



Three Riverbend Family Ministries Staff Members Attend ASIST Workshop

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WOOD RIVER - The ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) workshop was hosted by LivingWorks in collaboration with Compass Health, Missouri Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and Osage County Anti-Drug Community Action Team.



The two-day workshop featured lectures, audiovisuals, discussions, and simulations. The workshop had the objective to provide individuals with skills on how to prevent suicide by recognizing signs, providing a skilled intervention, and developing a safety plan to keep someone safe.

Three staff from Riverbend Family Ministries' (RFM) SOAR program were in attendance - Program Coordinators, Nathaniel Carlson and Marissa Green, and Program Director, Kenlea Herndon.

The SOAR program staff work directly with at-risk adolescence in a group setting discussing sensitive topics around mental health. Staff were sent to this workshop with the intent for them to become more equip to have conversations regarding suicide and to respond appropriately and effectively in the event that an individual discloses suicidal ideation.

Nathaniel expressed, "I am very happy that we were able to attend the ASIST training on suicide prevention. We want to be on the forefront of helping teens navigate the complexity of life in a way that keeps them safe and healthy."

The SOAR program staff that attended the training all reported that they are better equipped to provide suicide first aid following the training. The workshop provided specific and easy-to-follow steps to supporting an individual experiencing suicidal ideation. There is a possibility that a SOAR client could disclose suicidal ideation due to the intimate setting of our services, and our staff now have the tools to better intervene and help them keep safe.

Beyond supporting our clients, our staff have been given the tools to assist even a stranger that might be showing signs of suicidal ideation, allowing for a suicide safer community. Kenlea Herndon the SOAR program Director stated, "We now have more tools in our toolbox to connect with our teens in a different way. In a more impactful way. Suicide is a hard topic to discuss, and I am honored to be working with a team who is willing to sit in the mud with people and have tough Conversations."

The key takeaways from the ASIST training:

- Understanding of attitudes and beliefs about suicide and prevention
- Providing suicide first aid to a person at risk
- Creating a suicide safety plan
- Importance of identifying suicide prevention resources in the community

The SOAR program staff also had the opportunity to network with other attending members. A staff member from Prevention First in Springfield, IL was in attendance and connected with SOAR staff about their training offerings on youth development and prevention. Prevention First advances efforts to promote healthy behaviors and prevent substance misuse in every community through a variety of evidence-based and collaborative approaches, including training, support, and public awareness.

Marissa said, “Attending the ASIT training allowed me to connect with others on a deeper level. I feel confident in being able to utilize the skills that I have gained in suicide awareness. Our team has the ability to recognize and assist with our at-risk youth.”

They also shared information about their Student Advisory Board and expressed interest in connecting with the youth in the Metro-east area. SOAR staff also connected with a staff member from The Conflict Resolution Center located in St. Louis, MO regarding more training opportunities for staff. The Conflict Resolution Center empowers people to resolve conflict through accessible mediation, coaching, and education.