

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

Introducing ASIST 11

The new edition, ASIST 11, builds on the legacy of previous editions while offering advances that help meet current challenges and provide new opportunities in creating suicide-safer communities.

ASIST 11 reflects the same core beliefs and retains many of the well-known program features that have contributed to the success of previous editions. These upgrades offer unique opportunities to teach and learn new, more collaborative ways to help persons at risk keep safe. The new developments in ASIST 11 are well worth the commitments involved for organisations in updating their trainers and integrating the changes.

Why change—why now?

Since 1983, LivingWorks has sought to make current knowledge about suicide and its prevention accessible to caregivers in ways that can be readily learned and practically applied. Periodic program enhancements have maintained the currency of our programs while encouraging new ways of understanding and responding to persons at risk.

These new enhancements are:

- » informed by new knowledge about suicide intervention;
- » supported by ASIST program evaluations;
- » responsive to research findings about suicide-intervention-training; and
- » reflect feedback from ASIST trainers and participants (about 100,000 each year).

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ASIST 11 combines significant enhancements and a decade of smaller refinements packaged to make upgrading both worthwhile and manageable.
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Key Features —What’s new?

The purpose

In ASIST 11, suicide first-aid is more clearly focused on ways to increase “safety-for-now” for persons at risk. Safety defines the goal of a suicide first-aid intervention. The workshop design supports the collaborative process that helps participants work toward this goal.

The helping process

The ASIST suicide intervention model is reframed as a pathway for assisting life.

- » The pathway begins with suicide—caregivers are encouraged to ask directly and hear the person at risk’s story about suicide.
- » Recognising that suicide is not the only answer helps persons at risk understand their choices—arousing interest in how to keep safe, at least for now. This is the turning point in the intervention.
- » The second part of the pathway supports this turn toward safety with practical plans and steps that help the person at risk keep safe.

For persons at risk

ASIST 11 provides better, more purposeful ways to engage and work with persons at risk.

- » A key goal is to increase their ownership of and investment in a safe outcome.
- » A core strategy is to reduce threats to their safety while increasing the strengths, supports and changes in situations that can sustain safe choices.
- » A basic assumption is that persons at risk can play a vital role in making choices, developing plans and taking actions that keep them safe.

For participants

The teaching process in ASIST 11 is more interactive and provides more opportunities for practice and new tools help caregivers clarify the scope and nature of their helping role.

- » Caregivers are encouraged to be mindful of their role in an intervention, recognising that this may change depending on the setting, situation or their relationship with the person at risk.
- » Caregivers are also invited to consider the level of guidance they will need to offer as the intervention unfolds.
- » Generic strategies and skills learned in ASIST could be applied to other helping situations.

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ASIST 11 is already widely available throughout Australia. For information about planned workshops or registered ASIST trainers in your area, contact the LivingWorks Australia office - contact details below.
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Opportunities for your Organisation

ASIST 11 can meet a variety of training needs for individuals within your organisation such as:

- » help create a safer work environment;
- » equip staff or volunteers in service roles to respond effectively to persons at risk of suicide;
- » provide suicide-intervention training in the community.

ASIST 11 also recognises the importance of the learning context:

- » the training encourages respect for the diversity of participants/caregivers and persons at risk;
- » the program can be adapted to organisational contexts and diverse community settings;
- » materials acknowledge the importance of cultural safety and cultural adaptations.

The workshop's safety framework encourages collaboration:

- » the framework invites conversations with other service providers and flags the importance of medical, mental health and faith-based communities or resources;
- » the framework encourages co-operative approaches to care matching individual safeplans.

ASIST 11 is an integral part of primary care.

The workshop enables caregivers to respond:

- » sooner and closer to where persons at risk are;
- » in ways that are more directly responsive to their safety needs;
- » and links them into primary care networks as appropriate.



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