



c a s t

Coping And Support Training

Brief Description of the Program

Coping and Support Training (CAST) is a 12-lesson skills training program used by schools, community centers, and youth-oriented agencies. It is appropriate for middle or high school-aged youth. Features of the program include:

- Skills training, with a focus on building self-esteem, monitoring and setting goals, decision making and personal control, including help & support seeking strategies.
- A group context of adult and peer support, developed to enhance the personal and social protective factors of youth.
- A crisis response plan that includes both school and community-based strategies and resources for responding to a range of suicide-risk behaviors.
- Parent involvement, including active parental consent, support of the CAST goals for their teen, and awareness of school and community support resources.

CAST Outcomes CAST research evidenced:

- Significant, sustained reductions in suicide-risk behavior (65%) & depression (44%)
- Declines in anxiety (34%) and anger control problems (24%), even more rapid for females than males
- Substantial reductions in hard drug use (62%)
- Reductions in alcohol use (16%) as well as in drug use control problems (33%)
- Enhanced and sustained higher levels of problem-solving coping (24%), personal control (24%), and family support (27%)

Essential Group Structure and Instructional Methods

1. CAST is a 12-session prevention program that may be offered in a middle or high school or mental health or community setting as part of prevention programming.
2. The group meets for twelve 1-hour sessions, typically twice a week for 6 weeks. The small group format is critical with a 1:6-8 teacher-student ratio.
3. CAST Leaders are chosen from those who excel in building positive interpersonal relationships with and have a desire to work with at-risk youth.

CAST Participants

CAST was designed with students who were known to be at risk for school dropout and evidenced suicide-risk behaviors (e.g., suicide thoughts, threats and/or attempts, depressed mood).

However, CAST can be offered to an entire population (as “universal” prevention), to a high-risk group (“selective” prevention), or to specific at-risk students (“indicated” prevention). CAST participants must be INVITED and consent to join the group.

For program information and training/curriculum ordering arrangements contact:

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