



ASIST

Oregon Suicide Prevention Conference 2009

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

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Our GATEKEEPER definition

Gate•keep•er (*n.*)

1. Those people (formal and informal resources) who regularly come into contact with individuals or families in distress... in environments of work, play, and natural community settings
2. Each has a unique relationship to individuals at risk and a responsibility to intervene in a timely and effective manner

(adapted from U.S. NSSP, 2001)

Suicide is a major
community health problem

Public health, mental health, social
welfare, injury control

Distribution

Best done through local
training resources

foundations

Need for gatekeeper
training

First-aid training for formal and
informal resource caregivers

Guided by traditional suicide
prevention framework

- Prevention, Intervention, Postvention
- Focus of ASIST is on Intervention

ORIGINAL CHALLENGE

- Increase early identification of suicide risk
- Reduce caregiver preparation inadequacies
- Strengthen caregiver intervention skills

Our Core Beliefs - Suicide

- Community health problem
- Understandable, idiographic, interpersonal
- Dangerous, temporary, ambivalent, preventable
- Open, honest talk is encouraged

Our Core Beliefs - Intervention

- Main prevention focus
- Cooperation is key
- Skills are known and teachable
- Large numbers can learn skills
- Effectiveness evidence is broadly defined

Evidence-based Outcomes

- Increase suicide first aid interventions
- Resolve immediate crises
- Better support and treatment over time
- Better suicide prevention coordination
- Fewer suicidal behaviors

Institute of Medicine

supports the ASIST approach

- Carefully designed programs
- Science-based
- 2 or more days duration
- Those trained return to and work within existing resource networks

(IOM, 2002)

Curriculum Design, ASIST Edition X (2003)

- **Preparing**
- **Connecting**
 - » Attitude experience
- **Understanding**
 - » Invitations
 - » Suicide
 - » Reasons
 - » Risk
 - » Safeplan
 - » Commitments
- **Assisting**
 - » Explore
 - » Ask
 - » Listen
 - » Review
 - » Contract
 - » Follow-Up
- **Networking**

ASIST workshop

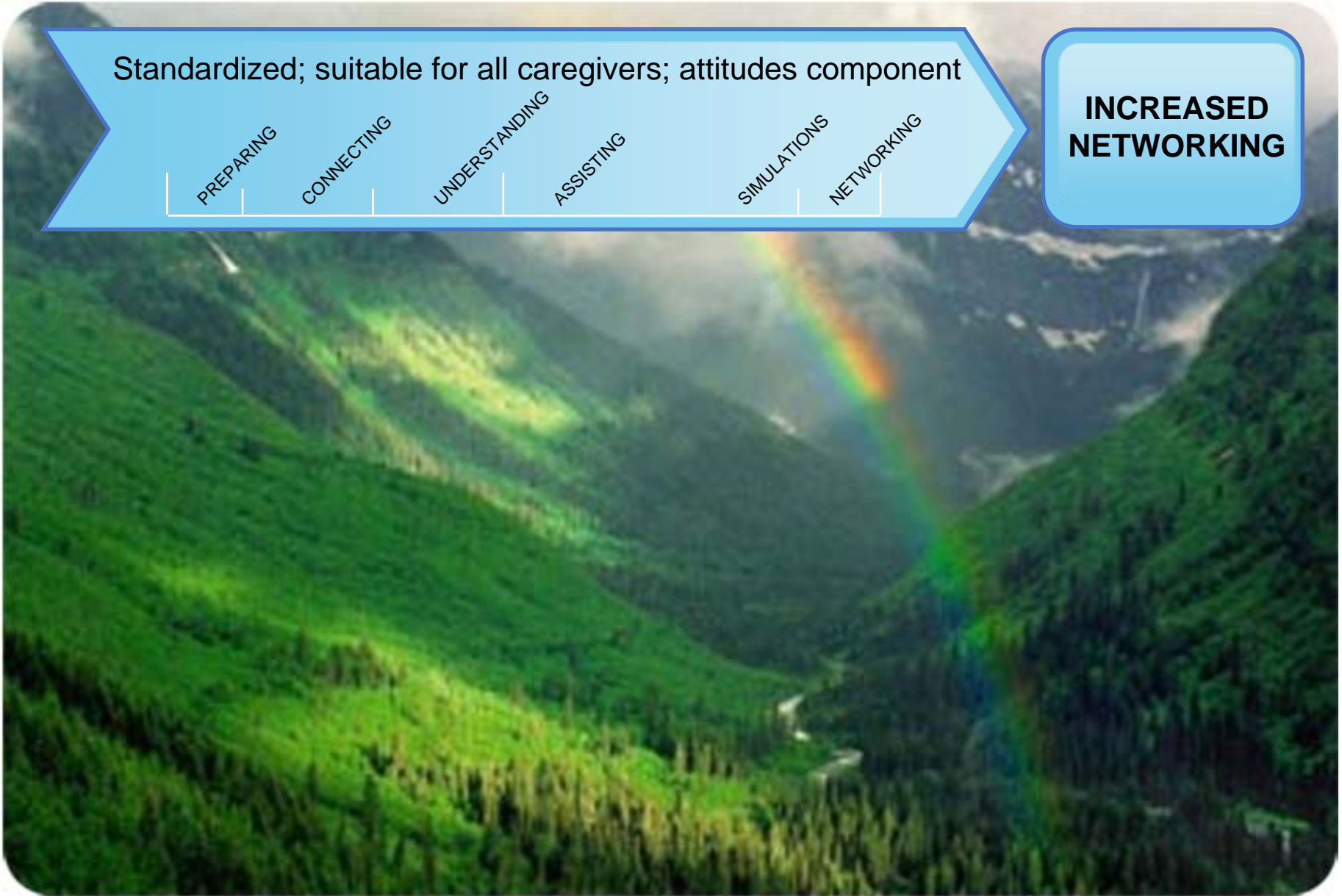
Standardized design allows customizing

- target populations
- cultural modifications
- standardized statistical supplements
- international adaptations

Standardized; suitable for all caregivers; attitudes component

- PREPARING
- CONNECTING
- UNDERSTANDING
- ASSISTING
- SIMULATIONS
- NETWORKING

INCREASED NETWORKING



Standardized; suitable for all caregivers; attitudes component

PREPARING

CONNECTING

UNDERSTANDING

ASSISTING

SIMULATIONS

NETWORKING

**INCREASED
NETWORKING**

Build upon adult's experiences through participation

SOME
PARTICIPATION

HIGH
PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION

PRESENTATION
PARTICIPATION

HIGH
PARTICIPATION

NETWORKING

READY

Standardized; suitable for all caregivers; attitudes component

PREPARING

CONNECTING

UNDERSTANDING

ASSISTING

SIMULATIONS

NETWORKING

INCREASED NETWORKING

Build upon adult's experiences through participation

SOME PARTICIPATION

HIGH PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION

PRESENTATION PARTICIPATION

HIGH PARTICIPATION

NETWORKING

READY

Introduce challenges in large group; complete in small group

LARGE GROUP

SMALL GROUP

SMALL GROUP

LARGE GROUP

SMALL GROUP

LARGE GROUP

WILLING



Comparison Evaluations

1991 California; 1999 Washington;
2001 & 2003 Oregon

Field Trial Evaluations (1998 Australia)

ASIST evaluations

SAMHSA Evaluations

2002 Colorado, Tennessee

Focus Groups Evaluation

2003 Norway

A scenic mountain valley with a rainbow arching over a river. The landscape is lush green with dense forests and rolling hills. In the background, majestic mountains rise, some with patches of snow or light-colored rock. A river winds through the valley floor. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Suicide-safer communities

Impact on Persons at Risk

2005 Virginia
2005 Colorado

ASIST
evaluations

Impact on Interventions

1988 Canada
1998 Australia
2006 Scotland

General Impact

numerous endorsements
highly rated
99% recommend to others
numerous testimonials
over 750,000 participants



LivingWorks

suicide-safer communities

saving lives for tomorrow

SAMHSA Evaluation

2002 Tennessee (N=1100)

- Surpassed training goal (900)
- High satisfaction ratings: >90% (knowledge, quality of trainers, recommend)
- Value of workshop coordinator/organizer
- Broad range of youth contacts (school, alcohol/drug, abused, foster care, gang, homeless, GLBTQ, sports and recreation)
- Transition to state-wide training

Field Trial Evaluation

1998 Australia (N=976)

- **Portability** — positive
- **Competence** — increased; stable at 4m
- **Confidence** — increased; stable at 4m
- **Risk estimation** — greater accuracy; stable at 4m
- **Helping beliefs** — substantial increase
- **Changed helping activities** — 84%
- **Completed homework exercises in SIH** — 74%

Comparison Evaluation

1999 Washington State (N=110)

- Youth gatekeepers successfully trained (N=110)
- Significant increases in efficacy (pre-post; comfort, confidence, competence)
- Significant increases in behavioral intentions (intervention; suicide is preventable)
- More likely to know 2 or more warning signs (compared to public education campaigns)

Comparison Evaluation

1991 California ; 2001 & 2003 Oregon

- Youth gatekeepers successfully trained (N=3600+)
- Significant increases in self-reported comfort, confidence, competence
- Significant increases in interventions
- Knowledge and behavior sustained at least six months
- Community actions and enduring networks formed as a result of the workshop



LivingWorks

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