

## Full-Day Group Training

# Experiential Training in the Chronological Assessment of Suicide Events (CASE Approach) for Crisis Centers and Other Crisis Line Providers

**Provided by:** Training Institute for Suicide Assessment and Clinical Interviewing (TISA)  
[www.suicideassessment.com](http://www.suicideassessment.com)

**Intended Audience:** Any telephone crisis center provider including volunteers (equally useful for providers without advanced degrees in mental health as it is for providers with advanced degrees including social workers, counselors, and psychologists)

### Description

Undoubtedly one of the most critical tasks for any provider handling a crisis call is the ability to sensitively uncover the caller's suicidal intent as one determines what type of follow-up to recommend to maximize safety during the upcoming weeks. The ability to gently elicit often taboo and stigmatizing material regarding the caller's suicidal ideation, behaviors, and intent is a daunting task when the provider is handicapped by the lack of nonverbal cues necessitated by the limitations of phone intervention.

The Chronological Assessment of Suicide Events (the CASE Approach), a sensitive interview approach for uncovering suicidal ideation and intent, was developed by Shawn Christopher Shea when he was the director of the Diagnostic and Evaluation Center (DEC) at the University of Pittsburgh. The DEC was composed of both a set of emergency room clinicians and a separate set of telephone providers, who, together, handled all crisis calls coming into the catchment center. As the director, Dr. Shea was responsible for the design and the direct day-to-day teaching and supervision of all telephone providers. From the unique cross-fertilization provided by the chance to supervise and train staff working both on telephones and in the emergency room setting, Dr. Shea was able to take the best from both worlds to create the innovative interviewing strategy for uncovering suicidal ideation, planning, behavior, and intent – the CASE Approach – that is equally useful in both settings. The interviewing techniques of the CASE Approach are also of great utility in uncovering the type of sensitive material so commonly triggering suicidal thoughts in callers such as incest, marital discord, domestic violence, financial distress, problems at work/unemployment, and substance use. The CASE Approach has been described by David Jobes Ph.D., a former President of the American Association of Suicidology, as an interviewing strategy that moves:

“ . . . almost imperceptibly into the secret internal workings of the mind and soul of the patient tormented by suicidal ideation. I believe that the CASE Approach is a remarkable conceptual and clinical contribution to the field of suicidology. It should be taught to any front-line clinician. It has the power to meaningfully save lives.”

In the course of the day, two state-of-the-art role-playing approaches – *microtraining* and *macrotraining* are adapted to provide an intensive small-group training experience created

by Dr. Shea (pod training), that not only provides a sound introduction to the principles of the CASE Approach but also provides an opportunity to intensively practice the techniques via a set of carefully designed role-playing experiences. All role-plays are performed back-to-back to simulate call-center conditions.

The TISA trainer provides an in-depth presentation of how to use the CASE Approach to weave six interviewing techniques - designed to increase validity - into a fluid interview strategy for uncovering suicidal desire, ideation, planning, actions and intent. The trainer provides brief didactics to describe each validity technique and how each region of the CASE Approach (presenting suicidal ideation, recent ideation over the past two months, past suicidal ideation, and immediate ideation and intent during the interview itself) is explored by sequencing these interviewing techniques. Every technique and sequential region of the CASE Approach is demonstrated by the showing of a video of Dr. Shea using the CASE Approach.

Participants break into learning pods of four individuals *directly after each specific technique is described and demonstrated* to employ the role-playing techniques described above. The trainer circulates among learning pods to observe and provide direct feedback, as well as demonstrating techniques where appropriate. By the end of the day, each participant will have individually performed, as the interviewer, approximately 10 role-plays (to enhance their skill in using each interviewing skill), will have functioned as the interviewee in approximately 10 role-plays (to experience what the interviewing techniques feel like to clients), and will have functioned as an “observer coach” in approximately 20 different role-plays to better understand the nuances and consolidate the use of the interviewing techniques as used during phone interventions.

## **Objectives**

By the end of the day, participants will have gained both a theoretical and experiential understanding of how to adapt the techniques and strategies of the CASE Approach to meet the unique needs of callers. The intensive training provides participants with advanced skills, not only of use in uncovering suicidal ideation and intent, but also in helping callers share sensitive material such as domestic violence, substance abuse, financial stress, sexual concerns, and relationship problems, topics that are the “bread and butter” of crisis center providers:

### **Individual use of validity techniques:**

1. shame attenuation
2. normalization
3. behavioral incident
4. gentle assumption
5. symptom amplification
6. denial of the specific

### **Integration of the validity techniques into the CASE Approach:**

1. creating a “verbal videotape” using behavioral incidents
2. sequential exploration of suicidal ideation, behavior, plans and intent in the past 48 hours (Presenting Suicide Events)
3. sequential exploration of suicidal ideation, behavior, plans and intent in the past 2 months (Recent Suicide Events)

4. sequential exploration of suicidal ideation, behavior, plans and intent in the remaining history of the past (Past Suicide Events)
5. sequential exploration of suicidal ideation, plans, and intent actually occurring during the interview itself (Immediate Suicide Events)
6. instruction on how to flexibly apply the CASE Approach to the unique needs of the client and the clinical situation, whether a face-to-face interview or during an interview by phone

### **The Designer and Master Trainer**

Shawn Christopher Shea, M.D. is an acclaimed workshop leader and educational innovator in the fields of suicide prevention and clinical interviewing, having given over 850 presentations worldwide. He has been a recipient of an Outstanding Course Award presented by the American Psychiatric Association for his presentations at their annual meetings. He is a frequent presenter at the Cape Cod Symposium where his course has received the highest evaluation of the thirty courses presented over the summer. He has been actively involved in call center training having been a member of Lifeline's "Standards and Training Practices Subcommittee" since 2006.

Dr. Shea is the author of six books and numerous articles on clinical interviewing and training, including one of the classic texts in the field of suicide prevention, *The Practical Art of Suicide Assessment*. He is the creator of the internationally acclaimed interviewing strategy for uncovering suicidal ideation and intent – the Chronological Assessment of Suicide Events (the CASE Approach). His other interviewing innovations, including faciliic supervision, macrotraining and the Medication Interest Model (MIM) have been adopted around the world with his works being translated into a variety of languages as diverse as French, Greek, Japanese, and Chinese.

Both editions of his book, *Psychiatric Interviewing: the Art of Understanding*, have been chosen by the Medical Library Association for the Brandon/Hill List as one of the 16 most important books in the field of psychiatry, and it's French translation was awarded the "Prix Psyche" in 2005 as the most important new psychiatric book published in the French language.

Dr. Shea is the Director of the Training Institute for Suicide Assessment and Clinical Interviewing ([www.suicideassessment.com](http://www.suicideassessment.com)), a training and consultation service providing workshops, consultations, and quality assurance design in mental health assessments. He is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the Dartmouth Medical School.

**For more information on the CASE Approach, the following two-part article is available as a free pdf on our homepage. Return to our homepage: [www.suicideassessment.com](http://www.suicideassessment.com) - look at the right sidebar and click on "2-Part Article on Uncovering Suicidal Intent and the CASE Approach":**

Shea, SC: Suicide Assessment: Part 1: Uncovering Suicidal Intent – A Sophisticated Art and Part 2: Uncovering Suicidal Intent Using the Chronological Assessment of Suicide Events (CASE Approach). *Psychiatric Times*. December, 2009.