



Suicide Intervention Trainings and Networks Hosted by CMHA-WECB in Windsor Essex: January 2020 - July 2023 REPORT

Canadian Mental Health Association, Windsor-Essex County Branch

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Roots of Hope: A Community Suicide Prevention Model

The World Health Organization states that suicide is a global public health concern with far-reaching impacts on individuals, families, friends and communities, estimating that more than 700,000 people die by suicide globally each year, and for every suicide many more people deliberately harm themselves.

In 2021, as part of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Windsor-Essex County Branch (CMHA-WECB) and the Windsor Essex County Suicide Prevention Coalition's (WECSPC) ongoing commitment to life promotion and suicide prevention, Windsor, Ontario joined over 18 community organizations in Roots of Hope: A Community Suicide Prevention Model. A community-led suicide prevention project, Roots of Hope builds on community expertise to implement suicide interventions tailored to local contexts.

A community suicide prevention model recognizes that one person, organization or system cannot prevent suicide; it requires a comprehensive holistic approach. Communities provide social support to the people most in need, engage in supplemental care, raise awareness, reduce stigma, and support those bereaved by suicide.

The model builds on community expertise to implement suicide prevention and life promotion initiatives based on 5 pillars and 13 guiding principles:

1. Means Safety. (Identify "hot spots" and implement measures to limit access to the suicide methods being used.)
2. Public Awareness. (Create local educational campaigns (e.g., posters, brochures, social media)).
3. Research. (Set research priorities, surveillance, checking, and evaluation to increase the suicide prevention evidence base.)
4. Specialized Supports. (Develop a range of possible prevention, intervention, and postvention services (e.g., peer support, support groups, workplace interventions, as well as coordinated planning and access to services.)
5. Training and Networks. (Provide training and learning opportunities for community gatekeepers (e.g., physicians, first responders, nurses, HR staff and managers, teachers).)

Above: Suggest eliminating the period after naming the 5 pillars and putting it in the same sentence with brackets or using a colon.

The guiding principles:

1. Comprehensive
2. Collaboration/Coordination
3. Culturally Appropriate
4. Recovery-Oriented
5. Evidence-Informed
6. Measurement and Evaluation
7. Lived Experience
8. Flexible
9. Strengths-Based
10. Span the Continuum
11. Community Centered
12. Sustainable

13. Innovative

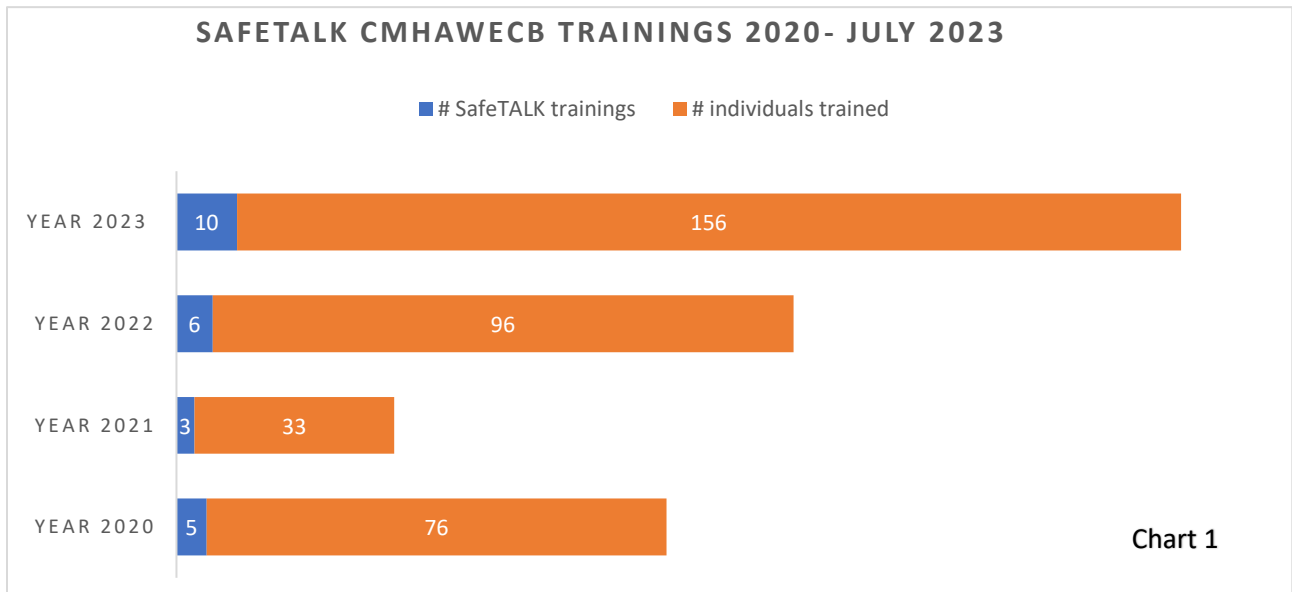
The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of data and key findings from the 5th pillar in the Roots of Hope Model: Training and Networks. This report will include a large sample size of trainings, evaluations, and feedback collected from January 2020 until August 2023. All trainings were related to suicide awareness, prevention and intervention, as well as postvention. Through this report, we hope to highlight key findings that can further help inform goals and work to be continued throughout 2023-2025, both at CMHA-WECB as well with the Windsor Essex Suicide Prevention Coalition (WESPC).

safeTALK Training:

safeTALK is a half-day gatekeeper training program that teaches participants to recognize and engage individuals who might be having thoughts of suicide, and to connect them with community resources trained in suicide intervention. SafeTALK stresses safety while challenging taboos that inhibit open talk about suicide. The program recommends that an ASIST-trained resource or other community support resource be at all training sessions. The ‘safe’ acronym of safeTALK stands for **‘Suicide Alertness for Everyone.’** The ‘TALK’ acronym stands for the actions that one does to help those with thoughts of suicide: **Tell, Ask, Listen, and Keep Safe.**

Literature around safeTALK can be found at: <https://www.livingworks.net/safetalk>

Chart 1: SafeTALK CMHA-WECB held trainings from January 2020 to July 2023.



*Years 2020 and 2021 resulted in fewer individuals trained in safeTALK due to COVID-19 and public health restrictions. It is important to note that in early 2020, CMHA-WECB and the University of Windsor were able to provide students, faculty, and staff safeTALK training through a Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health awarded grant.

All safeTALK trainings were either open to community or privately run within an organization. Based on registrations, most individuals that took part in safeTALK identified themselves as volunteers, students, post-secondary students, members working in unemployment, housing services, social services, mental health and addiction services, foster care parents, peer support, and Indigenous healing and wellness services. We have observed a huge increase in requests for safeTALK from private organizations looking to train staff or volunteers.

Chart 2: 2020 Participant Preparedness

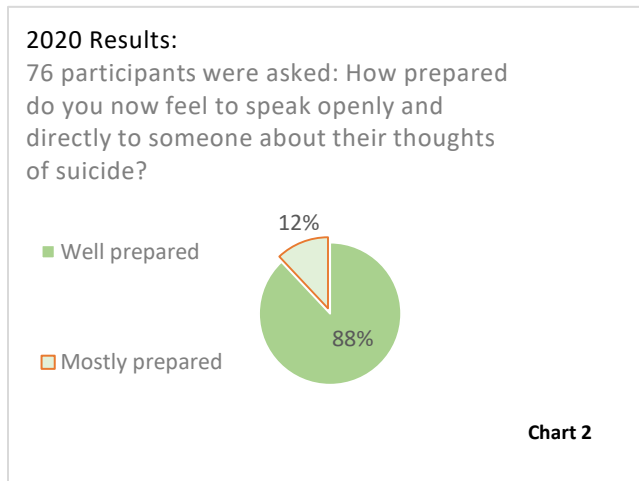


Chart 3: 2021 Participant Preparedness

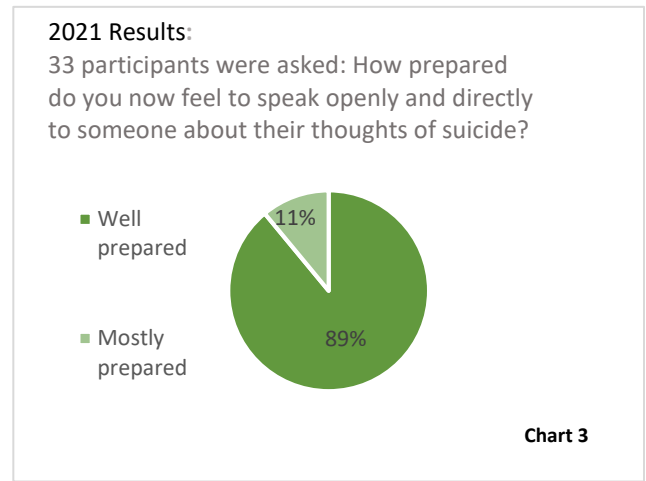


Chart 4: 2022 Participant Preparedness

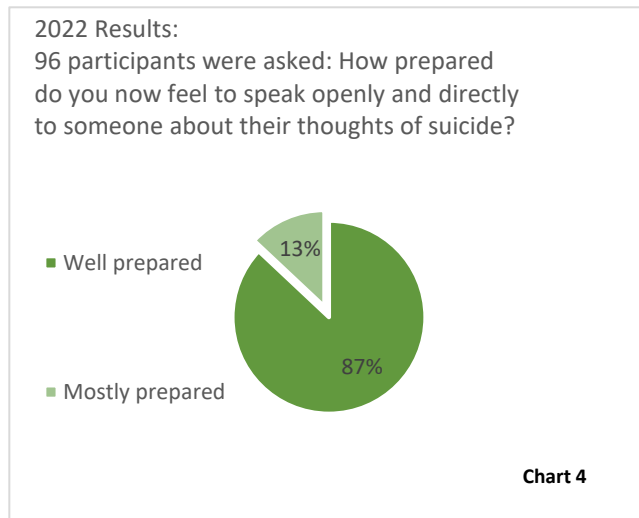


Chart 5: 2023 Participant Preparedness

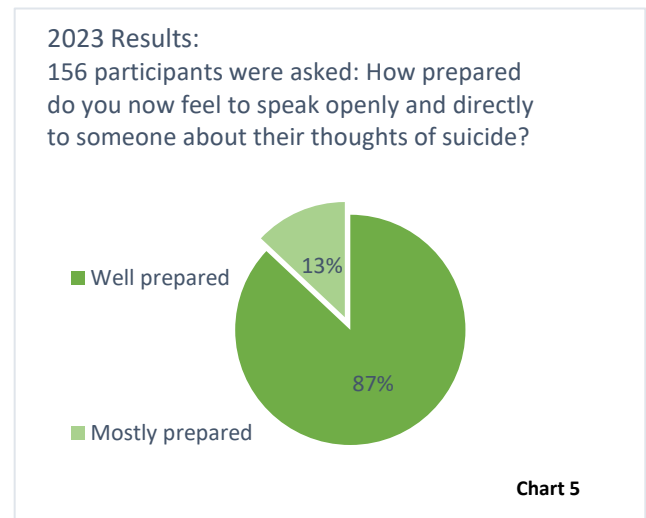
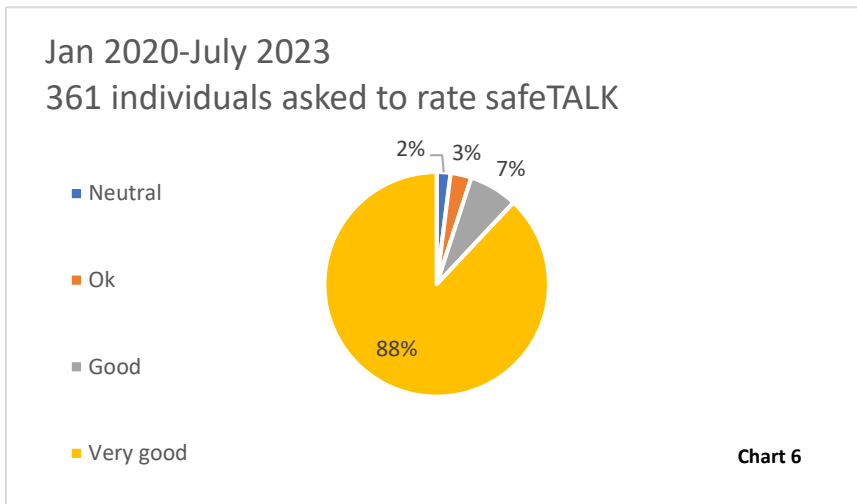


Chart 6: 361 participants rate safeTALK training



KEY FINDINGS:

CMHA-WECB’s mental health educators and affiliate safeTALK trainers have delivered over 24 safeTALK trainings throughout Windsor Essex County from January 2020 to August 2023. These trainings have resulted in a total of 361 suicide alert helpers added to the Windsor Essex Community who are ready, willing and able to speak to someone about their thoughts of suicide. Based on the charts above, there were significant outcomes that resulted from their participation in the workshop:

- Participants gained new knowledge, skills, and improved attitudes toward people who may be thinking of suicide.
- They were better able to explore the invitations (signs and indicators) of people thinking about suicide.
- They reported being better able and more willing to support people thinking about suicide.
- They were more aware of the crisis and mental health services and supports available in the Windsor-Essex County region.

GOALS for 2023-2025:

Working within the Roots of Hope framework in collaboration with the WESPC (Windsor Essex Suicide Prevention Coalition), CMHA-WECB’s mental health education team will continue to focus on enhancing/augmenting helper preparedness in speaking to someone about their thoughts of suicide. This will occur through increased gatekeeper trainings (throughout the community), increased opportunities for learning about programs, services and networks through events, campaigns, brochures, and outreach. A report released from the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) on the current state of suicide and self-harm will continue to inform our work through engaging priority populations as well as ensuring helpers feel ready, willing, and able to help someone thinking of suicide. To view the current report from the Windsor Essex County Health Unit: <https://www.wechu.org/reports/self-harm>

Specific goals include:

- Increase safeTALK trainings across various sectors (families of first responders, peer support and construction/labour sector), and offer free trainings or lower cost trainings at various times and locations to meet the needs of the community.
- Offer bi-monthly open community safeTALK.

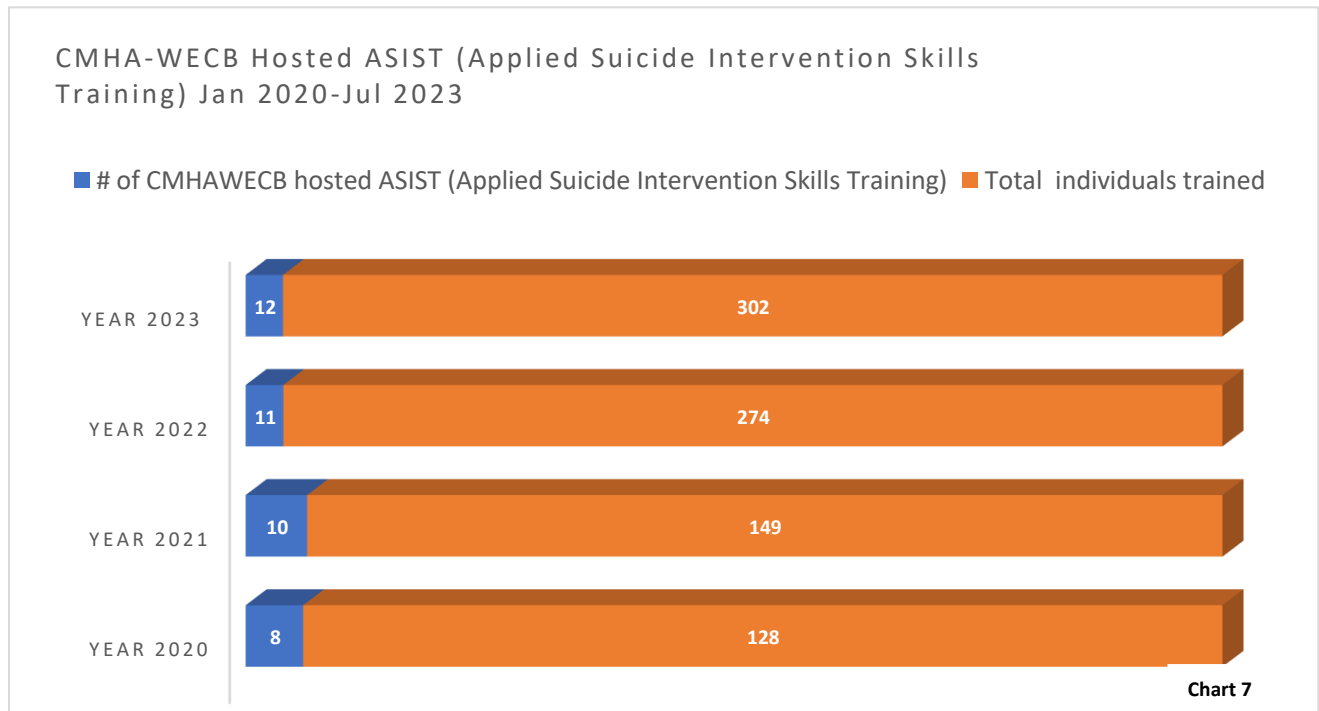
ASIST (Applied Suicide Interventions Skills Training) Trainings January 2020 – August 2023

LivingWorks Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) teaches participants to provide a skilled intervention and develop a collaborative safety plan to keep someone safe and alive. Trusted by professionals yet learnable by anyone, this training is 15 hours in length with two ASIST trainers. The ASIST curriculum includes suicide intervention skills development, confidential and trainer-facilitated small-group learning environments, established trainer protocols to address vulnerable or at-risk participants, knowledge of local resources that can be accessed, consistent use of positive feedback, a blend of larger-group experiential challenges and the safety of small-group opportunities to test new skills, no-fault simulation exercises, and the use of adult-learning principles.

Literature around ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) can be found:

<https://legacy.livingworks.net/resources/research-and-evaluation/>
<file:///C:/Users/jalmeida/Downloads/Evidence-in-Support-of-the-ASIST-11-Program.pdf>

Chart 7: Applied Suicide Interventions Skills Trainings run by CMHA-WECB open to community or private requested trainings within an organization or workplace.



*ASIST training cannot be run with less than 8 participants and no more than 30 per training.

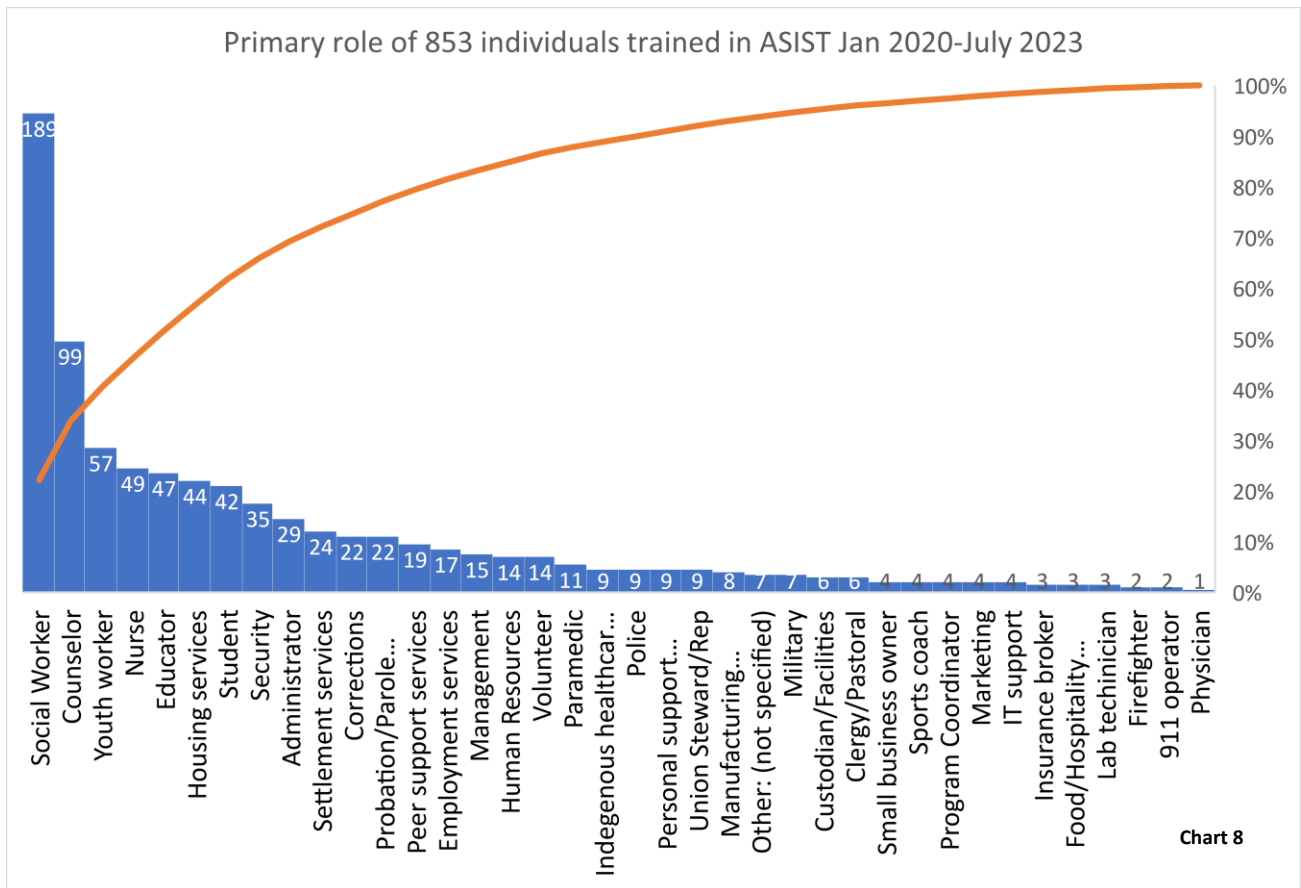
*Year 2020 and 2021 resulted in fewer individuals trained in ASIST due to COVID-19 restrictions, and protocols for enhanced safety.

The trainings were either open to the community or privately run within an organization. Based on information from Chart 7, we can observe that CMHA-WECB has almost doubled the number of individuals trained from 2022-2023. The mental health education and training team have 5 additional scheduled trainings to be completed by the end of 2023.

The trainers have observed a huge increase in requests for ASIST from private non-profit organizations as well as workplaces providing training to administrators and human resource departments. The impact of suicides is far reaching and we have supported numerous workplaces that have been impacted by losing someone to suicide. The mental health education team works collaboratively with organizations to help create tiers of safety in the workplace around suicide prevention and postvention supports.

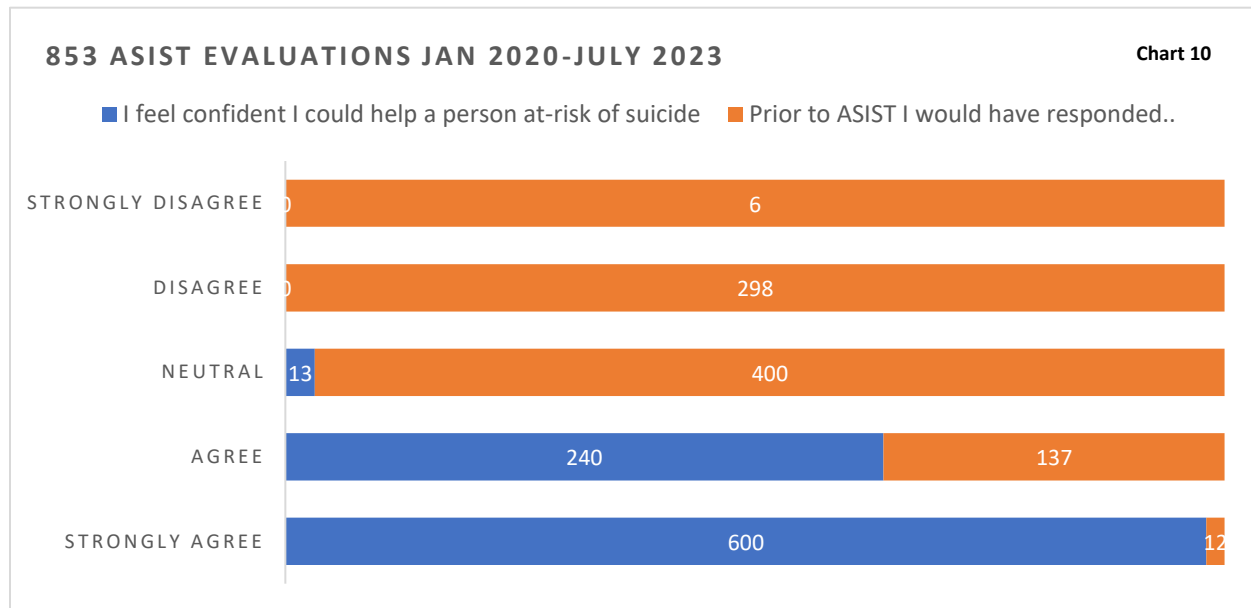
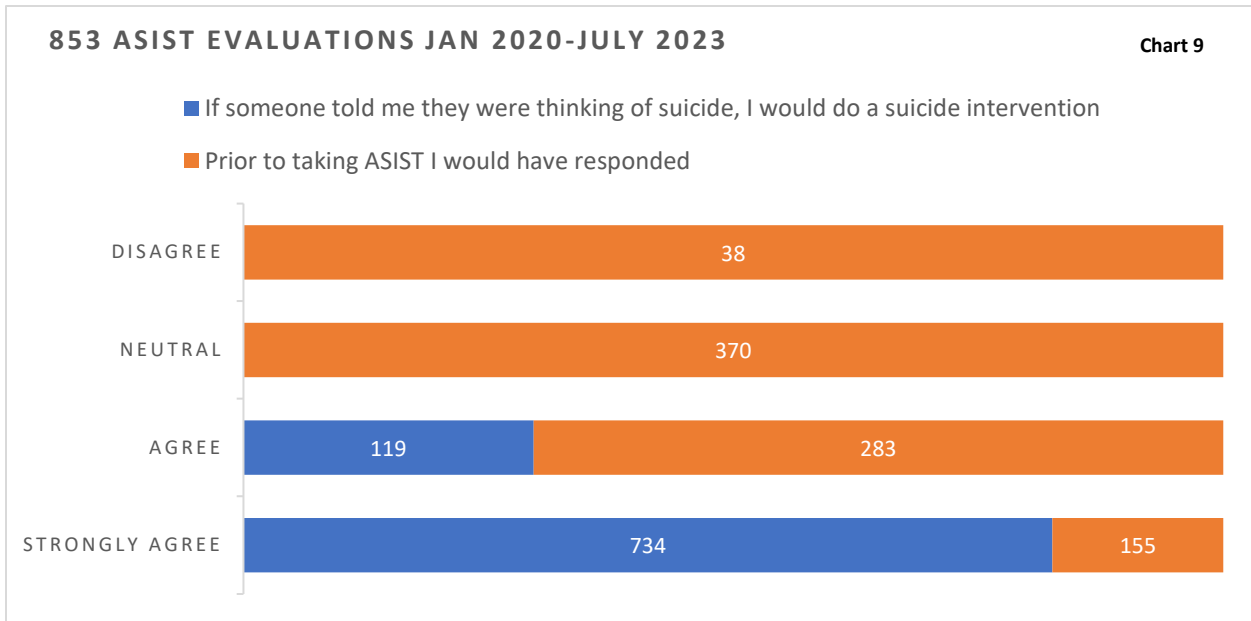
CMHA-WECB has been able to train an increased amount of Security, Border Services, as well as Probation and Parole Officers at no cost through generous donors and grants.

Chart 8: Primary roles of 853 individuals trained in ASIST at CMHA-WECB hosted trainings from Jan 2020 to July 2023.



Based on information collected through post-training evaluations we can observe through chart 8, each participant's primary role. The graph provides the numbers in ascending order with social workers, counsellors, youth workers, nurses, educators, housing services and security having taken this training in greater numbers. This graph also highlights and identifies areas in which numbers were low for certain roles or sectors, such as emergency response services including fire, paramedics, police and military.

Chart 9, 10, 11: 853 ASIST evaluations received from CMHA-WECB hosted trainings. Individuals were asked a set of questions around suicide intervention and helper preparedness prior to and after having taken ASIST.



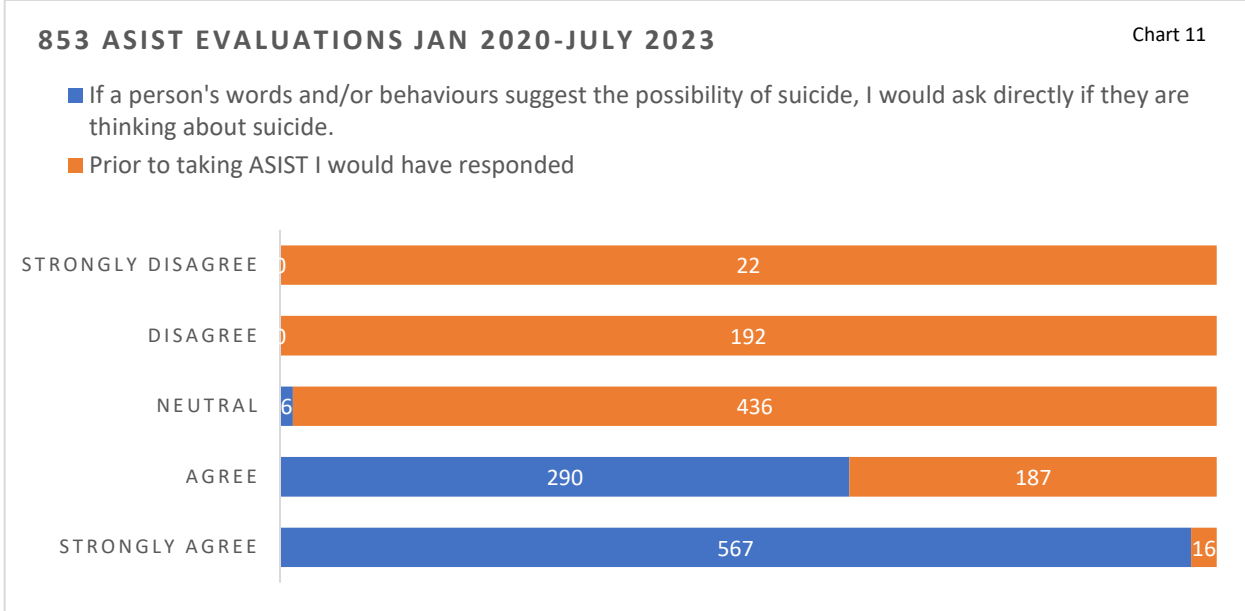


Chart 12: 853 individuals were asked to indicate practical use of ASIST both in personal and work life.



Key Findings:

The ASIST evaluations received from participants from January 2020 to August 2023 have significantly shown that most trainees report elevated levels of satisfaction with the training as well as increased self-reported knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to suicide post-training.

We have seen a significant increase in requests for both private and open community trainings involving all helping sectors and greater involvement from health care centres and family health teams.

Goals 2023-2025

Working within the Roots of Hope framework in collaboration with the Windsor-Essex Suicide Prevention Coalition, the mental health education team will continue to focus on increasing the number of suicide first aid helpers in the region that are ready, willing and able to help keep someone safe from suicide.

- The education and training team will continue to offer an open community ASIST once a month with the possibility for twice monthly when one training is at capacity. The team will also continue to explore opportunities to offer ASIST at no cost through grant opportunities or generous donors.
- A report released from WECHU on current state of suicide and self-harm (<https://www.wechu.org/reports/self-harm>) will continue to inform our work through engaging priority populations, increasing trainings to community health centres, family health teams, and hospitals and emergency services.
- The trainers/educators will continue to engage and find opportunities to host both private and open trainings to meet the needs of community.
- The educators and trainers will continue to ensure participants leave feeling well-prepared to provide a suicide first aid intervention with increased confidence in various formal and informal supports with their respective community.

ASIST 11 Tune-Up:

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) 11 Tune-up is a half-day refresher and recertification workshop developed by LivingWorks Education. The workshop offers participants an opportunity to review the Pathway for Assisting Life (PAL) model, discuss successes and challenges in using the model, and clarify concepts covered within the model.

Learning objectives for ASIST 11 Tune-up are as follows:

- Review or complete learning from the ASIST 11 workshop
- Test, examine or review how ASIST is applied in the real world
- Share your experiences in applying ASIST and learn from other participants' lived experiences
- Recapture the feeling of a caring community validating the necessity of self-care and the importance of having resources

CMHA-WECB offered 10 ASIST 11 Tune-up trainings between January 2020 to August 2023. ASIST is mandatory training for frontline service professionals at CMHA-WECB. We hold ASIST Tune-ups twice per or each year to ensure employees at CMHA-WECB and other community helping professionals whose workplaces have mandatory ASIST training are able to refresh their skills.

Chart 13: Primary role of 102 individuals who completed ASIST 11 Tune-up between January 2020- July 2023

Primary Role of ASIST Tune-up participant

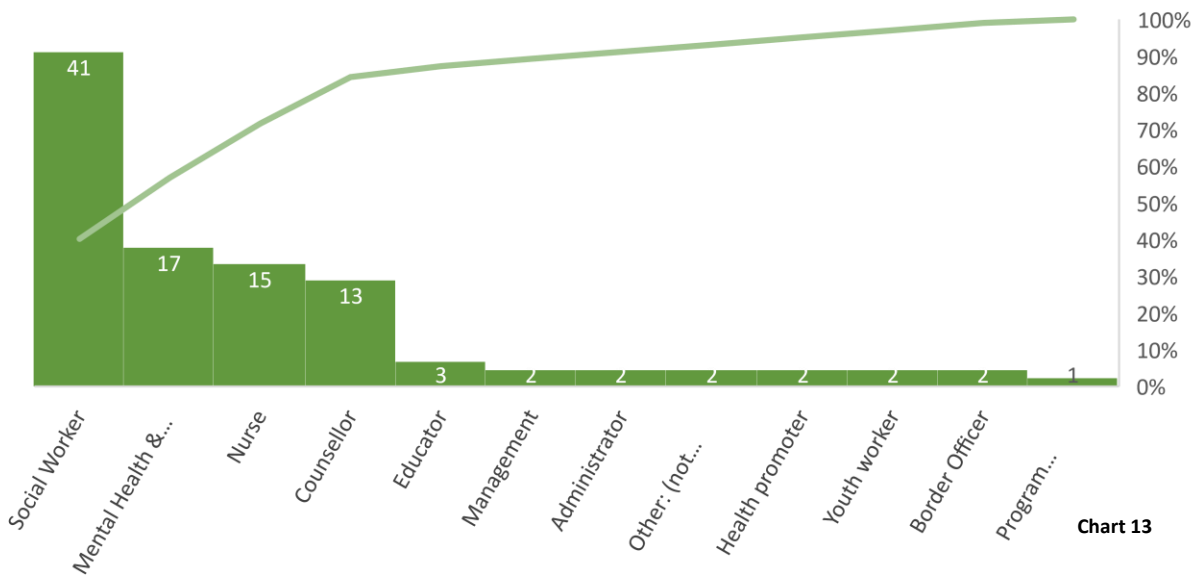


Chart 13

Chart 14: Increased hope and success in doing a suicide first aid intervention after taking ASIST 11 Tune-up

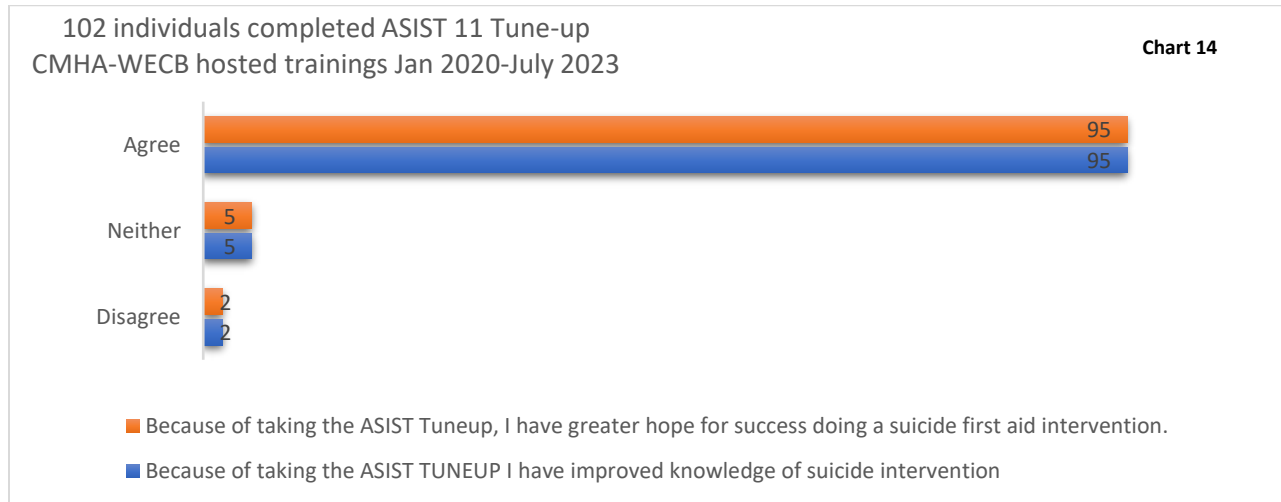
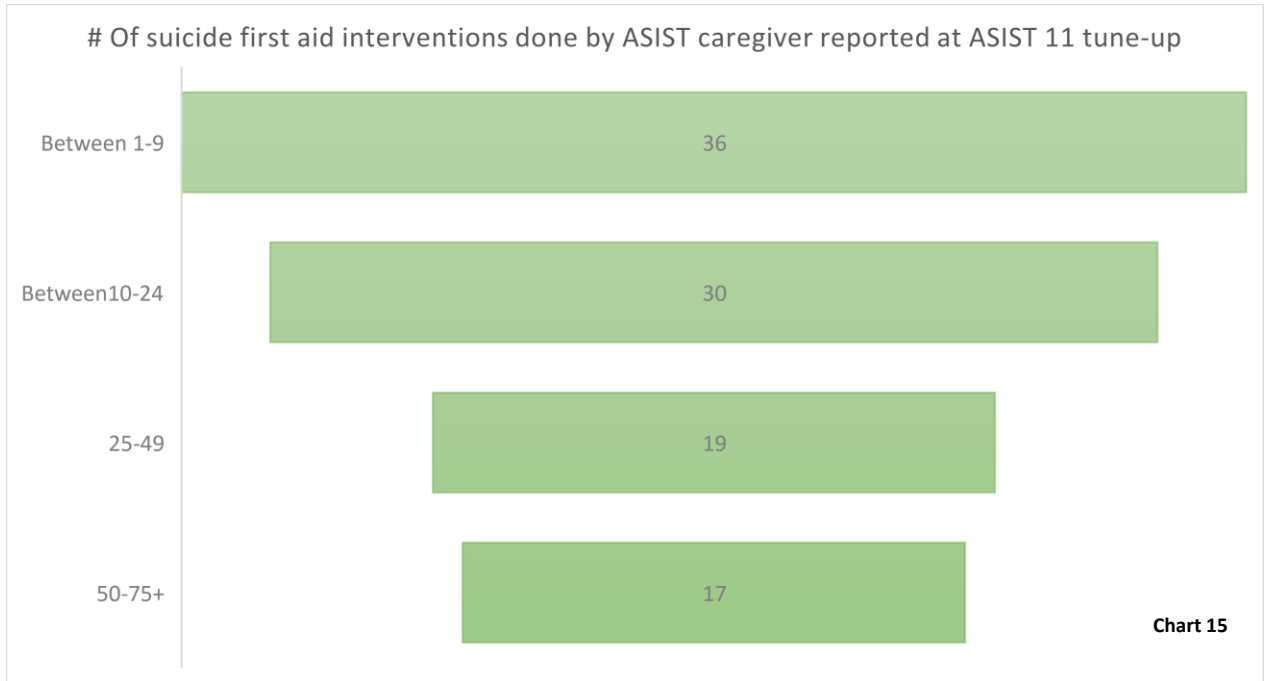


Chart 14

Chart 15: ASIST 11 Tune-up evaluations. 102 individuals were asked to state approximately how many suicide interventions they had completed since receiving ASIST.



Goals 2023-2025

- Increase availability of open community ASIST 11 Tune-up sessions to various sectors for continued growth, learning, and support for life assisting caregivers trained in suicide first aid.

By increasing the availability of the ASIST 11 Tune-up, it would provide greater data collection from helpers doing suicide first aid work in Windsor-Essex County. This would also provide validation, the opportunity to come together to share real life experiences in utilizing ASIST, and validate the importance of self-care for the helper.

Suicide to Hope:

The LivingWorks Suicide to Hope Workshop is a 1-day workshop designed for professional helpers supporting individuals who struggle with suicide on a long-term basis. Suicide to Hope is not a crisis intervention model. Suicide to Hope is structured around the Pathway to Hope (PaTH) model and focuses on exploring and describing barriers to recovery and growth, the formulation of suicide specific recovery and growth goals, as well as monitoring and reviewing the process. This workshop is currently being updated by LivingWorks so has not been offered since June 2023.

From January 2020 to July 2023, CMHA-WECB hosted 6 Suicide to Hope workshops with over fifty professional helpers in attendance.

SafeTALK Train the Trainer:

The safeTALK Training for Trainers (T4T) course prepares participants to become LivingWorks safeTALK trainers to offer this face-to-face program in their communities, workplaces, and beyond. The T4T is a powerful, hands-on learning experience. From 2022-2023, CMHA-WECB hosted two safeTALK T4T's resulting in 22 new provisional safeTALK trainers.

Calculating the impact of lives saved through trainings and networks:

It can be concluded from the evaluations received from January 2020 to August 2023 that attending a suicide intervention skills training can have drastic impacts on increasing a helper's ability to aid someone thinking of suicide and to also help create safety for right now for that individual. It can be concluded from the small sample size of individuals that completed the ASIST 11 Tune-up that 65% of helpers provided 10-75 suicide first aid interventions to individuals thinking about suicide.

One of the ways that LivingWorks calculates its impact is by estimating the number of interventions carried out by people trained in safeTALK, ASIST, Suicide to Hope and ASIST Tune-up programs based on the best available data. You can find some of these impact estimates here:

<https://legacy.livingworks.net/assets/Public/LivingWorks-Overview.pdf>

Conclusion

Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention. The Canadian Mental Health Association, Windsor-Essex County Branch will continue to be a lead provider in education, awareness, and training around suicide prevention, intervention, and life promotion, and will continue to work alongside the Windsor-Essex County Suicide Prevention Coalition to focus on suicide awareness and prevention efforts around:

1. Means Safety
2. Public Awareness
3. Research
4. Specialized Supports
5. Training and Networks

Testimonials from participants trained in safeTALK, ASIST, Tune-up, Suicide to Hope:

“Very informative. Helped and better prepared me to ask open questions and help someone who may need help.”

“Very well done. Good training, facilitator, information and inclusive of practice.”

“Training was a good mix of slides, facilitations, videos and discussion. I feel better prepared to ask about suicide.”

“I want to thank you for the fabulous training. I learned a ton and very much enjoyed both days. Your knowledge, experience, professionalism, and friendly, approachable, open-minded attitudes really were what made the training great despite an incredibly heavy topic.”

“I wanted to express my heartfelt gratitude for organizing the ASIST course on suicide prevention & skills training. It was absolutely fantastic and truly amazing. The course content was incredibly valuable, and the facilitators, both of you, did an outstanding job! I feel immensely grateful to have had the opportunity to participate and learn in such a wonderful and life-changing training ... it has certainly enhanced my knowledge and skills in supporting individuals in need.”

“Presenters were welcoming, nonjudgmental and supportive. Made me feel comfortable to share, and ultimately confident to provide suicide first aid assistance to someone thinking about suicide.”

“Excellent workshop, lots of fun roleplaying, good instructors with lots of knowledge and everyone felt respected”.

“Excellent training – the best training provided to helping professionals. It is directly applicable to my role and it is great that this training is made mandatory by my employer. Facilitators were ideal, knowledgeable, professional and able to deliver the workshop to a wide variety of helpers in our community.”

“Wonderful! Informative and full of great scenarios and a chance to connect with other helping professionals.”

“Refresher was good reminder of pathway for assisting life. Facilitator and group participation were excellent. I would definitely recommend this workshop.”

References

Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2018). Roots of Hope: A community suicide prevention model. Retrieved from: <https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/roots-hope/>

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