

Impact SPOTLIGHT

June 2024, Issue 2

Helping Communities Prevent Suicide – The Impact of *Talk Saves Lives™: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention*

The Challenge

Suicide is a leading but preventable cause of death in the United States impacting millions of people each year. In response, in 2015, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention created an education program that has reached nearly a quarter of a million people since its inception. *Talk Saves Lives™: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention (TSL)* is a free, community-based presentation that covers the general scope of suicide, research on prevention, and what people can do to fight suicide.

Connect with your local chapter to learn more about how you can bring a Talk Saves Lives presentation to your community or organization.

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* is the most requested and most implemented AFSP program and reached over 44,000 people in 2023 alone.
2. The program improves participants' beliefs and increases their knowledge around suicide prevention, as well as their likelihood to engage in preventative behaviors.
3. After attending the program, *TSL* participants are more likely to reach out for help if they are concerned about someone else or are struggling themselves.



Taking Action

Together with our chapter network and hundreds of partner organizations, AFSP conducted a robust evaluation of TSL to assess its reach and impact in communities across the country. With a full year of data (January through December 2023), our evaluation has helped us to:

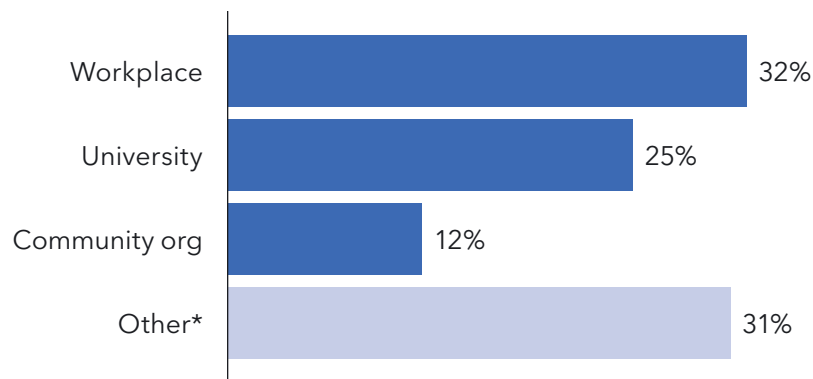
- Ensure we are reaching multiple, diverse audiences with culturally relevant content, and
- Assess the effectiveness of TSL in achieving its intended outcomes

By implementing a comprehensive evaluation strategy, we can ensure our programs are meeting community needs and reaching their intended audience.

Who Was Involved

Over 44,000 people participated in 1,475 *Talk Saves Lives* presentations delivered by 73 out of 74 AFSP chapters. More than half of TSL presentations (56%) were delivered in-person.

Workplaces and universities were the most common locations for TSL presentations (N=5,374)



*“Other” includes conferences, faith-based organizations, outdoor spaces, virtual, health care settings, and libraries.

Most participants were Caucasian/European/White (73%; N=6,382)



79% of respondents were women.

65% of respondents were 18 to 44 years old.

Nearly all participants had a positive perception of the program and would recommend it to others (N=5,415)

Rate the program as “very useful” or “extremely useful” **85%**

Rate the program as “excellent” or “good” **95%**

Would “definitely” or “probably” recommend the program **98%**

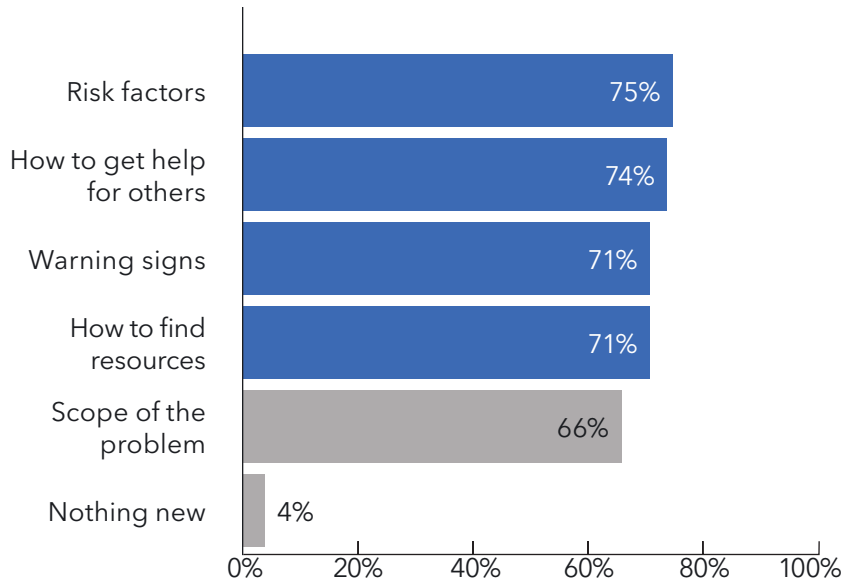
Note: ‘N’ refers to the total number of people who responded to that particular question.

What We Found

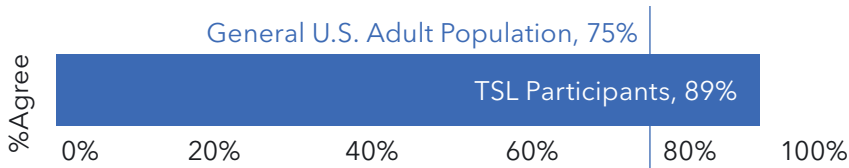
Data below include findings from the *Talk Saves Lives, TSL for Workplace Settings*, and *TSL: Firearms and Suicide Prevention* modules delivered across 49 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., in 2023. Other modules were excluded due to lower sample sizes.

In our evaluation, TSL was found to be effective at increasing knowledge about suicide prevention, including warning signs, risk factors, and how to get help for oneself or others.

Three-quarters of participants (75%) reported learning at least three new concepts from the program (N=5,473).



After attending the program, **89% of TSL participants** agree that most people who die by suicide usually show signs beforehand (N=2,678), compared to just 75% of the general U.S. adult population.¹



21% increase in participants who scored a 5 out of 5 in knowledge score from pre- to post-program.

Large increase in overall knowledge score, from 4.2 to 4.5 between pre- and post-program (N=2,840).



20% reported an **increase in their likelihood to talk to someone if they were concerned** about them.

26% reported an **increase in their likelihood to reach out for help** if they themselves were struggling.

What Comes Next

Building on these findings and feedback collected from program presenters as part of a comprehensive needs assessment, Talk Saves Lives™ has been refreshed to maximize relevance and effectiveness.

Launching this year, TSL will now feature:

1. More tailored content for specific audiences,
2. More videos and audience engagement, and
3. Additional resources for trainers and presenters.

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>.