

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

ASIST is a two-day interactive workshop in suicide first aid.

Participants learn to recognize when someone may be at risk of suicide and respond in ways that help increase their immediate safety and link them to further help. ASIST aims to enhance a caregiver's abilities to help a person at risk avoid suicide.

“The ASIST training provided much needed information through a variety of teaching methods. The material is up-to-date and well done. The trainers are effectively trained and are inspiring leaders.”

ASIST participant

Goals and objectives

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

- reflect on how their attitudes and beliefs about suicide affect their intervention role
- discuss suicide with a person at risk in a direct manner
- build a collaborative approach to intervention focused on safe outcomes
- review immediate suicide risk and develop appropriate safeplans
- demonstrate skills required to intervene with a person at risk of suicide
- identify resources available to a person at risk of suicide
- make a commitment to improving community resources
- recognize that suicide prevention is broader than suicide first aid and includes life-promotion and self-care for caregivers



ASIST training at a glance

Focus: Suicide intervention training

PARTICIPANTS: All caregivers, formally designated or not; 1 trainer per 7 to 15 participants

PRE-REQUISITES: None

DURATION: 2 days (15 hours)

LANGUAGES: English, French, Spanish, Inuktitut and Norwegian. Large print and Braille also available.

ASIST trainers

ASIST is facilitated by a team of at least two registered trainers who have completed a five-day *ASIST Training for Trainers (T4T)* course. Trainers use internationally standardized learning materials, tailoring examples and applications to local needs.

A listing of registered trainers can be found under *ASIST Consumer Information* at www.livingworks.net. Trainers must facilitate a minimum number of workshops per year and submit reports in order to remain on this list and receive ongoing support.

ASIST participants

The workshop helps people apply suicide first aid in many settings—with family, friends, co-workers, team mates and more formal helping roles.



Many organizations have adopted the program as part of the professional development of their workers in suicide intervention training. The program's widespread use in various communities helps promote a common language of assessment, risk management and referral across diverse organizational backgrounds.

Participants consistently say that they feel better prepared to respond helpfully to a person at risk of suicide. Evaluations have shown that participants demonstrate increased intervention skills, and that ASIST training has led to positive changes in both knowledge and attitudes.

“I use ASIST in virtually every crisis situation, volunteer and work... Thank you for this life-changing program.”

ASIST participant

Workshop attendance

Over 5,000 trainers are providing ASIST workshops to 85,000 participants annually. That is 68 workshops every week or ten workshops on any one day of the week. **Over one million participants have taken the workshop around the world.**

Training refresher: ASIST TuneUp

ASIST TuneUp is a four-hour refresher for participants who have completed the two-day ASIST workshop. The program consolidates and refines the learning from ASIST and examines how it is applied in the real world. Participants will also have an opportunity to share what they have learned from using ASIST. ASIST training is a pre-requisite. ■

Workshop process

ASIST is based on principles of **adult learning**. It values the experiences and contributions that participants bring and encourages people to share actively in the learning process.

Key features

- ASIST facilitates involvement. Participants will spend over half of the workshop in the same **small group** with one of the trainers.
- Learning is stimulated by **audiovisuals** and teaching. A **suicide first aid model** provides the framework for the workshop and skills practice.
- The workshop provides opportunities to learn what a person at risk may need from others in order to “keep safe” and get more help. Participants consider common factors that may flag potential suicide risk. However, the workshop emphasizes checking out suicide risk on an individual basis, reviewing that risk and working collaboratively with the person to increase their immediate safety.
- **ASIST has a training focus.** Personal and professional experiences that participants bring contribute to everyone's learning. Experiences with suicide and intervention are focused on the overall learning goal—to provide suicide first aid.
- Participants are also encouraged to **share and reflect on their attitudes** about suicide and suicide intervention and hear those of others. People are invited to reflect on how these attitudes may affect their caregiver role with a person at risk and to appreciate diverse perspectives.
- The workshop encourages **honest, open and direct talk about suicide** as part of preparing people to provide suicide first aid.

