

A Campus Example:

Syracuse University and
Campus Connect

How We Determined the Direction for our Training

- Experiences from Syracuse University:
 - Overwhelmed gatekeepers
 - Overwhelmed and disconnected students
- What we know from crisis intervention research:
 - Importance of empathic understanding and emotional processing
- What we know from therapy process research:
 - Importance of therapeutic relationship
- What we know from learning theory:
 - Active vs. Passive learning
- What we know from multicultural theory:
 - Knowledge, Skills, and Awareness
- Are there parallel processes at play in gatekeeper training?

Campus Connect: Basic Philosophies

- Gatekeepers can be trained to work with students in crisis
 - Not to fear them, punish them, or shut them down
- Gatekeepers can be trained to identify, understand, and relate to emotional experiences of students in crisis
 - Result is enhanced empathy skills and enhanced gatekeeper-student relationship
- Gatekeepers experience greater awareness of themselves and others when active learning is emphasized over passive learning
 - Result is increased comfort and skill in responding to students in crisis
- Students in crisis can benefit directly from support and understanding provided by gatekeepers
 - Result is reduced suicidal ideation and increased likelihood of following through with referral as a result of the connection and interaction with the gatekeeper

Campus Connect Core Components: Knowledge

- Basic statistics and definitions
- Warning signs
- Risk factors
- Myths
- Referral sources

Campus Connect Core Components: Relationship Skills

- Skills to Connect with Others
 - How to ask the “right” questions
 - How to express understanding
 - How to facilitate expression
 - Listening with awareness and empathy

Campus Connect Core Components: Experienced Self-Awareness

- To connect with others, you must be emotionally present and available
- It is important to sufficiently prepare gatekeepers for powerful emotions that occur in crisis situations
- Basic training philosophy:
 - Bring the relationship into the intervention by bringing the gatekeepers into the training
 - Gatekeepers as active learning participants

A Few Experiential Examples

- Personalizing Crisis
 - Helps overcome fear of crisis
 - Establishes “helpful” response behaviors
- Non-verbal interviewing
 - Experience of feeling misunderstood
 - Underscore importance of direct, concise questions
- The power of expression
 - A useful tool in overcoming the fear of asking about suicide and to emphasize value of open discussion of suicide
- The anxiety of sitting with suicidal people
- Who attempts Suicide: Photo Exercise
- Role Plays

A Few Cautions About Role Plays

- Can be one of the most effective training tools
- Consider the format:
 - Individual vs. Group
 - Why Campus Connect employs group role play
 - Importance of consistent role play across trainings
 - Importance of ending role play successfully
- Importance of processing trainee emotions
- Should not be the only experiential exercise

Evaluation and Measurement:

An Example From Syracuse

Assessing Effectiveness: Design Issues

- Important factors to consider:
 - Pre/post assessment designs
 - Consistent experience across groups
 - Incorporating a control group
 - Follow-up assessments

Assessing Effectiveness: Measures Used

- Determining how you actually want to measure effectiveness
- Our objective was measuring
 - Knowledge/Skills
 - Attitude/Confidence
- SIRI-II
- SITA

Year One

- All 150 Resident Assistants participated in Campus Connect training
- Unfortunately, only 82 pre-post assessments available due to difficulty in administering pre-assessments

Results For Year One

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for SIRI-2

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pre-test	76.6690	22.13982	82
Post-test	54.5829	14.87189	82
Difference	22.0861	15.66558	

$p < .001$

*The mean represents the participant's deviation from the expert score; therefore a smaller number is a better score

Year Two

- All new Resident Assistants participated in Campus Connect training
- To assess significance of experiential exercises we employed a different research design
 - RAs divided into 6 groups
 - 4 of those groups completed training in standard 3 hour format along with pre and post measures
 - 2 groups completed training over 2 days, with all experiential exercises withheld until day 2
 - These groups completed pre/post/post measures

Assessing the Importance of Experiential Exercises

- Again, scores are based on SIRI-II
- Group One
 - Mean pre-training: 84.33
 - Mean post-training: 60.19
- Group Two
 - Mean pre-training: 79.23
 - Mean post-training: 70.84
 - Mean post-training: 56.55
- All in-group and between-group comparisons of difference scores were significant at $p < .01$

Future Research Plans

- Follow-up focus groups to receive feedback from trainees regarding experiences of implementation
- Video taped role plays
- Tracking referrals
- Broadening the definition of gatekeeper
- Daring to think bigger!
 - Can we impact our campus culture?
 - Broad based student survey measuring loneliness, perceived support, and connection