

at-risk in the ED

Web-Based Suicide and Substance Abuse Screening Training Simulation for ED Staff

1.0 Overview

In 2007, there were over 95 million visits to U.S. Emergency Departments by adults, and over 12 percent involved a mental health and/or substance abuse (MHSA) diagnosis. Of these, two-thirds had MHSA as a secondary or tertiary diagnosis rather than a primary one. According to the National Institutes of Mental Health, ten percent of those who complete suicide have been seen in an ED in the two months prior to death. Since many EDs are not well-equipped to address MHSA conditions, it is not surprising that many ED patients who are at-risk for MHSA are discharged without an appropriate intervention or referral once the non-MHSA presenting condition is addressed. It is clear that the ED represents an opportunity to screen and intervene with patients who are at-risk for suicide and substance abuse. Significantly, Medicare now reimburses providers for screening and behavioral counseling for substance abuse and depression.

2.0 Program Description

At-Risk for Emergency Department Staff is an interactive gatekeeper training simulation designed to prepare medical staff to screen patients at risk for suicide ideation and substance abuse. The training covers several evidence-based suicide risk and substance abuse screening tools such as SAD PERSONS, RAPS4-QF, and CRAFFT. The course is freely available to 80 hospitals in Arizona via a contract with the Arizona Department of Health Services.

In this 1-hour online simulation, users assume the role of a medical practitioner in an ED and engage in simulated conversations with three patient avatars that exhibit signs and symptoms associated with psychiatric illnesses, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse. The goal is to accurately identify which patients require screening and referral by first reviewing their charts and interviewing them.



Snapshot of Simulated Conversation with a Patient Avatar

Developed with subject matter experts in behavioral health, the training provides institutions with a cost-effective and engaging learning tool that:

- Increases patient safety
- Reduces re-admission rates
- Assists in implementing The Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals on Suicide
- Awards 1.50 CME AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™, CEUs (AZ only) and Certificate of Completion
- Is listed in the SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention Programs

Questions?

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