

Background Information on Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training Programme



ASIST

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

Programme Overview

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is a 2-day skills-based workshop that equips caregivers for an effective suicide intervention role. The emphasis is on suicide first aid - helping a person at imminent risk stay safe and seek further help. Participants reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about suicide and how these may affect their intervention role. They learn how to notice invitations for help and ask directly about suicide. An intervention framework is provided and modelled. This is followed by extensive opportunities to practice skills needed to implement the model. Community resources likely to promote life links and continuity of care are also identified.

Programme Aims & Objectives

The purpose of the ASIST programme is to enhance caregivers' comfort, confidence and competence in helping a person at imminent risk of suicide.

Participants will be better able to:

- Recognise that caregivers and those at risk are affected by personal and societal attitudes about suicide
- Identify factors that help indicate suicide risk and estimate the level of risk
- Discuss suicide with a person at risk in a direct manner
- Demonstrate the skills required to intervene with a person at risk
- List resources, including themselves, available to widen the circle of care.
- Commit to helping co-ordinate social and professional supports likely to promote suicide safety.

The delivery of this training meets the training objectives set out in Reach Out, (The National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention HSE, 2005). In the HSE, the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) has responsibility for co-ordinating ASIST in Ireland. A national network of local teams of trainers has been established, each led by a local HSE Co-ordinator who takes the lead role in organising the workshops in their geographical area, engaging with local statutory and community groups.

Who Should Apply?

ASIST workshop places are limited therefore preference has to be given to potential participants who are likely to come into contact with someone who is at risk of suicide in their daily lives. The ASIST workshop can be very intense.

You may apply if you:

- Are 18 years of age or older
- Have not been bereaved by suicide or affected by a loss or illness in the last year
- Are personally and emotionally ready to attend a workshop of this nature
- Have not already completed an ASIST workshop. (Note: If you have already completed an ASIST programme, please contact your Local Co-ordinating Office to enquire about ASIST Tune-up. This is a half-day training refresher course, usually taken 3 years or more following completion of an ASIST workshop).

It is strongly recommended that anyone who has been bereaved or affected by a suicide or any other loss within the past 12 months do not attend. Structured training like ASIST is probably not what they need. Persons recently bereaved or affected by suicide may not be interested in learning about helping persons with thoughts of suicide. Often they are angry, sad, confused, numb or experiencing any number of the other initial grief reactions. ASIST has little content and practically no process that responds appropriately to the intense feelings that occur in such an acute situation. For more information for persons bereaved or affected by suicide, please see the You are Not Alone Directory of Bereavement Support Services on http://www.nosp.ie/not_alone_directory.pdf.

ASIST does not offer the following:

An ASIST workshop does not offer therapy or counselling to participants. It is an educational programme and not a support group.

Cost

There is no fee to attend an ASIST workshop. They are funded by the HSE, sometimes in partnership with other Statutory, Community or Voluntary groups.

How to apply for Consideration for a Place?

In order to assess your eligibility and to be placed on a workshop waiting list please complete the following expression of interest application form.