specific area of study. In North America, the study of suicide has become more focused over the last 30 years. Numerous authors, armed with more and more accurate statistics, describe upward trends in the rates of suicide. Confusing the picture of suicide, however, is the grossly underestimated number of non-fatal self-inflicted injury. In addition, ideation (suicidal or self-injurious thoughts) has been determined to exist in one in seventeen adults in the general population over a one year reporting period. With a growing awareness of the costs of suicide both to society and to those who are left as bereaved "survivors," interest in suicide prevention increased rapidly during the 1980's.

The Province of Alberta has become a world leader in the development of comprehensive suicide prevention training programs and many of these have been initiated from Calgary. In 1980, the Canadian Mental Health Association (Alberta South Central Region) appointed a volunteer Task Force on Suicide. Its major objectives was to establish a five-year plan for the development of suicide prevention programs in Alberta. In that plan, the Task Force identified the competency of "gatekeeper" professionals and other caregivers in dealing with suicide as a first priority. The literature also indicated that the knowledge and skills of caregivers to effectively intervene with persons at risk of suicide was generally inadequate, a fact frequently admitted by the helpers themselves. Recommendations by state, national and international task forces to improve the training and preparation of helpers working with suicidal persons reflect a widespread awareness of this need.

With support from the Alberta provincial government, the Suicide Prevention Training Programs (SPTP) were initiated. Ramsay, Tanney, Tierney and Lang (RTTL), a multidisciplinary team of health care professionals, were contracted to develop curriculum targeted at improving the skills of caregivers working with persons at risk of suicide. RTTL were also responsible for developing and pilot testing a training course for instructors or trainers to permit the widespread delivery of the workshop. The result was the Foundation Workshop (later renamed Suicide Intervention Workshop and now named *Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training*) and the *Training for Trainers Course* which certifies trainers to conduct the workshop.

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training and the *Training for Trainers Course* were the first in a series of health promotion activities envisioned by the partners. The RTTL partnership has evolved over several years to its reorganization as a public service company, LivingWorks Education, Inc. The company designs, develops, implements and presents continuing education programs using Rothman's developmental research model. Its primary focus in the area of suicide prevention continues to be the development and distribution of a package of programs that increase the suicide intervention skills of all community caregivers. Other parts of this package presently available include: a *Suicide Awareness Presentation* of 1-3 hours' duration for all audiences; a *Suicide Intervention Handbook* for distribution as a supplement or complement to *ASIST*; "refresher" opportunities after *ASIST* (*ASIST TuneUp*); community cooperation workshop (*Working Together*) and advanced clinical-management presentations in several formats. LivingWorks maintains a strong support network for its trainers in several countries and across three continents



overview of the workshop

"CPR" for suicide

through newsletters, conference gatherings, consultations and regular update sessions as learning materials are revised and upgraded. This comprehensive, coordinated and integrated public service package is available for distribution through license and public service arrangements to agencies, institutions and individuals.

The two-day *Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training* is designed for members of all caregiving groups. It is used to improve caregivers' abilities to intervene until either the immediate danger of suicide is reduced or additional assistance or resources can be accessed. A direct comparison to the CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) program of the American Heart Association is appropriate. Like the "Heartsaver" program, the workshop is designed to provide caregivers with emergency "first-aid" skills for helping persons at risk of suicidal behaviours.

intervention skills will likely always be essential

Large numbers of caregivers need to be trained. It is unlikely that suicidal thoughts and behaviours can be eliminated through primary prevention alone. The causes of suicide are too complex and incompletely understood, such that suicide is likely to remain part of the human condition. Increased rates of suicide over 25 years, and the magnitude of suicidal behaviours and thoughts indicate that intervention skills will be put to good use on a fairly frequent basis.

All types of caregivers need to be trained. Longer-term therapy caregivers need the training so that they will be able to minimize or eliminate the immediate danger of suicide before and during therapy. These caregivers, "designated" by society as qualified to deal with suicidal behaviour, may not be positioned very well to quickly recognize and respond to a person at risk of suicide. Other caregivers, less qualified in the "eyes" of society, are often first to encounter a person at risk. With training, these "emergent" caregivers can help to prevent the immediate risk in an effective and timely manner. Skillful intervention from any caregiver can also have long term prevention benefits. The likelihood of future suicidal behaviour may be greatly reduced just by the intervention experience alone.

heterogenous groups with all types of caregivers are preferred

ASIST is a standardized learning experience using a common "language" to help increase collaboration among caregiving groups. Workshops with heterogeneous (mixed) groups are preferred. Because the workshop content is flexible, it can be presented to caregivers with varying levels of training in many different settings, ranging from community groups, to groups from a specific institution or work setting. In mixed group workshops, caregivers get a chance to share and work with other types of caregivers. Bonds are built and a common understanding is developed, all greatly increasing the possibility of increased collaboration in their respective communities.

the most widely used suicide prevention training program in the world

Although the implementation of the workshop only began in 1985, it is now the most widely used suicide prevention training program in the world. To date, over 200,000 caregivers have participated in the workshop. The workshop is used for standardized training by the Province of Alberta, Correctional Services Canada, U. S. Army units, New Brunswick Mental Health Commission, California Department of Mental Health, Samaritans of Singapore and Lifeline Australia. It has been demonstrated and pilot tested in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, India and Mexico. Less than one percent of participants fail to complete the workshop and over 99 percent recommend the workshop to others. Several program evaluation studies testify to both the short-term and longer-term effectiveness of the workshop.

participant goals

By completing the workshop, participants will be able to:

- 1) recognize that persons at risk are affected by personal and societal attitudes about suicide;
- 2) identify factors that indicate and estimate the risk of suicide;
- 3) estimate the degree of risk;
- 4) discuss suicide with a person at risk in a direct manner;
- 5) demonstrate the skills required to intervene with a person at risk of suicide;
- 6) list the resources, including themselves, available to a person at risk of suicide; and
- 7) commit to helping coordinate social support resources to persons at risk of suicide.

learning model

The workshop uses small and large groups, and requires active participation by the participants. Flexible teaching styles, simulation exercises, learning aids and audio visual materials encourage a high level of participation. Two highly acclaimed, award winning videos are used exclusively in the workshop. The workshop features the only model of suicide intervention in the literature.

*small group learning,
intensive, practical,
practice-oriented*

The workshop is presented over two consecutive days. Much of the learning occurs in small groups. This format encourages the development of participation, trust, acceptance and mutual support. It breaks down barriers, focuses attention and heightens learning.

The learning model is based on adult education principles. Adults already have a knowledge base and skills acquired from previous learning. To bring this knowledge to the surface where it can be used, the workshop “uncovers” it through active participation, structured exercises and hands-on practice. Less than 15% of the workshop employs a lecture format to add new knowledge. Adults may also have blocks or hindrances based on prior experience. These may need to be acknowledged before skills already present within the participant can be uncovered and used effectively. Addressing attitudes right at the beginning of the workshop helps participants to acknowledge their experiences with and feelings about suicide. This discussion serves to reduce barriers to learning. It also starts the process of building group support. For any age, support is essential for new learning.

registered trainers

Other principles which direct the workshop include graduated learning, continuous reinforcement and the setting of trainer competency-based objectives. Simpler ideas are introduced first and built into more complex ones later. Important ideas are repeated in different ways at different times. Objectives are clearly stated so that trainers know what learning is to be achieved.

A five day *Training for Trainers Course* registers trainers to present *ASIST*. The *Training for Trainers Course* and a communication network among regionally-based trainers, help maintain the quality of the workshop. The regional distribution of trainers reduces the costs of presenting the workshop.

five modules

The workshop is divided into five modules: Introduction, Attitudes, Knowledge, Intervention and Resources. The first and last modules are brief. The main learning activities address competencies in attitudes, knowledge and intervention skills.



attitudes module

one unique feature of the workshop is the time allotted to exploring attitudes

In contrast with other suicide prevention programs, *ASIST* has a specific focus on the attitudes that participants have about suicide and their attitudes toward helping someone considering or demonstrating suicidal behaviour. Negative attitudes are frequently observed among caregivers when they are confronted, directly or indirectly, with suicidal behaviours and ideations. Caregiver attitudes towards people with suicidal behaviours are particularly important because they have a direct bearing on whether a suicide intervention is made and on the eventual effectiveness of that intervention. The primary emphasis of the module is to provide participants with an opportunity to clarify and examine their own attitudes. The module is also directed towards removing attitudinal barriers that may hinder knowledge and skill development.

knowledge module

practical information to recognize and estimate risk

This module focuses on the knowledge necessary to recognize and estimate the risk of suicide. The module is conducted in small groups and makes use of exercises, discussion, lectures and a number of overhead graphs and tables. The aim is to help participants determine and practice using information useful in estimating risk. Participants are given the opportunity to practice using their knowledge of risk estimation on a number of sample cases. Local and current data are used in the presentation whenever possible.

intervention skills module

featured is the only model of the suicide intervention process

The intervention module consists of two parts. In a large group session, information about the *Suicide Intervention Model* is presented to provide a framework for understanding the process of suicide intervention. The model is illustrated with several large group exercises. The second part, conducted in small groups, provides participants with opportunities to apply their attitudes, knowledge and skills in simulated practice situations.