

SUICIDE AWARENESS: PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, & POSTVENTION

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Description:

The issue of suicide is disorienting and disturbing to almost everyone, including many mental health professionals. A leading cause of death in the United States and Canada, suicide has remained largely a taboo in our society and a neglected topic in the training for most counselors. Fortunately, this taboo is changing. In the last decade, suicide has been recognized as a public health problem that requires a coordinated national effort to address its devastating impact on society. Great strides have been made in developing suicide prevention programs, increasing our knowledge of the causes of and treatments for suicidality, and providing services for those survivors who grieve the loss of someone to suicide.

This practical seminar is designed for the counselor, clergyperson, or human services professional who would like an overview of contemporary suicidology. The emphasis will be on cutting edge and practical knowledge about suicide that caregivers can put to immediate use. Three broad areas of interest regarding suicide will be addressed. The first is an overview of new developments in suicide epidemiology and prevention programs in community and school settings. The second will be information about risk assessment and intervention with suicidal individuals. The third will focus on guidelines for work with bereavement after suicide. Case examples, recent research, and interactive small group discussion will be used to illustrate relevant issues and interventions. While not specifically a course in the management of suicidal clients, the seminar will provide a broad framework for clinicians to understand and intervene with suicidality. The program will also be of relevance to program administrators who deal with suicide prevention, and grief counselors and other caregivers who provide support after a suicide.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Reflect on their personal and professional assumptions about suicide.
- Report at least three facts about the epidemiology of suicide in the United States.
- Identify a number of factors that might contribute to the development of suicidality in an individual.
- List four common elements of empirically supported suicide prevention programs.

- Recognize both acute and longer term risk factors for suicide attempts or completion.
- Identify common elements of treatment models for working directly with suicidal ideation and behavior.
- Describe prominent themes in the bereavement of persons bereaved by the suicide of a loved one.
- Identify various intervention options for individuals and groups impacted by suicide.
- List common elements of interventions for suicide loss survivors.
- Begin to formulate plans for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention programs in one's current work setting.

Seminar Schedule

Morning

8:00-8:30 *Registration*

8:30 –10:00 ***Understanding Suicide: An Overview of Contemporary Suicidology***

- Why Do People Take Their Life? – Models for Understanding Suicide
- Suicide Epidemiology: Who Takes Their Life?
- General Risk Factors for Suicide
- Common Myths About Suicide
- Summary: Suicide as the “Perfect Storm” of Contributing Factors

10:00-10:15 *Break*

10:15-11:15 ***Suicide Prevention: Examples of Programs That Offer New Hope***

- U.S. Air Force Program
- Screening for Mental Health/ S.O.S. Programs
- Summary: Emerging Principles of Prevention Programs

11:15-12:00 ***Suicide Prevention: Principles of Assessment & Intervention***

- Screening for Suicide Risk
- Longer Term Risk
- Imminent Risk

12:00-1:00 *Lunch (Own your own)*

Afternoon

1:00-2:30 ***Suicide Prevention: Principles of Assessment & Intervention***

- Treatment Alliance

- B. Assessment of Risk, Contracting, & Hospitalization
- C. Problem-Solving: Targeting The Suicidal Mode
- D. Psychotropic Medications
- E. Family Involvement
- F. Therapist Availability
- G. Case Discussion
- H. Summary: Principles of Intervention with Suicidality

2:30-2:45 *Break*

2:45-4:30 ***Suicide Postvention: Walking the Journey with Survivors***

- A. Who Is a Suicide Survivor?
- B. Common Themes and Problems for Survivors
- C. The Impact of Suicide on Families
- D. What Do Survivors Tell Us They Need?
- E. Intervention Options for Survivors
- F. Summary: Clinical Guidelines for Working with Survivors
- G. Case examples

Seminar Format:

This seminar will include lecture, class discussion, case presentation, and audio-visual presentation. Dr. Jordan's teaching style encourages interaction with the audience, including ample opportunities for questions and discussion.