



Impact SPOTLIGHT

October 2023, Issue 1

Helping Corrections Staff Prevent Suicide – The Statewide Rollout of *Talk Saves Lives*: *An Introduction to Suicide Prevention in the Correctional Environment in Indiana*

The Challenge

Incarcerated individuals and corrections staff are particularly vulnerable to suicide for a variety of complex reasons. Suicide is the leading cause of death in jails, and suicide in prisons has increased 30% in recent years. In response, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has created the education program **Talk Saves Lives™: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention in the Correctional Environment (TSL Corrections)**, a free offering for corrections staff. The program provides corrections staff with information about what can be done to create a safer environment for people in custody, as well as highlighting resources available for corrections staff to help them take care of their own mental health.

Measuring impact – by collecting and leveraging data in strategic and thoughtful ways – plays a critical role in ensuring that we achieve real results with the actions we take, programs we produce, and partnerships and initiatives we embark on in our quest to prevent suicide and provide support to those affected.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Impact Spotlight series takes a look at some of the ways we're making a true difference in communities everywhere.

Key Takeaways

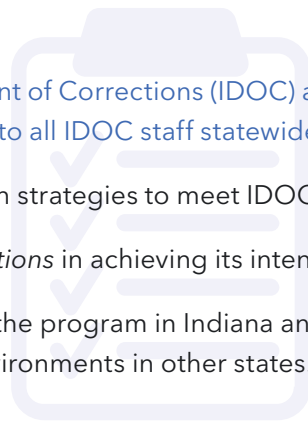
1. *TSL Corrections* is effective at increasing knowledge about suicide across multiple groups.
2. The program increases participants' confidence in recognizing warning signs for suicide.
3. The more people we can reach with this program, the more corrections officers there will be who are equipped to respond to those in crisis in a safe and effective way.

Taking Action

In partnership with the Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC) and with the support of our AFSP Indiana Chapter, AFSP rolled out *TSL Corrections* to all IDOC staff statewide in order to:

- Identify, test, and implement evaluation strategies to meet IDOC's unique logistical needs, and
- Assess the effectiveness of *TSL Corrections* in achieving its intended outcomes

By initiating this full, state-wide rollout of the program in Indiana and measuring its impact, we can be better suited to do the same for correctional environments in other states.

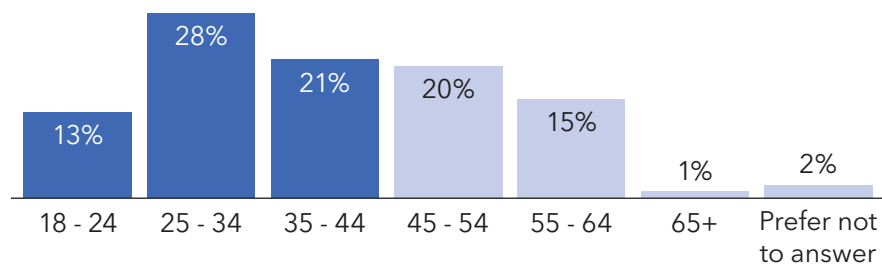


Who Was Involved

Nearly 2,000 correctional staff participated between July and December of 2022. Half of participants had a history of previous suicide prevention training, 29% participated as a part of new employee orientation, and 71% participated as a part of annual in-service training.

Age (N=1,724)

Most participants were under 44 years old



Race (N=1,717)

Most participants (70%) were Caucasian/European/White



Role (N=1,858)



74%
Supervisors



62%
Correctional Officers

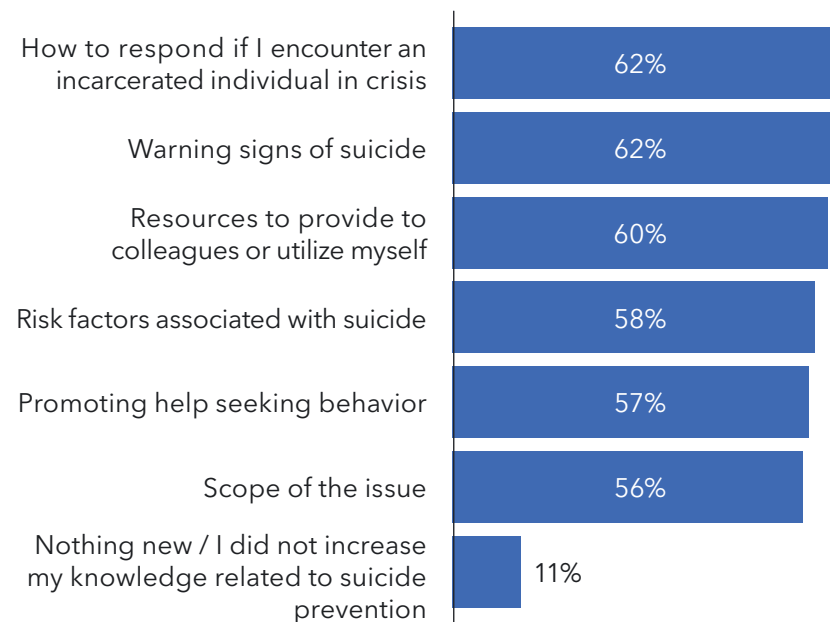
Note: 'N' refers to the total number of people who responded to that particular question.

What We Found

Nearly 90% reported a perceived gain in knowledge after attending the program.

In an evaluation survey created in collaboration with IDOC, conducted following the rollout, *TSL Corrections* was found to be effective in its goal of increasing awareness among corrections staff about warning signs and risk factors for suicide. The program was received favorably by participants. In fact, 91% of participants indicated they would recommend it to others.

Findings suggest that *TSL Corrections* is useful for both supervisors and non-supervisors, including those with previous suicide prevention training.



What Comes Next

Results from this evaluation will inform:

1. Future strategies for implementing *TSL Corrections* in other correctional settings
2. Innovative methods for collecting and reporting data, and
3. Program improvements to continue increasing outcomes for correctional officers and those who are incarcerated.

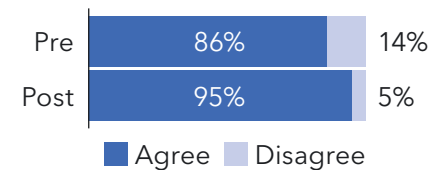


9% increase in participants' belief that suicide can be prevented. More program participants feel suicide can be prevented compared to 52% of the general U.S. population.¹

17% increase in the number of participants who recognize that talking about suicide does not make someone suicidal.

More participants (95%)

felt confident in their ability to recognize suicide warning signs after attending the program.



9% increase in participants who feel confident in their ability to recognize warning signs for suicide.

After attending the program, **nearly 8 out of 10** participants reported being likely to talk with a health care professional (doctor, therapist, etc.) if they are concerned about themselves, compared to 4 out of 10 in the general U.S. population.¹

¹American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, Suicide Prevention Resource Center (2022). Public Perception of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Survey Results. <https://suicidepreventionnow.org/static/executive-summary-2022-9c5a59e0f8016f1803570b11cfd3cb29.pdf>.