



Positive choices
helping prevent suicide across Wales

www.positivechoices-wales.org



o blaid gwell
iechyd meddwl
For better
mental health



Dynamic Ways of Engaging People

WaMH in PC Wales Mental Health in Primary Care Information Sheet 3

How many of us would walk past someone in difficulty in a river, saying that's none of my business?

Yet when it comes to someone thinking of suicide, people can be reluctant to get involved. This can be down to fear of making things worse, feeling that it is someone else's responsibility, even the mistaken belief that it would be futile to intervene because this person has made their mind up to die. **Stigma, fear and pessimism** can be barriers leading to suicide being seen as something only a specialist mental health professional can deal with, and can translate into inertia in front line services and the general public

Mind Cymru is providing community-wide training to break down these barriers. **Positive Choices** is a five year national project aiming to raise awareness of suicide and provide essential training to front-line services in early intervention skills.

Positive Choices Suicide Prevention Training Framework

An empathic, person-centred approach based on trust and good communication

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)	Evidence-based, 2 day workshop offers intensive training for front-line workers, caregivers and community members.
Connecting with People Suicide Response Training	1 day workshop designed to support Primary Care Teams' role in community based suicide prevention approach
Connecting with People Suicide Awareness Training	2 hour workshop to create empathy and challenge stigma, helps participants develop understanding of suicidal behaviour.

Why is this important to GPs?

Primary Care teams play a pivotal role in the prevention of suicide. When people are feeling desperate, often their GP will be the first one they turn to for help.

While only 25% of those who die by suicide are known to specialist mental health services, the majority of the remaining 75% will be in contact with front-line services, including Primary Care

When gatekeepers in the community intervene with a person at risk and start putting together a safe plan, the GP will always be at the top of the list.

The Welsh Assembly Government has provided funding for Positive Choices to develop a comprehensive suite of training specifically designed to meet the needs of Primary Care teams.

The challenge

Every year in Wales nearly twice as many people die by suicide as are killed in road traffic accidents. For every suicide, there may be up to 100 times more who are injured by non-fatal suicidal behaviours. Suicide is the leading cause of death in young people. But this is just the tip of the iceberg:

In any year, an estimated 5% of the population have serious thoughts of suicide. This year as many as 150,000 people in Wales will have thoughts of suicide

The National Suicide and Self Harm Reduction Action Plan for Wales emphasises the importance of early intervention, and the role that all front-line services should play in responding to individuals in need, at the point at which they request help.

As long as suicide is seen as the preserve of specialist mental health services, opportunities for early intervention will be missed

Everybody's business

Research shows that a **population based approach to suicide prevention** with trained "gatekeepers" in front-line services and the community increases the potential for early, effective intervention.



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Something can be done

United Nations' guidelines and national strategies in Australia, England, Finland, Norway, Scotland and the United States emphasise that caregiver competence is a critical component in any large-scale suicide prevention program.

The key to suicide prevention is trained caregivers who are ready, willing and able to get involved - caregivers who can recognise individuals who are at risk and who are willing to intervene to reduce the risk of suicidal thoughts becoming suicidal behaviours. Early response helps to reduce the isolation of the person at risk, relieves distress and improves the chances of people working together effectively to provide support. *ASIST* is a key component of suicide prevention strategies in Scotland, Ireland and Norway.

Mind Cymru is working with Open Minds Consulting and Consultant Psychiatrist Alys Cole-King to develop training packages that complement *ASIST* and advance a community-based, gatekeeper led approach to suicide prevention.

Monitoring and Evaluation

All training provided by the Positive Choices Project will be evaluated to ascertain its impact and effectiveness by Public Health Wales. This evaluation will be conducted against all four levels of the Kirkpatrick model. Follow-up surveys will measure the impact on practice and behaviour.

Training is delivered by a national framework of experienced trainers, supported and mentored through the Positive Choices Project. Feedback from all workshops will be monitored to ensure consistency and quality control.

Suicide Response Training for Primary Care Teams

A one day workshop specifically designed to support Primary Care Teams to increase their understanding and skills to be able to contribute to a community-based suicide prevention approach. Aimed at GPs, community nurses and other primary health care professionals, this workshop will:

- Reduce anxiety about seeing and treating patients experiencing suicidal thoughts,
- Enhance skills of assessing and responding to suicidal thoughts using a therapeutic, transparent and collaborative framework;
- Improve ability to conduct an effective assessment and instigate a safe, clinically appropriate management plan;
- Promote realistic ways for dealing with very distressed suicidal individuals in a busy morning surgery/clinical setting/home visit
- Includes a component that looks at how the work of trained gatekeepers in the community interfaces with Primary Care.

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

ASIST is a two-day intensive, interactive and practice-dominated course designed to help caregivers recognise and intervene to prevent the immediate risk of suicide. It is the most widely used and researched suicide intervention skills training in the world. Just as "CPR" skills make physical first aid possible, training in suicide intervention develops the skills used in suicide first aid

This internationally recognised and award-winning training is a key strand of the ***National Suicide and Self Harm Reduction Action Plan for Wales***.

ASIST is taught in small groups of no more than 15 participants to one trainer. Participants are trained in the use of the Suicide Intervention Model to identify persons with thoughts of suicide, give support and develop a safe plan based on good communication and trust.

Other key elements of the course are to promote partnership working and to help all professionals know other local services that can help. The multi-agency nature of the workshops is crucial in building local networks and breaking down barriers. Standardised, quality assured training creates a common language and a shared understanding.

“Connecting with People” Suicide Awareness Seminar

This is a two hour workshop designed to increase empathy and challenge stigma by helping participants develop their understanding of suicidal behaviour. The main objective is to enhance participants' ability to talk with someone who has suicidal thoughts and equip them with simple techniques for reducing distress.

Project Partners

Torfaen Mind, Mind Aberystwyth & Vale of Clwyd Mind are the Regional Centres for the delivery of Positive Choices training across Wales.

Other partners in this Big Lottery funded project are ***Open Minds Consulting***, who are developing targeted versions of the two hour Connecting with People and one day Suicide Response workshops; and ***Public Health Wales***, who are carrying out evaluation and monitoring of all training for the duration of the project.

For more information on the

Positive Choices Project

visit our website: www.positivechoices-wales.org or email: positivechoices@mind.org.uk

**WaMH in PC is working to improve primary care mental health by nurturing:
trust • good communication • person centredness**

WaMH in PC

Wales Mental Health in Primary Care

Regus House, Falcon Drive, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF10 4RU

T: 029 2050 4516 **F:** 029 2050 4300 **E:** wamhinpc@rcgp.org.uk www.wamhipc.org.uk