

# Lowering the Barriers: Helping Carers in their role through Training & Support

Suicide Prevention Conference:

Hobart, Tasmania April 29-30, 2009

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# Overview

- Two kinds of carers
- 5 year project
- 167 people trained in Suicide Intervention
- Conducted pre - post questionnaires
- Follow up training



# Who Was Involved?

- 72 Informal Carers (parent, partner, sibling, child, friend)
- 97 Formal Carers (Social Worker, Psychologist, Counsellor, Nurse)
- Age Range 18 - 75
- Cross-cultural



# The Need

- Front Line Caregivers
- Little/no previous training in suicide prevention
- Felt ill-equipped
- Lack of skill was affecting their own Mental Health & well-being



# Extra Challenges

- Age range
- Language & cultural barriers
- Fragility of some participants
- Funding issues
- Vietnam Veterans



# Pre Workshop Questionnaire

- >70% knew someone who had died by suicide
- >65% knew someone who had attempted
- 80% had been a helper
- >80% felt not prepared/partly prepared to intervene
- <20% felt mostly /well prepared



# What Did They Learn?

- ASIST Model of Suicide First Aid
- Common language around suicide
- 3 C's with suicide
  - ✓ comfort
  - ✓ confidence
  - ✓ competence





# Post Workshop Questionnaire

- >90% felt more prepared to ask about suicide
- 100% felt more prepared to listen to the reasons why the person thought of suicide
- 90% felt better skilled to review/assess the current suicide risk
- >90% felt more able to contract a safeplan with a person at risk



# What was Different After Doing ASIST?

- Able to Ask the Question
- Understanding of feelings of ambivalence around suicide
- A model to follow
- Confident to communicate with others involved care plan
- Know when to escalate



# Case Study 1

Joan, aged 67, F/T Carer  
Peter (son) aged 39, has  
schizophrenia. Frequently  
talks of suicide, which is  
frightening for Joan. Peter  
has attempted previously &  
has had several  
hospitalisations.



# Case Study 1

Following ASIST training, Joan feels able to talk to Peter openly about suicidal thoughts.

No longer panics at the mention of suicide.

Feels confident to do a Risk Review & Safe Plan with him.

Knows when to escalate & involve MH Team/GP etc.



# Case Study 2

Stephen, support worker  
(PHM Program) for:

Paul who has depression &  
anxiety disorder, lives alone,  
little family support. Has had  
several hospitalisations.



# Case Study 2

Since doing ASIST, Stephen reports that he feels confident about:

Asking Paul about suicide, then

Using ASIST model to establish risk & involve MH workers if necessary.

Feels less fearful when Paul is feeling low.



# Feedback

- “I will be more alert to the clues”
- “I feel I can talk to MH workers about my family member”
- “Will ask directly about suicide now”
- “I am prepared to listen to reasons for dying & living”
- “Feel better able to support my son”
- “I feel less fear about the topic”



# Follow Up

## Tune-Up

- 6-12 months later
- Refresher on model
- Practise
- Support



# Where to from Here?

- More training for other similar groups of carers
- More follow-up
- Tune-Up training for those already attended ASIST
- More funding!



# Thank you!

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