

Self Rated Intent (SRI) Training

Rebecca Salvador, M.A.

988 Quality Improvement Manager

June 9, 2023

Training Objectives

- Understand what Self-Rated Intent (SRI) is and how it can be utilized to measure suicidality
- Learn about how and when to ask the SRI question
- Understand why this is utilized as a measurement and metric

History of Safety Assessment

- Lifeline was launched on January 1, 2005 by SAMHSA and Vibrant
- After the launch of the Lifeline, SAMHSA funded evaluations that indicated the need for more consistent, uniform suicide risk assessment practices for call centers
- As a result of these findings, Lifeline developed the Standards, Training & Practices Subcommittee (STPS)
- 2007: The Suicide Risk Assessment Standards (SRAS) were adopted as policy by the Lifeline

History of Safety Assessment

- The Suicide Risk Assessment Standards (SRAS) focus on four core principles:
 - Suicide Desire
 - Suicidal Capability
 - Suicide Intent
 - Buffers

- 2019: Lifeline updated the Suicide Risk Assessment Standards and Imminent Risk Guidelines. They were combined and re-named Lifeline Safety Assessment Guidelines.

Lifeline Safety Assessment Guidelines

Safety Assessment

- Lifeline suggests early in the call/chat/text (first 5-7 minutes) counselors ask the following questions
 - Have you had any thoughts of suicide in the past few days, including today?
 - Have you taken any action to harm yourself today?

- If the answer to the question is yes, the counselor will then begin a thorough safety assessment

Lifeline Safety Assessment Guidelines

SUICIDAL DESIRE	SUICIDAL CAPABILITY	SUICIDAL INTENT	BUFFERS/CONNECTEDNESS	
Suicidal Ideation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Killing self and/or others	History of suicide attempts	Attempt in progress	Immediate supports	
	Exposure to someone else’s death by suicide		Social supports	
	History of/current violence to others			
Psychological pain	Available means of killing self/ other	Plan to kill self/other <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Method known	Planning for the future	
Hopelessness	Currently intoxicated		Engagement with helper <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Telephone worker	
	Substance abuse			
Helplessness	Acute symptoms of mental illness, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recent dramatic mood change• Out of touch with reality	Preparatory behaviors	Ambivalence for living/dying	
Perceived burden on others			Core values/beliefs	
Feeling trapped	Extreme agitation/rage, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased anxiety• Decreased sleep	Expressed intent to die		
Feeling intolerably alone		Sense of purpose		

Suicidal Intent

"Intent is characterized by explicit plans and intention to enact a suicide attempt and is distinct from suicidal desire." (Nock & Kessler, 2006)

Why ask about Suicidal Intent?

- Stronger suicidal intent has been associated with more lethal self-injury (Brown, Henriques, Sosdjan, & Beck, 2004)
- Stronger suicidal intent has also been associated with an increased likelihood of death by suicide (Nock & Kessler, 2006)

Self-Rated Intent (SRI)

- A measurement of how likely a help-seeker is to act on their suicidal thoughts at the time of contact
- A self-rating by the help-seeker
- Suicidal intent reflects the *current* risk level of the help-seeker
- Intent is more likely to change during the short span of the contact, giving counselors a way to measure risk level throughout the interaction

Why Use Self-Rated Intent

- "A Note on Self-Reports Versus Clinicians' Judgments...However, patients' self-reports were better than clinicians' views at predicting suicidality several months later, suggesting that patient self-report has considerable probative value, even compared with clinician-ratings." (Joiner et al., 1999)
- "Only intent to die at the end of the baseline call remained a significant predictor [of any suicidality at follow-up]." (Gould et al., 2007)
- Asking the help-seeker to rate themselves also gives them the agency to assess their current state and tell the counselor how severe their intent is.

Why We Ask Self Rated Intent

- Asking help-seeker to *self-rate*, instead of using counselor's rating of risk, decreases subjectivity
- It is an effective way to measure de-escalation throughout the call
- Aids the help-seeker in distinguishing between feelings and actions
- Can be therapeutic for the help-seeker to understand that talking about their pain and feelings is *different from acting upon them*

How To Ask SRI Question

“On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is you’re **not likely** to kill yourself TODAY, and 5 is you’re **very likely** to kill yourself TODAY, where are you on that scale right now?”

When do we ask this?

- At the beginning of all contacts during the safety assessment phase. Generally asked after asking about thoughts of suicide and plan
- At the end of all contacts, during safety planning/wrapping up

How To Ask SRI Question

Start of Contact

- Ask SRI during the safety assessment
- SRI is asked every time help-seeker reports thoughts of suicide

- Order of questions
 - Thoughts of suicide
 - Plan
 - Access to means (if applicable)
 - Timeline (if applicable)
 - **SRI**

How To Ask SRI Question

End of Contact

- Ask SRI while completing safety planning
- Ask the question again the same way you asked it in the beginning of the contact
- Ask SRI at the end of the contact regardless of what their reported SRI was at the beginning of the contact
- If their end SRI is high (4 or 5)
 - Ensure that an in-depth safety plan is created
 - You can initiate an emergency service intervention, if you are concerned the help-seeker will not be able to keep themselves safe after the contact
 - Consult with a supervisor if you are unsure of next steps to take

How To Ask SRI Question

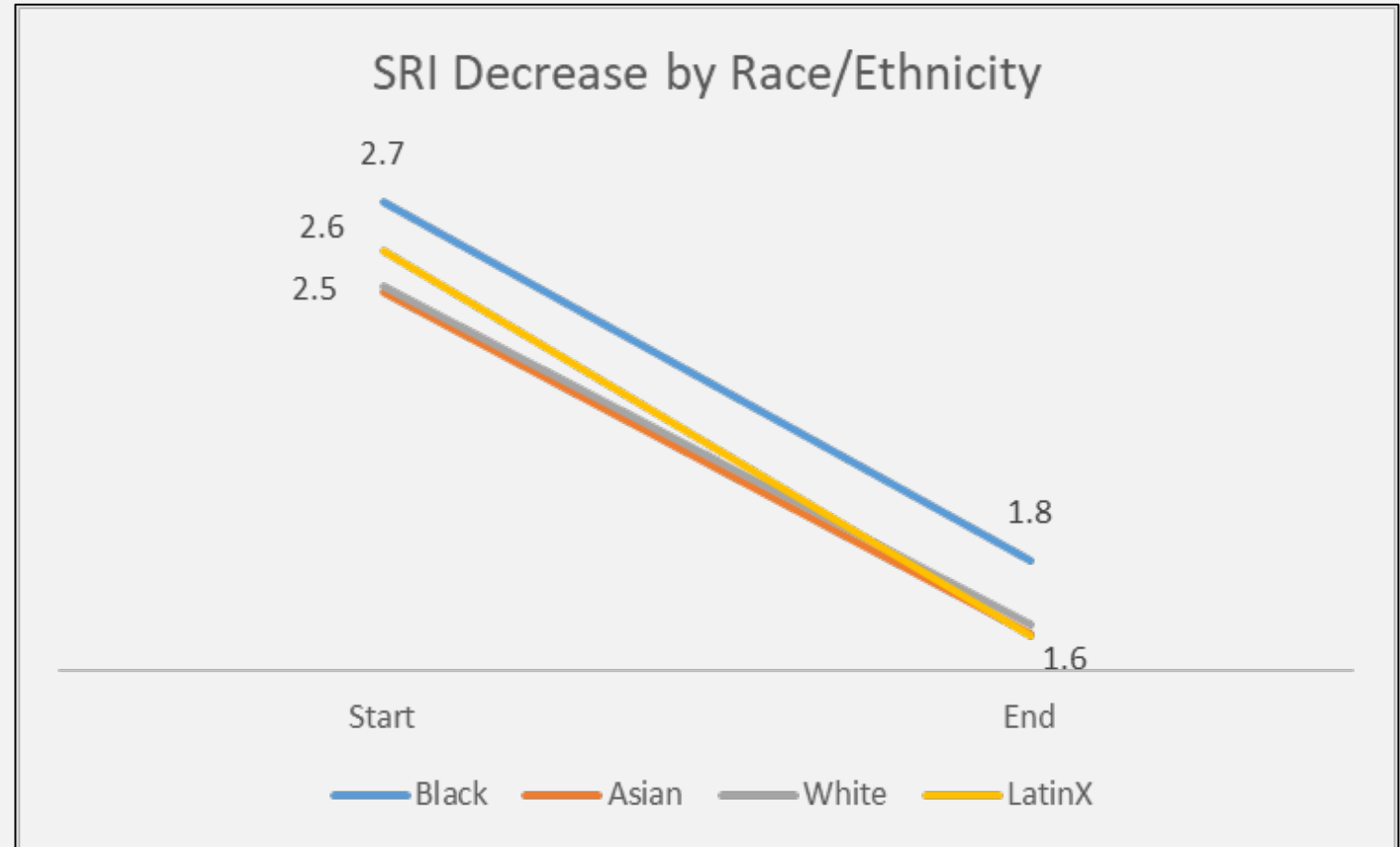
SRI for 3rd Party contacts

- Do not ask 3rd party contacts to answer the SRI question on behalf of the person they are calling about
- Instead, you can coach the 3rd party on how to ask other safety assessment questions, and use them as a tool when they are talking to their loved one about their suicidality
 - How to ask about thoughts of suicide
 - How to ask about a plan
 - How to ask about means

Why We Ask Self-Rated Intent

To demonstrate we are
being effective and saving
lives!!

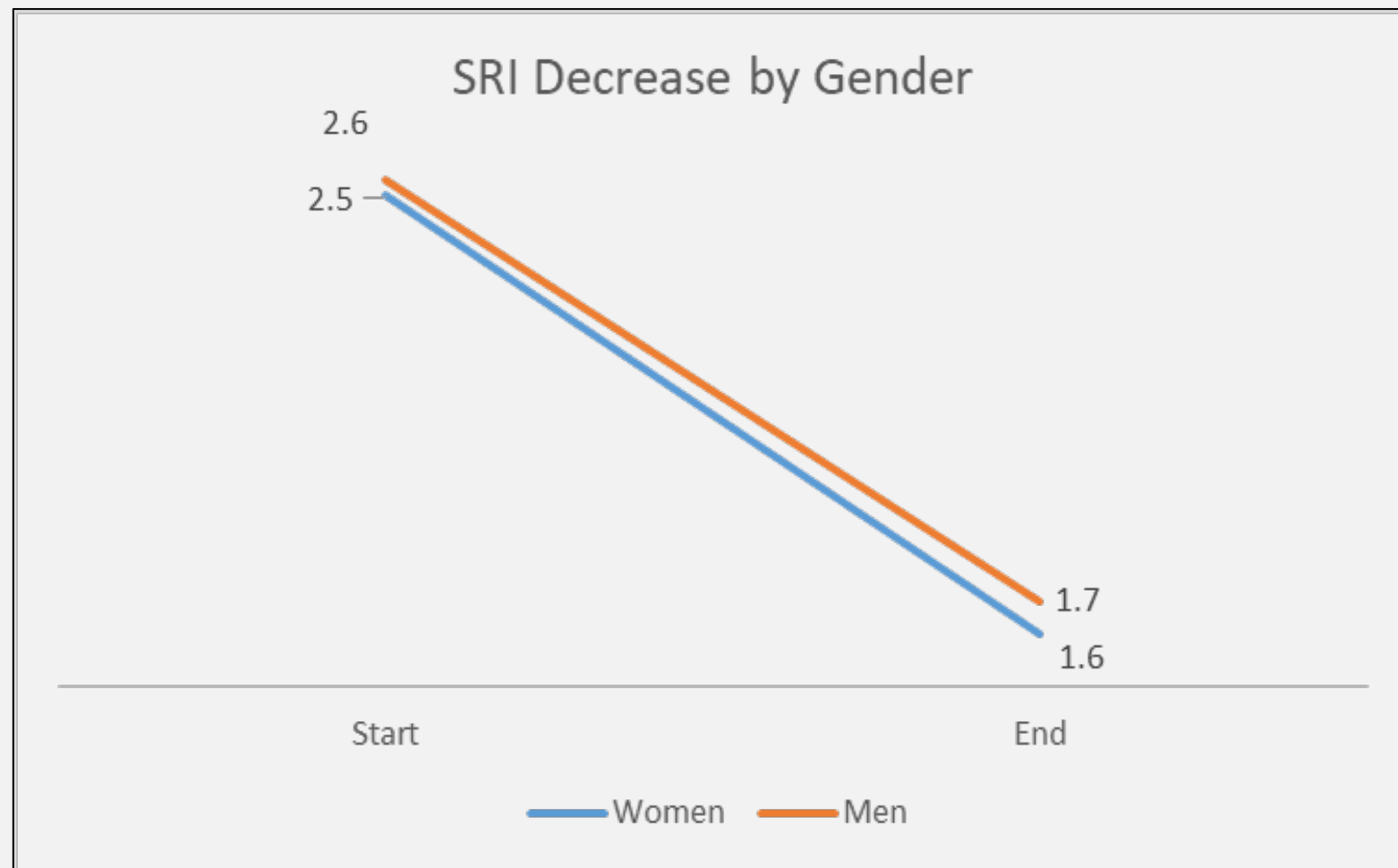
Note the slight variation in
the starting SRI between
different races/ethnicities



Why We Ask Self-Rated Intent

Both men and women
are benefitting.

SRI for women callers
decreasing more.



Why We Ask Self Rated Intent

- Can assist counselor in deciding what types of intervention may be needed
 - High SRI (4-5): Initiating an emergency service intervention, engaging help-seeker in means restriction planning during safety planning, more in-depth safety planning, offer follow up call
 - Mid SRI (3): Means restriction planning, normal safety planning, offer follow up call
 - Low SRI (1-2): Normal safety planning, offer follow-up call

- Can be utilized as a tool during safety planning
 - What coping skills can be used when a help-seeker is at different SRI levels?
 - Ex. When a help-seeker is feeling they are at an SRI 4 or 5, they can call 988, ask a trusted person in their life to take them to the hospital etc.

Review

“On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is you’re **not likely** to kill yourself TODAY, and 5 is you’re **very likely** to kill yourself TODAY, where are you on that scale right now?”

- Asked anytime a help-seeker reports thoughts of suicide
- At the beginning of all contacts, during the safety assessment phase.
- At the end of all contacts, during safety planning/wrapping up

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if someone reports an SRI of 4 or 5?

- Respond with empathy, and non-judgmentally
- Ask about access to a gun, past attempts
- Assess imminent risk (can they stay safe during the call/chat/text)

I don't know how to ask the SRI question, or how to bring it up

- Ask it after you ask about their plan, means, and timeline. It is a natural progression in the questions if you ask it in this order.
- Remember to use this wording: “On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is you’re **not likely** to kill yourself TODAY, and 5 is you’re **very likely** to kill yourself TODAY, where are you on that scale right now?”

Frequently Asked Questions

The help-seeker doesn't feel high risk enough to ask this question

- While it might feel odd to assess if there is no perceived risk, best practice is to ask the question at the beginning and end of the contact anytime someone reports thoughts of suicide.

I am uncomfortable with using the word “kill”, I'm worried it will cause people's intent to increase

- Research shows that using the word “kill” does not elicit any additional distress when compared to other phrasing when assessing for suicide. (Gould et al., 2005)
- Addressing suicidal thoughts directly through asking about intent may actually help to destigmatize suicidal thoughts for the help-seeker