

NEWS RELEASE



Waterloo Region
Suicide Prevention Council
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Laurier School of Social Work to train 60 MSW students in suicide intervention and prevention

KITCHENER – The Laurier School of Social Work is partnering with the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council to provide Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) for 60 of its 120 students enrolled in the MSW program. ASIST is an internationally recognized, accredited two-day suicide skills training workshop. While a handful of institutions offer this training to their BSW and MSW students, it's not usually a mandatory element of earning an MSW degree.

Suicide prevention training for social workers is not currently mandated in Canada, despite the increasing numbers of suicidal ideation, attempts, and completed suicides within the province. Training and education for people who come in contact with high-risk individuals has been shown to be an effective suicide prevention intervention.

"The Master of Social Work (MSW) program is designed to prepare specially qualified professionals for the many diverse forms of direct clinical and community practice, and for related professional positions in policy development, planning, administration and research. In all of these areas, there is a growing demand for social workers who possess advanced, theoretical knowledge and specialized practice competence. Providing the ASIST aligns with this mission for our students" says Nick Coady, Dean of the School of Social Work.

Tana Nash, executive director of the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council, says she is thrilled that Laurier is following Renison University College's lead. In January, all 60 Renison University College BSW students were trained in ASIST "The results from Renison clearly showed that this is important training for future social workers and the comments from students boldly said this training should be included in the schooling. Other institutions training our future social workers across Canada are taking notice of Waterloo Region. It is our hope that this training can be built into the curriculum of social work programs in the future to ensure sustainability" says Nash.

On May 2 & 3 and 23 & 24 2015, two ASIST workshops of 30 students each will be facilitated by members of the Suicide Intervention Community Training Team who are comprised of a variety of local organizations and led by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Waterloo Wellington Dufferin Branch. Laurier's prospective social work graduates will learn how to identify people with thoughts of suicide and be given opportunity to learn and practice skills to equip them in delivering competent suicide interventions.

Several suicide prevention and awareness trainings are available for workplaces, community groups, or can be taken as an individual. For more information, contact workshops@cmhawwd.ca or visit <http://wwd.cmha.ca>

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