

OVERVIEW

30% of all college students report feeling so depressed it is difficult for them to function

6% of college students say they have seriously considered suicide in the past year

Close to 80% of students who commit suicide go unnoticed

At-Risk for University and College Faculty and Staff is an online professional development simulation designed to help faculty and staff build confidence, knowledge, and skills to best support students exhibiting signs of psychological distress. The program uses simulated conversations with virtual students to provide learners with hands-on practice in approaching students they are concerned about and, if necessary, how to refer them to support services.

[SAMHSA SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry](#)

Launched in 2009, the program has been adopted by more than 400 universities and colleges, assessed in two empirical studies, and added to the SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry for suicide prevention programs.

Unlike any other online mental health program, *At-Risk* uses a virtual environment to enhance the learning experience. Users assume the role of a university faculty member and engage in simulated conversations with fully animated virtual students exhibiting behaviors associated with depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety and substance use. After experiencing this hands-on practice, learners become more confident and proficient in handling similar situations in real life.

SIMULATED CONVERSATIONS

In these simulated conversations, the learner practices talking with a student, using motivational interviewing tactics to achieve several goals:

- Broach the topic of psychological distress
- Motivate the student to seek help
- Avoid common pitfalls, such as attempting to diagnose the problem or giving unwarranted advice

INSTITUTIONAL BENEFITS

At-Risk for University and College Faculty and Staff provides a cost-effective solution that benefits academic institutions in several ways:

- Promotes early intervention
- Increases student retention and academic performance
- Reduces the stigma associated with mental illness
- Increases visibility for campus mental health initiatives

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing the simulation, faculty and staff will be better equipped to do the following:

- Identify warning signs of mental distress, including verbal, behavioral and situational clues
- Manage conversations with students to determine the need for referral
- Develop awareness of negative stereotypes and misconceptions about mental distress and illness
- Understand their school specific process for student referral and the counseling services available for students



CUSTOMIZATION AND SPECIAL FEATURES

At-Risk includes a number of components and tools that can assist in marketing the product to end-users on campus:

Built-in Assessment

At-Risk is equipped with a built-in survey system, which collects feedback from faculty and staff about their experience with the course through pre-, post- and 3-month follow-up surveys.

Materials for On-Campus Promotion

With *At-Risk*, client institutions receive materials to assist in on-campus promotion of the course:

- Suggested language for an email to learners
- Customizable flyer
- PowerPoint presentation with guidelines
- An animated and narrated trailer about the simulation
- A list of suggested marketing strategies
- Account Manager to assist with marketing initiatives

Integration of Campus-Specific Information

Your school receives a customized “Local Resources” web page, where you can enter information about your counseling center and other campus resources. Users will be able to access/print this page while viewing the course.

24/7 Accessibility via the Web

Users can access *At-Risk* via a computer with internet access. The simulation saves the user’s progress along the way, thereby allowing users to complete it in multiple sittings.

Tracking

The simulation records the name, email address and demographic information of each user as well as their progress throughout the simulation. This information can be downloaded through a special Administrator Account.

Jared Bailey

Academics Behavior Appearance

Grades

Assignment 1	Group Presentation	Midterm	Assignment 2	Group Project
B	C-	F		

Cumulative Grade: C-

Participation & Attendance

good
ok
poor

week of class: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

late
absent

Comments:
Jared's grades have been getting worse. His first assignment was fine, but then he had problems with his group members and got a low grade on their presentation. On the midterm, his responses were very disorganized. He went on one-page tangent about the FDA, most of which I highly doubt was accurate, and he didn't answer the last two questions.

Comments:
Jared has become less and less interactive in class and more frequently absent. He was always quiet, but now when he's in class he mostly just sits there and stares at the wall. Sometimes he chuckles to himself for no reason. I'm not sure if he's listening to me or not, but I don't think he is.

Back to Class FLAG Talk to Student

Katie Lim

Academics Behavior Appearance

Grades

Assignment 1	Group Presentation	Midterm	Assignment 2	Group Project
B+	A-	C+		

Cumulative Grade: B

Participation & Attendance

good
ok
poor

week of class: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

late
absent

Comments:
Katie's grades are good, though her midterm grade was lower than she expected.

Comments:
Katie often raises her hand and asks challenging questions. However, if she doesn't like the way I answer a question, she'll make a face and challenge me in front of the whole class. Once, she complained that I was lecturing on something I had already talked about. When I said I needed to review it for the other students, she acted bored and started talking with a nearby student.

Her attendance is excellent.

Back to Class FLAG Talk to Student

WALKTHROUGH OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE



1 Identification

In this highly interactive simulation, learners (faculty, staff and/or administrators) assume the role of Professor Hampton, who is teaching a class in which three students are experiencing psychological distress. Throughout the simulation, learners guide Professor Hampton through the task of identifying, approaching and referring these three at-risk students.



In identifying these students, learners review five students' profiles, which detail their academic performance (i.e., grades, participation and attendance), class behavior and appearance. If users believe there is sufficient information to suggest the student might be at-risk, they can choose to "Talk to Student," which brings the student into Professor Hampton's office for a chat.

The symptoms exhibited by the five students in their profiles and during their conversations have been carefully chosen to reflect those that often indicate the most common and most severe psychological illnesses among young adults, including:

- Alcohol/Substance Abuse
- Bipolar Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Panic Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Social Phobia

2 Approach and Referral

Each conversation takes 5-7 minutes to complete. The objective of each conversation is two-fold: 1) decide whether the student is at-risk (i.e., must be referred to the counseling center); and 2) successfully refer those students deemed at-risk. The learner controls the conversation by choosing what topic(s) to discuss and what specific things to say or ask. The available topics depend on the student's profile and on the decisions made by the learner throughout



Snapshot of Sample Conversation Menu

the conversation (i.e., new topics appear and others disappear as the conversation unfolds).

The virtual student is an animated character who responds to the learner's decisions with realistic speech and body language. Some statements and questions make the student more comfortable and increase the likelihood that they will open up to the learner. Other statements and questions make the student more defensive, reducing the opportunities to make a successful referral.

Throughout the conversation, learners receive encouragement and constructive criticism on their decisions to reinforce best practices. In addition, the student's body language and verbal responses are strong indicators to the learner about the effectiveness of their actions. As the conversation unfolds, users determine whether the student needs to be referred. If so, they must refer the student and use appropriate language to convince and motivate him/her to seek help. In certain situations, the simulation suggests that the teacher take a more active role and contact the support services themselves.

3 Feedback

Upon concluding each conversation, learners receive an analysis of the student, a review of their symptoms in class and in conversation, advice on how to refer other students with similar symptoms and a reminder to follow up with the student.

4 Completion

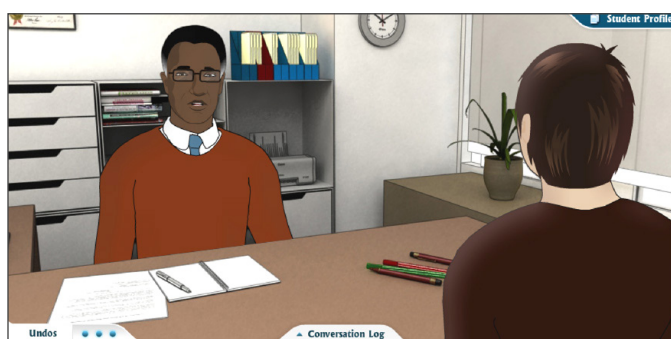
Once learners complete the course, they receive a certificate of completion. At that point, they are provided with access to a printable summary of best practices and asked to complete the online survey.



Snapshot of Student's Reaction



Snapshot of Advice Provided to User



Snapshot of Faculty Discussing Counseling Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions, please contact us at 212-675-9234 or info@kognito.com.