Recognizing and Responding to Suicide Risk

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Professionals who completed the Recognizing and Responding to Suicide Risk (RRSR): Essential Skills for Clinicians training demonstrated long-term improvement in attitudes toward suicide, confidence in their ability to work with clients who are at risk for suicide, and clinical practice skills. The authors of this study concluded that their research “supports the evidence base of the RRSR training as a cost-effective means for improving clinical skills among mental health clinicians and thereby positive outcomes with clients at risk of suicide.”

The authors suggested that the outcomes measured are related to effective clinical practice. These included:

• Positive attitudes toward suicide prevention (that is, the belief that suicide can be prevented and that suicide prevention falls within the purview of the clinician)

• Confidence in their ability to assess and respond to suicide risk

• Integration of the clinical methods taught in the training into their practice, and whether they sought out additional information and training on suicide prevention after the training

Improvements in the major outcomes at the four-month follow-up suggested that the training resulted in an improved ability to effectively recognize and respond to suicide risk. The sample was composed of professional counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses, psychiatrists, and medical doctors who completed pre- and posttests, as well as a follow-up test four months after completing the training. Recognizing and Responding to Suicide Risk: Essential Skills for Clinicians is a 2-day training developed by the American Association for Suicidology. Recognizing and Responding to Suicide Risk is listed in Section III of the SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention.

This research summary is based on information in: J. M., Osteen, P., Jones, A., & Berman, A. (2012). Evaluation of the recognizing and responding to suicide risk training. Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior, 42(5) [1], 471-85

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