

A Comparison of Web-based and Face-to-Face Gatekeeper Training



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Purpose

The goal of the current study is to compare the effectiveness of web-based and face-to-face QPR training for the outcome variables of knowledge, self-efficacy, and intentions to engage in suicide intervention.

Introduction

Gatekeeper training programs have been developed in response to the need for suicide prevention efforts. These programs are designed to train community members who may be in contact with suicidal individuals to identify those at risk for suicide and to assist with referring those in need to the appropriate mental health services (Brown, Wyman, Brinales, & Gibbons, 2007).

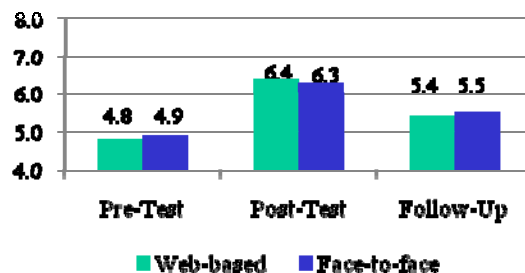
In particular, Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) is a gatekeeper training program which is typically available in a face-to-face format and has recently become available in a web-based format. Evidence has supported the effectiveness of QPR in a face-to-face format (e.g., Tierney, 1994; Wyman et al., 2008).

Advantages of a web-based suicide prevention training include saving individuals time and money, allowing individuals to determine the pace of their own training, eliminating instructor biases, and having training available 24 hours of the day via the internet (QPR, 2008).

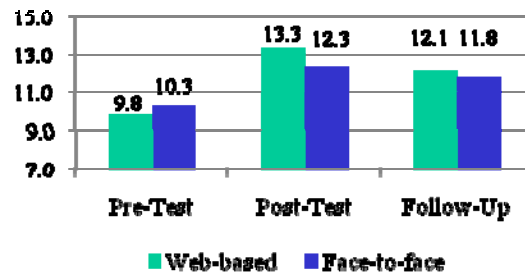
Method

107 individuals participated in the web-based version of QPR training and 853 individuals in the face-to-face QPR training. Trainees completed a pre-test, post-test, and six month follow-up which assessed their knowledge about suicide, self-efficacy for suicide intervention, and behavioral intentions to engage in suicide intervention.

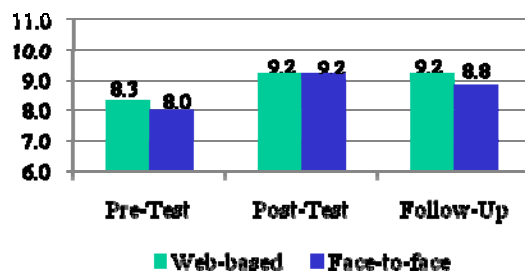
Comparison of Knowledge Gain in Web-based vs. Face-to-face QPR Training



Comparison of Self-Efficacy Gain in Web-based vs. Face-to-face QPR Training



Comparison of Behavioral Intentions Gain in Web-based vs. Face-to-face QPR Training



Results

Knowledge

Both groups demonstrated significant gains in knowledge from pre-test to post-test and showed significant declines at the six month follow-up.

Self-efficacy

The web-based QPR group showed significantly more improvement in self-efficacy from pre-test to post-test as compared to the face-to-face QPR group. However, this gain was no longer apparent at the six month follow-up.

Behavioral Intentions

Both groups demonstrated significant gains in behavioral intentions to engage in suicide intervention from pre-test to post-test. Whereas the face-to-face group's intentions declined at follow-up, the web-based group maintained their intentions to engage in suicide intervention.

Discussion

Participants in both QPR trainings followed similar patterns of change in knowledge related to suicide intervention. We found some differences in terms of self-efficacy and behavioral intentions which warrant further exploration. Post-test gains tended to decline after six months. Future research should examine ways of maintaining these effects over time.

Overall, the results of this study are promising for the utility of the web-based QPR training. If future evaluations replicate these initial findings, then web-based gatekeeper training may have an advantage over face-to-face training due to decreased training costs and increased administration flexibility (Long et al., 2008).

One possible limitation in this study is the non-equivalence of groups in terms of country of origin. The face-to-face training group was made up of Americans and the web-based training group was composed of Australians. However, the United States and Australia are very similar in terms of suicide rates and attitudes towards suicide, and we do not believe there are differences that would affect the results of this study.