

2010-2011 QPR Suicide Prevention Training at the University of Connecticut

The Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper training program is a three-step program that teaches individuals:

- a) How to ask whether someone is thinking of suicide
- b) How to assist the person in seeking professional help
- c) The necessary information for referring a person to their local resources

Within three years of providing QPR Gatekeeper training at UConn, the UConn Trainers have provided 106 training sessions to a total of ~3000 individuals on the Storrs and Avery Point campuses.

The UConn version of the QPR Gatekeeper Training sessions additionally provides information about college mental health statistics, and resources specific to the UConn community. Given that a psychiatric diagnosis (most commonly diagnosable Mood Disorders) are present for approximately 90% of all completed suicides, UConn QPR Gatekeepers are also instructed in identifying signs of depression.

Gatekeeper training is intended to increase the probability that a depressed or suicidal person will be identified and referred for assessment and treatment, before a crisis or adverse outcome can occur. It is predicted that the greater the percentage of community members trained as gatekeepers, the fewer the occurrence of attempted or completed suicides within that community (Tompkins and Witt, 2009).

A recent review of the literature (D'Orio & Garlow, 2004) indicates that while there is increasing sophistication in understanding the risks and protective factors for suicide, it remains difficult to quantify and assess the generalizable efficacy of suicide prevention efforts. Though not initially generalizable outside of UConn, the UConn QPR training program has engaged in an ongoing program of metric and learning outcome based assessment of its efforts since its inception. For 2008-2009, 775 individuals were assessed for metrics and outcomes. For 2010-2011, 303 individuals were assessed for metrics and outcomes.

UConn QPR Gatekeeper training participants' satisfaction have consistently been assessed on their self-reported knowledge of suicide and suicide prevention, their awareness of resources, and their beliefs about and confidence in the appropriateness and likelihood of asking others who may be in distress about suicide. Consistent with 2008-2009 findings, Table 1 illustrates that UConn QPR Gatekeeper participants consistently expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of the training, the quality of trainers, the perception of relevance of suicide prevention training to their jobs, and the development of confidence in intervening with someone who might be suicidal when necessary.

A recently published study (Indelicato, Mirsu-Paun, and Griffin, 2011) of QPR Gatekeeper training at another university, found that there were significant increases in self-rated knowledge about suicide, suicide prevention, awareness of resources and belief in the appropriateness and likelihood they would ask someone about suicide. Consistent with 2008-2009 findings, Table 2 illustrates the UConn learning outcomes, pre- and post-training, of participants' self-reported

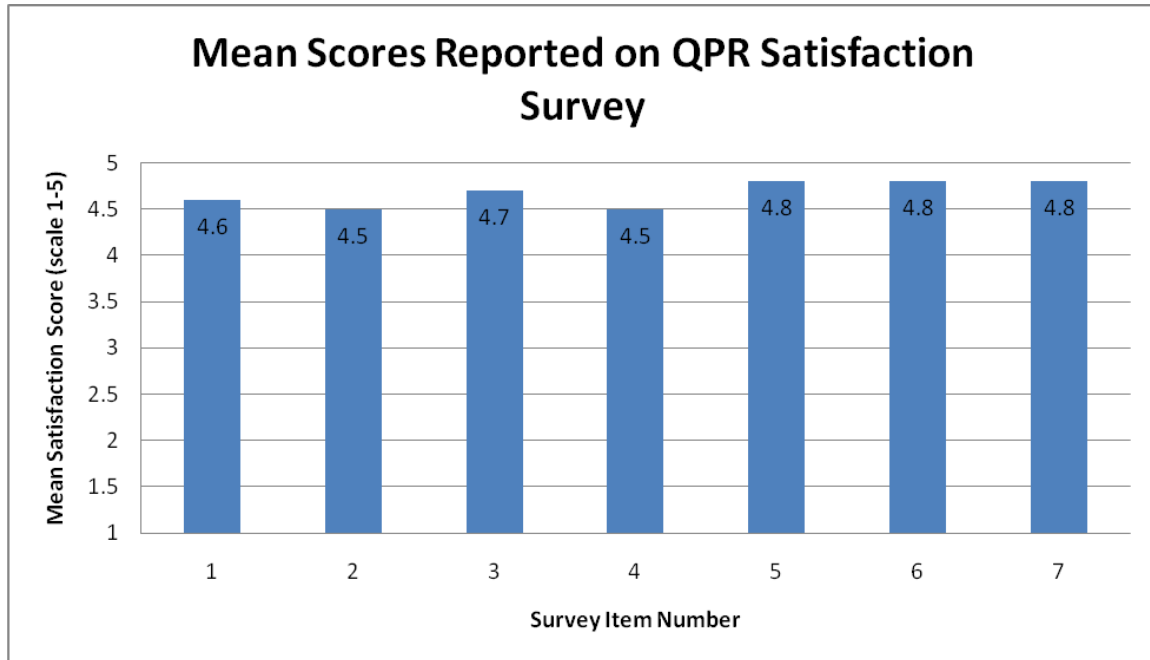
knowledge about suicide, and self-reported feelings of readiness/competence to engage a person who might be at risk for suicide. All knowledge items changed in the direction that is consistent with the goals of QPR Gatekeeper training.

QPR Gatekeeper training sessions have been provided to the UConn community for the past three years. UConn originally certified 20 individuals of which ten have continued on as consistent presenters across the three years and to which the Suicide Prevention Committee expresses gratitude for their continued commitment to this vital training for the UConn campus:

Jennifer Fox	Counseling and Mental Health Services
Sharon Mendes	Academic Center for Exploratory Students
Maritza Lugo-Stalker	Counseling and Mental Health Services
David Henry	Counseling and Mental Health Services
Paula Jessen	Student Health Services
Graciela Quinones Rodriquez	Counseling and Mental Health Services
Karen Bresciano	Office of Student Services and Advocacy
Trudy Flanery	Avery Point Regional Campus
Doris LaPlante	Humphrey Clinic
Donna Korbel	Center for Students with Disabilities

The UConn QPR Trainers will continue to provide training with the most current focus being increased training of UConn students in addition to the current focus on staff and faculty. The UConn QPR Trainers will also offer a first time option for training to parents and families of UConn based on the idea that parents and families are critical partners with the university and more so during a time of potential crisis.

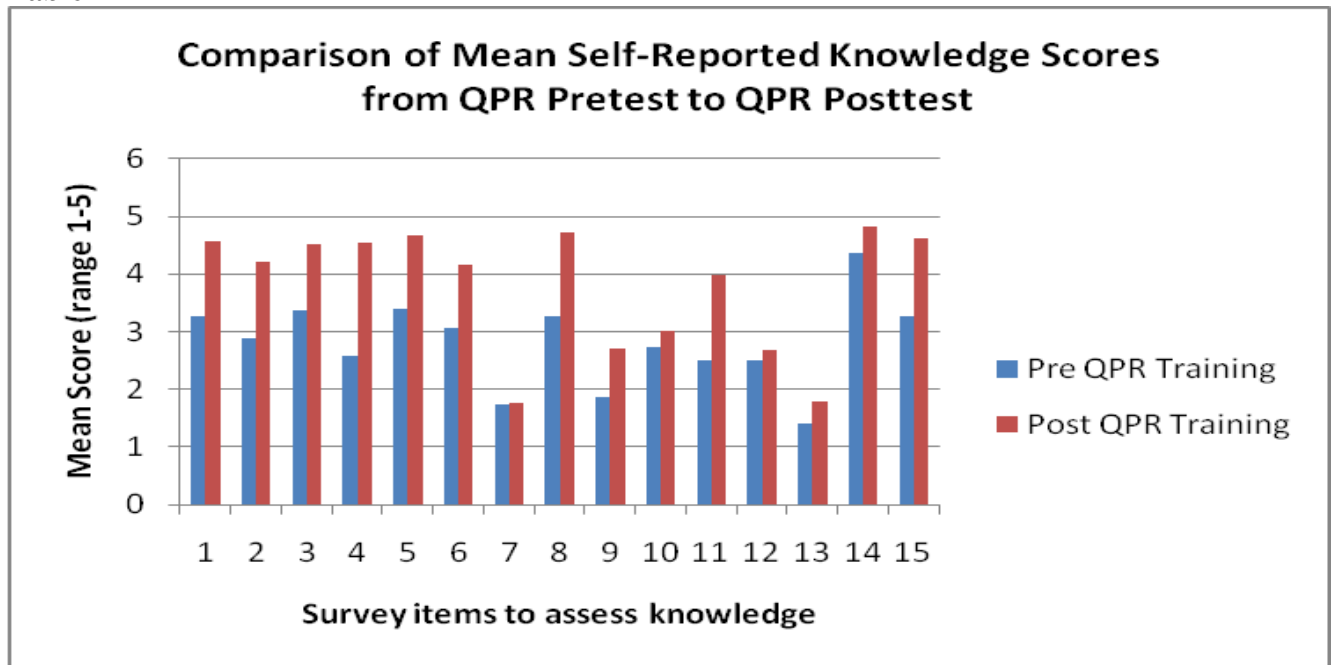
Table 1.



Survey Item Reference Number

1. The information presented in this training is useful to me.
2. The information presented in this training is relevant to my job.
3. The information presented in this training was easily understandable.
4. As a result of this training, I am ready to approach suicidal persons more effectively than I would have before the training.
5. The presenter was knowledgeable about the material presented.
6. The presenter effectively facilitated the training session.
7. The training session was well organized.

Table 2



Reference for Survey Items 1-15

Subjective knowledge and readiness to engage in QPR skills:

1. I know about warning signs and risk factors that indicate that a person might attempt or complete suicide
2. I am able to effectively communicate with a student who I think is at risk for suicidal behavior
3. I know when it is advisable to refer a student for professional help
4. I know the procedures to refer a student for professional help
5. I know how to reach a mental health professional in order to consult about a student who I am concerned about

Knowledge of Suicide risk factors:

6. Confronting a person about suicide will not increase their risk of completing suicide
7. Once a suicide plan is made, it will be carried out (reverse score)
8. Men are more likely than women to complete a suicide
9. Suicidal people will keep their specific plans to themselves (reverse score)
10. One can predict the likelihood of a suicide attempt from specificity of a plan

Knowledge of appropriate statements or questions to a person at risk for suicide:

11. "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
12. "Think about how your family would react." (reverse score)
13. "You're not thinking of killing yourself, are you?" (reverse score)
14. "Will you go with me to get help?"
15. "Sometimes when people are this upset they wish they were dead. I'm concerned-do you feel that way too?"

References

D'Orio, B., & Garlow, S. (2004). Suicide prevention: A vital national public health issue.

Journal of Health and Human Services Administration, 27(2), 123-141.

Indelicato, N.A., Mirsu-Paun, A, and Griffin, W.D. (2011). Outcomes of a suicide prevention gatekeeper training program on a university campus. *Journal of College Student Development, 52(3), 350-361.*

Tompkins, T.L. and Witt, J. (2009). The short-term effectiveness of a suicide prevention

gatekeeper training program in a college setting with residence life advisors. *Journal of Primary Prevention, 30(2), 131-149.*