

Suicide Prevention Programs

Review 6

Isaac, M., Elias, B., Katz, L. K., Belik, S., Deane, F., Enns, M. W., & Sareen, J., The Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team. (2009). Gatekeeper training as a preventative intervention for suicide: A systematic review. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 54(4), 260–268. PubMed abstract available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19321032>.

Objectives	Examine a widely used suicide prevention effort termed “gatekeeper training.” Review the state of the evidence on gatekeeper training for suicide prevention, and propose directions for further research.
Studies Included	Thirteen U.S. and international studies published between 1992 and 2008
Participants in the Studies	School staff in U.S. school district, adults who work with youth in Quebec, Aboriginal people in Australia and New Mexico, youth workers, Veterans Affairs staff, the U.S. Air Force
Settings	Settings reported included primary care, schools, and military.
Outcomes	Suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and deaths by suicide in a target population, as well as effects on the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes of trainees
Limitations of the Studies	There are no randomized controlled trials showing that gatekeeper training alone has an effect on the suicide rate. The best evidence for gatekeeper training exists within suicide prevention programs that implement many different initiatives to address suicide, which makes it difficult to separate out the effect of gatekeeper training alone. Only studies in English were used.

Results

Gatekeeper training has been shown to positively affect the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of trainees regarding suicide prevention. Large-scale cohort studies of military personnel and physicians have reported promising results with a significant reduction in suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and deaths by suicide. More work needs to be done on longevity of these traits and referral patterns of gatekeepers. There is a need for randomized controlled trials. The unique effect of gatekeeper training on suicide rates needs to be further illustrated.