

Educational Preferences and Outcomes From Suicide Prevention Training in the Veterans Health Administration: One-Year Follow-Up With Healthcare Employees in Upstate New York

*Monica M. Matthieu, PhD, LCSW * † ; Yufei Chen, MSW * ; Mary Schohn, PhD ‡ ;
Larry J. Lantinga, PhD ‡ § || ; Kerry L. Knox, PhD ¶ †*

ABSTRACT This study identifies training outcomes and educational preferences of employees who work within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Using a longitudinal pre- postsurvey design, 71 employees from one geographic region of VHA healthcare facilities participated in an evaluation of a brief standardized gatekeeper program and a needs assessment on training preferences for suicide and suicide prevention. Results indicate significant differences in knowledge and self-efficacy from pre to post ($p < 0.001$), although only self-efficacy remained significant at 1 year follow-up, ($M = 3.01$; $SD = 0.87$) as compared to pretraining ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.05$) ($t = -5.64$, $p < 0.001$). At post-training, 90% of the participants were willing to learn more about suicide, with 88% willing to spend more than 1 hour in future training activities on more advanced topics. This training program can increase the knowledge and abilities of VHA staff to engage, identify, and refer veterans at risk for suicide to appropriate care.