

## **New Training Simulation Increases Faculty Skill in Identifying Students who are At-Risk for Suicide**

*Results from a national study conducted in 42 leading universities in the U.S. revealed that At-Risk, a web-based, interactive training simulation that uses educational gaming technology, increases the willingness and skill of faculty and staff to identify and refer students exhibiting signs of mental distress, such as depression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide. Read more at <http://www.kognito.com/atrisk/research.html>.*

New York, NY ([PRWEB](#)) June 29, 2009 -- A national study, conducted at 42 leading universities in the U.S., revealed that At-Risk, a web-based, interactive training simulation that uses educational gaming technology, increases the willingness and skill of faculty and staff to identify and refer students exhibiting signs of mental distress, such as depression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide. At-Risk was created by Kognito, an award-winning developer of web-based training simulations, in partnership with the Mental Health Association of New York City

Each year more than 1,350 college students commit suicide and, according to the American College Health Association, almost 10% of all students say they have seriously considered suicide during the past year. Academic institutions have been actively seeking ways to engage their faculty and staff in identifying at-risk students and referring them to their counseling centers, a crucial task considering that close to 80% of students who commit suicide are never seen by a counselor.

Responses collected from faculty and staff participating in the At-Risk study show that:

- 87% are now better prepared to identify, approach, and refer students exhibiting signs of mental distress.
- 82% are more confident in their ability to help a suicidal student.
- The use of role-play exercises where learners engage in simulated conversations with students who are depressed, anxious, or suicidal received much praise from respondents, with 96% saying that it was an effective tool in preparing them for similar conversations in real life.
- 99% reported the simulated conversations in the program were realistic representations of conversations they had or likely to have with at-risk students.
- 95% said they would recommend At-Risk to their colleagues.

In At-Risk, users assume the role of a faculty member who is concerned about six of his students. Users first analyze profiles of these virtual students in order to identify the three who are at-risk. They then engage those students in simulated conversations to determine whether and how to refer them to the campus counseling center. The virtual students are fully animated and possess their own emotional intelligence and memory. The training is completed once the user successfully identifies and refers the three at-risk students. At-Risk was created by Kognito in partnership with the Mental Health Association of New York City. A demo of At-Risk can be viewed at <http://www.kognito.com/atrisk>.

A complete report can be downloaded at <http://www.kognito.com/atrisk/research.html>. Kognito will conduct webinars on June 30, July 7, and July 9 where the results of the study will be further discussed. You can sign up

for the webinar at <http://www.kognito.com/atrisk/webinar.html>.

#### About Kognito

Kognito is a developer of web-based, interactive training simulations and educational games that address strategic business and training challenges. Since 2003, our team of psychologists, learning experts, and game designers has been leading the way in using cutting-edge game technology and empirical research in social behavior to produce evidence-based training experiences for Fortune 500 companies, government entities, and universities. Our work has won numerous awards including the 2007 and 2008 Learning Leader Awards from Bersin & Associates. For more information visit <http://www.kognito.com>.

#### About the Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA of NYC)

Founded in 1964, the MHA of NYC has led the way in mental health services, advocacy, and education in the New York metropolitan area and across the nation. The MHA of NYC fights to shape the policies that benefit those who suffer with mental illness, promotes early detection of mental illness, facilitates access to treatment, and pioneers the development and implementation of innovative, award-winning direct service programs to help individuals and their families lead rich and rewarding lives, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK), the only national 24/7 suicide prevention hotline available to anyone in emotional distress or suicidal crisis. For more information, visit <http://www.mhaofnyc.org>.

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