

## Essential Information for safeTALK Trainer Candidates

Designed by LivingWorks Education, *safeTALK* is a half-day workshop that trains community members to recognize persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to intervention resources. In this way, *safeTALK* is a complement to the skills of suicide intervention caregivers such as those who have attended the two-day *ASIST* workshop. LivingWorks developed *safeTALK* to meet a number of widely requested program features, including:

- › Delivery to up to 30 participants in half a day
- › Accessibility to all participants regardless of prior experience or training
- › Customizable elements to suit the needs of different participant groups
- › Integration with other community suicide intervention resources

By attending a *safeTALK* workshop, participants become alert helpers able to provide practical assistance to people experiencing suicide. An alert helper...

- › Is aware that opportunities to help a person with thoughts of suicide are sometimes missed, dismissed or avoided
- › Is aware that persons with thoughts of suicide invite help and is receptive to those invitations
- › Recognizes when a person might be having thoughts of suicide
- › Engages a person with thoughts of suicide in direct and open talk about suicide
- › Listens to the person's story about suicide long enough to show that they recognize that the thoughts are serious
- › Knows the name and contact information of local suicide intervention resources and understands how they work
- › Moves quickly to connect the person with thoughts to someone who can do a suicide intervention

By carrying out the *TALK* steps taught in *safeTALK* (Tell, Ask, Listen and KeepSafe) a suicide alert helper offers potentially life-saving assistance to someone experiencing suicide.

# The role of safeTALK in a suicide-safer community

*safeTALK* teaches suicide alertness skills that complement caregivers with intervention skills like those learned in LivingWorks' *ASIST* program. These caregivers could include a mental health professional, counselor, safety officer, crisis line worker or many others—but they can't be everywhere at once. People with thoughts of suicide may not know about resources, or may be reluctant to approach them because of the stigma that often surrounds suicide. This is where *safeTALK-trained* alert helpers come in: they make early recognition and referral possible on a far larger scale than communities can afford through intervention skills training alone. With more *safeTALK-trained* helpers, suicide intervention caregivers will be used more often.

*safeTALK* trainers need to identify and determine the availability of *ASIST-trained* and other suicide intervention resources in their community. This information enables *safeTALK* participants to make a KeepSafe Connection when they recognize someone experiencing suicide. When it appears that there are few resources in a community or that access to these suicide intervention caregivers is restricted, this must be highlighted within *safeTALK*. It is likely that communities with limited helping resources also do not have many suicide alert helpers, with access to telephone help—such as a crisis line—often being the only resource. In a community like this, *safeTALK* can still be used to train suicide alert helpers and to help make the community aware that they also need readily available suicide intervention resources.

Before participating in a *safeTALK T4T*, develop a list of suicide intervention resources in your community, organization or region. Talk to them about what you will be learning and teaching, and find out how they can help. They may be able to act as Community Support Resources during your *safeTALK* workshops and provide a KeepSafe Connection for the participants you train.

## Selection criteria for safeTALK T4T candidates

While *safeTALK's* curriculum is sufficiently structured and detailed to guarantee high levels of participant satisfaction, an aspiring trainer's existing skills are a key factor. A good attitude—including dedication to suicide prevention and a strong will to succeed—is even more important. The following information on selection criteria may help you determine whether you want to become a *safeTALK* trainer. All *safeTALK Trainer Candidates* must attend an *ASIST* workshop before completing a T4T.

Here are some of the factors that tend to increase the likelihood of becoming a successful *safeTALK* trainer:

- You have completed an *ASIST* workshop in the previous 24 months
- You are a skilled presenter
- You have good facilitation skills
- You are committed to promoting suicide safety through open and direct discussion
- You are proficient with PowerPoint

The importance of a trainer's presentation skills varies with the style used to lead the workshop. Most of *safeTALK* is a lecture presentation, but a video co-trainer—whom the trainer can use in whole or in part—can present much of that material. When using the video co-trainer extensively, the trainer's facilitation skills can be more fully utilized, although care must be taken to make sure all of the content is covered in three and one-half hours. When using the co-trainer sparingly or not at all, presentation skills become more important.

All *safeTALK* Trainer Candidates **must have attended the two-day ASIST workshop in the 24 months prior to the *safeTALK* T4T**. All *safeTALK* trainers are required to be *ASIST-trained* caregivers and are expected to attend *ASIST* every four years to support their knowledge and ongoing development. You need to have the confidence that comes from this training, even though you may not be the primary helper. Nothing could send a more damaging message than a *safeTALK* trainer who misses, dismisses or avoids talk about suicide in an intervention or bereavement situation. As an *ASIST* caregiver or trainer, you will know something about suicide intervention—the more, the better. Be aware that only a very limited and tightly structured subset of intervention knowledge can be taught in *safeTALK*. You must understand what *safeTALK* can and cannot do. Learning to adapt one's knowledge of intervention to *safeTALK*'s goals is one of the challenges for those with extensive knowledge of suicide intervention.

A *safeTALK* trainer's attitude toward suicide is another important consideration. *safeTALK* teaches nine core beliefs about suicide that *safeTALK* trainers need to endorse:

1. **safeTALK procedures are trustworthy.**
2. **Content counts.**
3. **safeTALK participants are people.**
4. **safeTALK objectives come first.**
5. **Trainers teach—and facilitate.**
6. **Practice is essential.**
7. **Safety and challenge—two sides of learning.**
8. **Comfort facilitates.**
9. **Only hard work can make safeTALK look easy.**

Your belief in these can be severely tested in presenting *safeTALK*. Simply agreeing with them is not enough—you need to have confidence in the wisdom supporting them. You also need to have confidence that the participants will recognize that wisdom. Calm, patient assuredness is crucial to helping participants learn *safeTALK*'s key messages.

# Overview of safeTALK T4T

You can expect the *safeTALK T4T* to have a similar feel to any other LivingWorks program you have experienced. There will be a focus on a positive learning environment, encouragement of open and honest discussion, respect for differences, support of each other and plenty of opportunities for active participation. You can also expect it to be hard work, with an emphasis on the seriousness of suicide and the part you can play in helping communities become safer.

The *safeTALK T4T* schedule is as follows:

- Day 1 morning: Observation and participation in an actual *safeTALK* training.
- Day 1 afternoon: Study and preparation to present an assigned part of *safeTALK*.
- Day 2 morning: Activities designed to support the integration of *safeTALK*'s core messages.
- Day 2 afternoon: Trainer candidates present the part of *safeTALK* that they prepared for on Day 1. The T4T ends with a look forward to a new trainer's first *safeTALK* workshop, including some tips on implementation, use of technology and policies and procedures that all *safeTALK* trainers are expected to follow.
- Post-T4T: Additional self-directed reading and planning in preparation for the first *safeTALK* workshop.

Upon completing the T4T, you will receive a set of materials for use in presenting *safeTALK*. These include:

- *A safeTALK Trainer Manual*
- A USB drive or DVD with the *safeTALK* presentation slides
- A USB or DVD with a demonstration of a *safeTALK* workshop
- *safeTALK* video vignettes to select based on your audience's needs
- *safeTALK* sticker, brochure, wallet card, lanyard and badge

To host your own *safeTALK* workshops after completing your T4T, you can order *safeTALK* materials from LivingWorks.

# Obligations before and after safeTALK T4T

## Before the T4T

You will receive a pre-reading package before the T4T which you are expected to review. The more effort you are able to dedicate to this review, the more you will get from the T4T. Please take the pre-reading material to the T4T.

## After the T4T—provisional trainer

After completing your T4T, you are considered a provisional *safeTALK* trainer. The provisional nature of your trainer status applies only internally within the LivingWorks documentation system, and to external audiences you are considered a full registered trainer. New trainers need approximately two days of initial training plus another two days for preparation and review for their first three *safeTALK* workshops.

As a provisional trainer, you will need to successfully complete and report three *safeTALK* trainings, each with a minimum of 10 participants—15 is the recommended minimum—within one year of your T4T to receive your *safeTALK Registered Trainer* certificate. If you do your training with another *safeTALK* trainer, each of you must have done all parts of the training at least once.

## Trainer listing

Upon becoming a registered *safeTALK* trainer, you will need to complete and report at least two *safeTALK* trainings every year to maintain your status. If this requirement is not met, your *safeTALK* trainer status will lapse in LivingWorks' database, and you will need to undergo a reactivation process in order to continue training.

**Benefits of listing:** As a *safeTALK* trainer, your trainer ID number (and your name and/or contact details if you wish to display them) will be listed on LivingWorks' website along with information about what participants can expect from a *safeTALK* workshop. This will help participants in your area find, learn more about and register for your *safeTALK* trainings. In addition, you'll receive support from LivingWorks including FAQs, a workshop posting board, a quality control system that assures your participants a global standard of excellence, and materials to advertise and advocate for your workshops.

## Materials

You must order and use licensed *safeTALK* curriculum for every *safeTALK* training. Each *safeTALK* participant receives a wallet card reminder of the *TALK* steps, two reusable stickers identifying the participant's willingness and ability to help, a 24-page resource book and a certificate.

Financial returns to LivingWorks are mostly used to offset the initial and ongoing development costs of *safeTALK*, as well as the costs of the materials and the provision of trainer support. All of these costs were paid for and financed by LivingWorks without subsidies, grants or tax benefits.

## Posting trainings

Whether your *safeTALK* training is open and available to community members or closed and already filled, you must post the date of your training on the LivingWorks website as soon as a date is set.

## Reporting requirements

You must submit a trainer report through the LivingWorks website for each training you conduct. This is an important part of the quality assurance process and is essential in maintaining a standard of excellence. Please keep the participant feedback forms and a copy of your trainer reports from your last five trainings. LivingWorks may request to see them or you may need to submit them should you want to become a *safeTALK T4T Instructor* and provide T4T training to others.

## Presentation standards

*safeTALK* is standardized and customizable. It must be presented in a manner consistent with the trainer manual, the T4T course and the approved standards for customized materials. However, some elements of your own style can fit within that standard. You must always use current *safeTALK* materials. From time to time, there will be improvements to *safeTALK*.

**Presentation length:** *safeTALK* is presented in about three and one-half hours unless approved *safeTALK* supplementary materials are used. All trainings must be completed over the course of a single day.

**Participant numbers:** The number of participants should not be less than 10 or more than 30. The preferred minimum is 15.

**Community Support Resource:** A Community Support Resource must be present at all of your trainings to serve as an able, available and approachable support for those who might be having thoughts of suicide or who might uncover unresolved grief issues.

## Self-selection: Is a safeTALK T4T right for you?

Reading this document and agreeing to the commitments in the accompanying online registration is one of the key steps to participating in a *safeTALK T4T*. Your registration indicates acceptance of the time and resource commitments involved in becoming a *safeTALK* trainer. You will also sign an agreement with similar content at the end of the T4T. LivingWorks takes quality, individual commitment and employer support very seriously. We want you to fully understand what will be required of you as a LivingWorks *safeTALK* trainer.

**Making the right decision:** If possible, it is highly recommended that you attend a *safeTALK* training or serve as the Community Support Resource at a *safeTALK* training before applying. Once you know the date of your T4T, schedule your first *safeTALK* workshop to occur within one month of completing the training. Having your first training scheduled in advance correlates so strongly with eventual success that we recommend you do not attend a T4T until you have your first *safeTALK* scheduled. When a candidate decides that they do not want to become a trainer, only the cost of the materials can be refunded and these materials must be returned to LivingWorks. Consider your decision carefully. Do not let yourself be talked into attending the T4T if you do not feel that being a *safeTALK* trainer is right for you—but know that if it is, the rewards are well worth it.

As a *safeTALK* trainer, you can have a positive impact upon participants' learning, and at times can also contribute to participants getting in touch with emotions and experiences that they may not have fully integrated. Most importantly, you can provide suicide alertness skills that will enable participants to save lives in their community.

## Instructor feedback

Note that attending a T4T in and of itself does not guarantee you will become a provisional trainer, you and the instructor will have a say in that decision. Rarely, a *safeTALK T4T Instructor* might recommend that a trainer candidate consider contributing to suicide prevention in a way other than becoming a *safeTALK* trainer. In that case, the candidate must return the materials.

After your T4T you will receive feedback from your *safeTALK T4T Instructor*, usually routed through LivingWorks. This feedback will typically offer ideas and suggestions for your first workshop. It might include the suggestion or requirement to seek consultation or technical support. Your consultation and support could take place by phone, video chat or face-to-face meeting and there might be a fee associated with your consultation. This charge, if any, is your responsibility and should be worked out with the consulting trainer directly. A requirement for additional consultation or support is a relatively rare but essential way of making sure that all *safeTALK* trainers meet a standard of excellence, which helps to assure participants they are receiving a world-class program.

The criteria your instructor will be using to determine the feedback you will receive at your T4T is organized around the *TALK* acronym.

**Tell:** Do you present the content in an open and direct way that is easy to understand? Do your comments convey endorsement of the fundamental *safeTALK* beliefs?

**Ask:** Do you ask questions in a direct way that encourages open discussion about suicide?

**Listen:** Do you listen in an open, respectful and inviting way that encourages participants to express their questions, comments and concerns?

**KeepSafe:** Do you facilitate awareness of, and connections to and between, helpers who might be in a community? Do you interact with participants and facilitate the training in a way that promotes safety, openness and hopefulness about suicide-safer communities?

You will have to make an investment of time and energy to become an effective *safeTALK* trainer, but it will be worth it. *safeTALK* can pay back what you put into it many times over, and as over 3,300 *safeTALK* trainers worldwide can attest, the reward of saving a life from suicide is priceless.