



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Contents

Essential Information for safeTALK Candidates	1
The role of safeTALK in a suicide-safer community	2
Selection criteria for safeTALK T4T participants.....	3
Overview of safeTALK Training for Trainers (T4T).....	5
Obligations after safeTALK Training for Trainers (T4T)	6
Self-selection: is a safeTALK T4T right for you?	8
Instructor feedback	9

Essential Information for safeTALK Candidates

Designed by LivingWorks Education, safeTALK is a half-day workshop that trains community members to recognize persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to intervention resources. In this way, safeTALK is a complement to the skills of suicide intervention caregivers such as those who have attended the two-day ASIST workshop. LivingWorks developed safeTALK to meet a number of widely requested program features, including:

- Delivery to up to 30 participants in half a day or less
- Accessibility to all participants regardless of prior experience or training
- Customizable elements to suit the specific needs of different participant groups
- Integration with other community suicide intervention resources

By attending a safeTALK workshop, participants become alert helpers able to provide practical assistance to people at risk of suicide. An alert helper...

- Recognizes when someone might be having thoughts of suicide
- Knows that opportunities to help a person at risk are sometimes missed, dismissed, or avoided
- Wants people with thoughts of suicide to invite them to help
- Engages a person at risk in direct and open talk about suicide
- Listens to a person at risk of suicide to show recognition that the thoughts are serious
- Knows the name and contact information of local suicide intervention resources
- Moves quickly to connect a person at risk with someone who can initiate a suicide intervention

By carrying out the TALK steps taught in safeTALK (Tell, Ask, Listen, and KeepSafe), a suicide alert helper offers potentially life-saving assistance to someone at risk.

The role of safeTALK in a suicide-safer community

SafeTALK teaches suicide alertness skills that complement caregivers with intervention skills like those learned in LivingWorks' ASIST program. These caregivers could include a mental health professional, counselor, safety officer, crisis line operator, or many others—but they can't be everywhere at once. People with thoughts of suicide may not know about resources, or may be reluctant to approach them because of the stigma that often surrounds suicide. This is where safeTALK-trained alert helpers come in: they make early recognition and referral possible on a far larger scale than communities can afford through intervention skills training alone. With more safeTALK-trained helpers, suicide intervention caregivers will be used more often.

safeTALK trainers need to identify and determine the availability of ASIST-trained and other suicide intervention resources in their community. This information enables safeTALK participants to make a KeepSafe connection when they recognize someone at risk. When it appears that there are few resources in a community or that access to these suicide intervention caregivers is restricted, this must be highlighted within safeTALK. It is likely that communities with limited helping resources have few suicide alert helpers either, with access to telephone help—such a crisis line—often being the only resource. In a community like this, safeTALK can still be used to train suicide alert helpers and to help make the community aware that they also need readily available suicide intervention resources.

Before participating in a safeTALK T4T, develop a list of suicide intervention resources in your community, organization, or region. Talk to them about what you will be learning and teaching, and find out how they can help. They may be able to act as community support resources during your safeTALK workshops and provide a KeepSafe connection for the participants you train.

Selection criteria for safeTALK T4T participants

What will you get out of participating in a two-day safeTALK T4T? While safeTALK's curriculum is sufficiently structured and detailed to guarantee high levels of participant satisfaction, an aspiring trainer's existing skills are a key factor. A good attitude—including dedication to suicide prevention and a strong will to succeed—is even more important. The following information on selection criteria may help you determine whether you want to become a safeTALK trainer.

Here are some of the factors that tend to increase the likelihood of becoming a successful safeTALK trainer:

- You have completed an ASIST workshop
- You are a skilled presenter
- You have good group facilitation skills
- You are committed to promoting suicide safety through open and direct discussion
- You are proficient with PowerPoint (if you want to customize the safeTALK experience)

The importance of a trainer's presentation skills varies with the style used to lead the workshop. Most of safeTALK is a lecture presentation but a taped co-trainer, whom the trainer can use in whole or in part, can present much of that material. When using the taped co-trainer extensively, the trainer's facilitation skills can be more fully utilized, although care must be taken to make sure all of the content can be covered in three hours. When using the co-trainer sparingly or not at all, presentation skills become more important.

It is strongly encouraged that you attend an ASIST workshop before becoming a safeTALK trainer. As an ASIST caregiver or trainer, you will know something about suicide intervention—the more, the better. Be aware that only a very limited and tightly structured subset of intervention knowledge can be taught in safeTALK. You must understand what safeTALK can and cannot do. Learning to adapt one's knowledge of intervention to safeTALK's goals is one of the challenges for those with extensive knowledge of suicide intervention.

A safeTALK trainer's attitude toward suicide is another important consideration. safeTALK teaches certain fundamental assumptions about suicide that safeTALK trainers need to endorse:

- Suicide is not a mental illness, and the reasons for suicide thoughts can be understood
- Most people with thoughts of suicide want to live
- Directly or indirectly, most people with suicide thoughts express they want help to stay alive
- It would be easier for people at risk to ask for help directly if fewer people were judgmental or frightened about suicide
- Open, comfortable, and direct talk about suicide is the key to making more people open, comfortable, and direct in dealing with it

- Most people with thoughts of suicide do not injure or kill themselves, and with help even fewer would
- The best way to identify people with thoughts of suicide is to ask them directly about their thoughts
- Asking about thoughts of suicide does not “put the idea in someone’s head” if they aren’t already thinking about it
- Talking about thoughts of suicide with someone else will not cause you to be at risk of suicide
- All people with thoughts of suicide should be taken seriously

Your belief in these assumptions can be severely tested in presenting safeTALK. Simply endorsing them is not enough—you need to have confidence in the wisdom supporting them. You also need to have confidence that the participants will recognize that wisdom. Calm, patient assuredness is crucial to participants learning safeTALK’s key messages.

Overview of safeTALK Training for Trainers (T4T)

You can expect safeTALK to have a similar feel to any other LivingWorks program you have experienced. There will be a focus on a positive learning environment, encouragement of open and honest discussion, respect for differences, support of each other, and plenty of opportunities for active participation. You can also expect it to be hard work, with an emphasis on the seriousness of suicide and the part you can play in helping communities become safer.

The safeTALK T4T schedule is as follows:

- Day 1 morning: Observation and participation in an actual safeTALK training.
- Day 1 afternoon: Study and preparation to present an assigned part of safeTALK.
- Day 2 morning: Annotated demonstration of safeTALK, integrating what participants have learned about the training process.
- Day 2 afternoon: Participants present the part of safeTALK that they prepared for on Day 1. The T4T ends with a look forward to a new trainer's first safeTALK workshop, including some tips on implementation, use of technology, policies, and procedures that all safeTALK trainers are expected to follow.
- Post-T4T: Additional reading and planning in preparation for the first safeTALK workshop.

Upon completing the T4T, you will receive a series of materials for use in presenting safeTALK. These include:

- A safeTALK Trainer Manual and study guide
- A USB drive with the safeTALK presentation slides
- A DVD with two versions of safeTALK—one with the video co-trainer and one without
- safeTALK video vignettes to select based on your audience's needs
- safeTALK sticker, brochure, wallet card, lanyard, and badge

The audiovisual materials enable you to use all, none, or select parts of the prerecorded co-trainer presentation according to your preference. You can also replace the standard non-alert/alert vignettes with alternatives from a growing video library. Another option is editing the safeTALK PowerPoint slides; doing so requires proficiency with PowerPoint and having access to a data projector for trainings.

To host your own subsequent safeTALK workshops after completing your T4T, you can order safeTALK participant kits from LivingWorks.

Obligations after safeTALK Training for Trainers (T4T)

Provisional Trainer

After completing your T4T, you are considered a provisional safeTALK trainer. The provisional nature of your trainer status applies only internally within the LivingWorks documentation system, and to external audiences you are considered a full Registered Trainer. New trainers need approximately two and half days of initial training plus another two days for preparation and review for their first three safeTALKs workshops.

As a Provisional Trainer, you will need to successfully complete three safeTALK trainings, each with a minimum of ten participants—15 is the recommended minimum—within one year of your T4T to receive your safeTALK Registered Trainer certificate. If you do your training with another safeTALK trainer, each of you must have done all parts of the training at least once.

Trainer listing

Upon becoming a Registered safeTALK Trainer, you will need to complete at least two safeTALK trainings every year to maintain your status. If this requirement is not met, your safeTALK trainer status will lapse in LivingWorks' database automatically, and you will need to undergo a re-listing process in order to continue training.

Benefits of listing: As a safeTALK trainer, your name or trainer ID number (your preference) will be listed on LivingWorks' website along with information about what participants can expect from a safeTALK workshop. This will help participants in your area find, learn more about, and register for your safeTALK trainings. In addition, you'll receive support from LivingWorks including FAQs, a workshop posting board, a quality control system that assures your participants a global standard of excellence, and materials to advertise and advocate for your workshops.

Re-listing: If your trainer status lapses after you become a Registered Trainer, you can request a reinstatement within six months of your lapsed status with the expectation that you will complete three safeTALK trainings within a year. You will have to purchase any updated trainer materials at cost and pay a re-listing fee. Your safeTALK trainer status will be cancelled if the re-listing requirements are not met.

Materials

You must order and use safeTALK Resource Kits for every safeTALK training. Each safeTALK participant receives a wallet card reminder of the TALK steps, two reusable stickers identifying the participant's willingness and ability to help, a 24-page resource book, and a certificate.

Financial returns to LivingWorks are mostly used to offset the initial and ongoing development costs of safeTALK, as well as the costs of the materials and the provision of trainer support. All of these costs were paid for and financed by LivingWorks without subsidies, grants, or tax benefits.

Posting trainings

Whether your safeTALK training is open and available to community members or closed and already filled, you must post the date of your training on the LivingWorks website as soon as a date is set.

Reporting requirements

You must submit a trainer report through the LivingWorks website for each training you conduct. This is an important part of the quality assurance process and is essential in maintaining a standard of excellence. Please keep the participant feedback forms and a copy of your trainer report from your last five trainings. LivingWorks may request to see them or you may need to submit them should you want to become a safeTALK Instructor and provide T4T training to others.

Presentation standards

safeTALK is standardized and customizable. It must be presented in a manner consistent with the Trainer Manual, the T4T course, and approved standards for customized materials. However, some elements of your own style can fit within that standard. You must always use current safeTALK materials. From time to time, there will be improvements to safeTALK. As a listed trainer, you will either be able to download these improvements at no cost or purchase them at cost plus shipping and handling. If there is a change to safeTALK participant materials and you still have some supplies of the older version in stock, you may use the remaining stock.

Presentation length: safeTALK is presented in about three hours unless approved safeTALK supplementary materials are used. All trainings must be completed over the course of a single day.

Participant numbers: The number of participants should not be less than ten or more than 30. The preferred minimum is 15.

Community support resource: A community support resource should be present at all of your trainings to serve as your backup resource for those who might be having thoughts of suicide or who might uncover unresolved grief issues.

Self-selection: is a safeTALK T4T right for you?

Reading this document and agreeing to the commitments in the accompanying application is one of the key steps to participating in a safeTALK T4T. Where applicable, your employer's signature is also required. Your signature and your employer's signature on your application form indicate acceptance of the time and resource commitments involved in becoming a safeTALK trainer. You will also sign an agreement with similar content at the end of the T4T. LivingWorks takes quality, individual commitment, and employer support very seriously. We want you to fully understand what will be required of you as a LivingWorks safeTALK trainer.

Making the right decision: If possible, it is highly recommended that you attend a safeTALK training or serve as the community support resource at a safeTALK training before applying. Once you know the date of your T4T, schedule your first safeTALK workshop to occur within one month of completing the training. Having your first training scheduled in advance correlates so strongly with eventual success that we recommend you not attend a T4T until you have your first safeTALK scheduled. When a candidate decides that they do not want to become a trainer, only the cost of the materials can be refunded and these materials must be returned to LivingWorks. Consider your decision carefully. Do not let yourself be talked into attending the T4T if you do not feel that being a safeTALK trainer is right for you—but know that if it is, the rewards are well worth it.

As a safeTALK trainer, you can have a very positive impact upon participants' learning, and at times can also contribute to participants getting in touch with emotions and experiences that they may have not fully integrated. Most importantly, you can provide suicide alertness skills that will enable participants to save lives in your organization or community.

Instructor feedback

Within one week of your T4T, you will receive feedback from your safeTALK Instructor, usually routed through LivingWorks. This feedback will typically offer ideas and suggestions for your first workshop. It might include the suggestion or requirement to seek consultation or technical support. Your consultation and support could take place by phone, video chat, or face-to-face meeting, and there might be a fee associated with your consultation. This charge, if any, is your responsibility and should be worked out with the consulting trainer directly. A request for additional consultation or support is a relatively rare but essential way of making sure that all safeTALK trainers meet a standard of excellence, which helps to assure participants they are receiving a world-class program.

Rarely, a safeTALK Instructor might recommend that a T4T participant consider contributing to suicide prevention in a way other than becoming a safeTALK trainer. In that case, the participant must return the materials, and a refund will be issued.

The criteria your Instructor will be using to determine the feedback you will receive at your T4T is organized around the TALK acronym.

Tell: Do you present the content in an open and direct way that is easy to understand? Do your comments convey endorsement of the fundamental safeTALK beliefs?

Ask: Do you ask questions in a direct way that encourages open discussion about suicide?

Listen: Do you listen in an open, respectful, and inviting way that encourages participants to express their questions, comments, and concerns?

KeepSafe: Do you facilitate awareness of, and connections to and between, helpers who might be in a community? Do you interact with participants and facilitate the training in a way that promotes safety, openness, and hopefulness about suicide-safer communities?

You will have to make an investment of time and energy to become an effective safeTALK trainer, but it will be worth it. safeTALK can pay back what you put into it many times over, and as over 2,500 safeTALK trainers worldwide can attest, the reward of saving a life from suicide is priceless.