Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR) for SUD Treatment Professionals

AMSR for SUD Treatment Professionals is a one-day training workshop for substance use disorder treatment professionals. The 6.5-hour training program is based on the latest research and designed to help participants provide safer suicide care. Substance Use Disorder treatment professionals face many challenges when working with patients and clients at risk for suicide. For example, calm and compassion are needed the most and the hardest to maintain when working with someone at risk for suicide. Some patients may not disclose thoughts of suicide, and even when they do, the health care provider must make judgment calls about unpredictable outcomes, often with insufficient or contradictory information.

The training aims to provide participants with the background knowledge and practical skills that they need to address suicidal risk and behaviors in clients in care for substance use disorder treatment. Participants will have the opportunity to increase their knowledge and apply practical skills in the following areas:

- **Approaching Your Work:** Learn how to manage reactions related to suicide and maintain a collaborative, non-adversarial stance. Acquire the necessary skills to address potential conflicts between a care professional’s goal to prevent suicide and relapse and a client’s goal to eliminate psychological pain via suicidal behavior.
- **Understanding Suicide:** Gain an understanding of the definitions and language used when talking about suicide, as well as the data that are relevant to addressing suicide in substance use disorder treatment including risk and protective factors, warning signs, and the complicating factors of substance misuse, including opioids.
- **Gathering Information:** Identify key points in treatment where a suicide assessment should occur, what questions to ask to learn more about a client’s suicidal thoughts and behaviors past and present, and how to ask them. Participants will practice asking questions in an interactive learning environment designed to help build confidence. The training presents key scenarios, such as when to seek supervision or consultation and what to do when someone discloses suicidal thoughts during a group treatment session.
- **Formulating Risk:** Practice synthesizing assessment information into a risk formulation that will help inform next steps in treatment. AMSR emphasizes the importance of using a risk formulation not for prediction but as information to make a collaborative decision regarding recovery-oriented treatment planning.
- **Planning and Responding:** Review suggested actions to take based on a risk formulation using resources from SAMHSA’s TIP 50 and evidence-based interventions. Practice having conversations related to safety planning and addressing the potential for relapse through means counseling interventions.

Teaching and skill-building methods include video demonstrations, group discussion, paired practice, documentation practice, reflection, and expert teaching.

*This course has been approved by the Zero Suicide Institute at EDC, as a NAADAC-Approved Education Provider, for 6.5 CEs. NAADAC Provider #189015 is responsible for all aspects of its programming. AMSR-SUD addresses the Counselor Skill Groups of Clinical Assessment, Treatment Plan, and Documentation.*
About your Instructor:

Joanne Tulachka, MA, LPC, CSAC (Certified AMSR trainer)

Joanne started with Behavioral Health Training Partnership in November 2018 as the Training Coordinator. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree from UW-Stevens Point with a degree in Psychology and her Master's Degree in Community Counseling from Lakeland University. Joanne is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified Substance Abuse Counselor in the state of Wisconsin. Prior to working with BHTP, she worked for 18 years in county human services as a Mental Health and AODA Counselor along with being the Crisis Coordinator where she provided direct crisis intervention and worked closely with the court system through Chapter 51. She is also a trained IDP assessor that allows her to complete court ordered assessments for people convicted of operating while intoxicated.