

Seeking Safety Guidelines

Purpose

Seeking Safety (SS) is an empirically supported<sup>1</sup> treatment model for trauma, substance abuse, and/or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The SS Guidelines were developed in collaboration with Lisa M. Najavits, PhD, SS Developer, to provide Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LAC-DMH) Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Providers with protocols related to training, model fidelity, and sustainability.

Glossary

SS Initial Training: Completion of either “A” or “B” training requirements in Section I.

SS Champion: Developer-certified SS Adherence Rater and SS Supervisor.

Theme Based Calls (TBCs): Telephone consultations facilitated by developer or designee.

I. Training requirements to implement SS under the LAC-DMH PEI Plan

A. Initial Training by Developer-Approved Trainer

1. Conducted by developer-approved trainer (minimum of 6 hours).
2. Access to SS manual during and after training.
3. Developer highly-recommends participation in Theme Based Calls (TBCs).
4. Trainee will read SS Website’s Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)<sup>2</sup>.
5. Trainee will read LAC-DMH PEI SS FAQs<sup>3</sup>.
6. Accreditation with LAC-DMH as competent to practice.

B. Initial Training by SS Champion

1. Conducted by SS Champion (Section III).
2. Access to SS Manual, Training DVDs, and Website.
3. Complete SS Training Verification Form<sup>4</sup>.
  - a. To be completed during a 6-month period (“b” through “g”).
  - b. Trainee will read and become familiar with SS Manual.
  - c. Trainee will watch SS Training DVDs<sup>5</sup>.
    1. DVD #1: Overview of Seeking Safety.
    2. DVD #2: Example of a Session.
    3. DVD #3: Client’s Story/Grounding.
  - d. Trainee will read SS Website’s FAQs<sup>2</sup>.
  - e. Trainee will submit a minimum of one (1) audio/video recorded session(s) to SS Champion.
    1. SS Champion will rate recordings using SS Adherence Scale<sup>6</sup> and SS Adherence Scale Score Sheet<sup>7</sup>.
    2. SS Champion will provide feedback to trainee utilizing the SS Supervision Format<sup>8</sup>.
    3. More adherence ratings may be needed until SS Champion determines trainee is consistently demonstrating strong adherence (score of 2.0 or better on each section) to the model.

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- f. Trainee will demonstrate working knowledge of all the above with the SS Champion.
- g. SS Champion will submit completed SS Training Verification Form<sup>4</sup> to SS Practice Lead at [seekingsafety@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:seekingsafety@dmh.lacounty.gov).
4. Developer highly-recommends participation in TBCs.
5. Trainee will read LAC-DMH PEI SS FAQs<sup>3</sup>.
6. Accreditation with LAC-DMH as competent to practice.

II. Theme Based Calls

A. TBCs are highly-recommended by the Developer and encouraged by LAC-DMH.

1. Telephone consultations facilitated by developer/designee to support staff in effectively implementing SS.
2. Staff completing at least 10 out of the 13 themes below, with verified attendance, will receive a developer-issued “Certificate of Achievement”.
3. Other themes may be added as needed.

B. Recommended themes:

1. *Getting started with Seeking Safety (developing an action plan)*: This call is designed to help you dive in and make use of Seeking Safety in a user friendly way. Provides ideas to help you get started and discusses potential obstacles.
2. *Conducting the session*: This call provides strategies for conducting Seeking Safety. Topics include key treatment principles, preparation for sessions, and the structure and processes of Seeking Safety.
3. *Engaging resistant clients*: It can be difficult to work with clients that do not want to be in treatment. This call address strategies aimed at engaging clients in the Seeking Safety treatment by empathically meeting them where they are at in their lives.
4. *Focusing on trauma*: Trauma is one of the most important ways to engage clients in Seeking Safety. This call provides a variety of ways to help clients identify and address trauma in a non-threatening way and how to make use of trauma to understand and process what happens in the Seeking Safety session.
5. *Focusing on addiction*: Substance abuse is a central focus of Seeking Safety because it keeps clients stuck in trauma symptoms. This call will assist clinicians to identify and implement strategies to help clients address substance abuse in their Seeking Safety sessions. Topics include abuse vs. dependence, abstinence, harm reduction, and controlled use and the meaning of client’s substance abuse in the context of their trauma.
6. *Adapting Seeking Safety*: Seeking Safety is designed for maximum flexibility and adaptability. A major goal of this call is to support you in bringing your clinical wisdom, experience and personality into the Seeking Safety session while keeping fidelity to the model. This call will discuss many creative adaptations to Seeking Safety.

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7. *Working with unsafe behavior*: Danger is a major issue in the lives of many of our clients. This call is designed to help you assist your client in becoming aware of unsafe behavior and begin to take steps by eliminating it.
8. *Adolescents (challenges and opportunities)*: Adolescents can be particularly difficult to engage in treatment for a number of reasons. This call will explore creative ways to involve teens in the Seeking Safety treatment. Methods addressed include using games, illustrations, music, puzzles, and art work.
9. *Adults (challenges and opportunities)*: This call discusses the issues that adults bring to treatment and how to use Seeking Safety to effectively address their concerns.
10. *Older Adults (challenges and opportunities)*: Older adults bring very specific developmental concerns and life issues to treatment. This call discusses the challenges older adults experience in aging and how to use Seeking Safety to address these life issues.
11. *Tough cases*: This call offers clinicians an opportunity to explore how to work with challenging and complex clients when conducting Seeking Safety.
12. *Role-play a session*: On this call clinicians are given the opportunity to role play clients with challenging clinical issues.
13. *Fidelity (staying true to the model)*: The challenge of an evidence based treatment is to avoid model drift. This call will assist you in understanding the key concepts of adhering to the model of Seeking Safety utilizing tools available on the Seeking Safety website.

C. Feedback is encouraged by the developer for ongoing quality improvement. Anonymous feedback can be left at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SS\\_phone\\_consult](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SS_phone_consult).

D. Provider is responsible for any media and associated fees.

E. Forty-eight (48) hours advance notice is required for cancellation and/or rescheduling.

III. Seeking Safety Champion Training Requirements

- A. It is highly-recommended each Directly Operated Clinic and Legal Entity designates at least one SS Champion that successfully meets and completes all training requirements outlined in this section.
- B. The SS Champion is solely designed to ensure ongoing model fidelity (Section IV) and sustainability (Section I - B) within their agency as part of regular staff duties.
  1. SS Champion cannot conduct adherence ratings and supervision for other agencies, seek paid consultation to provide such ratings or supervision, nor represent him/herself as an associate of SS and/or the Developer.
  2. SS Champion developer-certification is transferable.

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- a. SS Champion will provide SS Practice Lead with request to transfer certification at [seekingsafety@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:seekingsafety@dmh.lacounty.gov).
- b. SS Champion will provide verification of employment with new Legal Entity or Directly Operated Clinic to SS Practice Lead.

C. Pre-Requisites

1. Licensed mental health clinician.
2. Strong buy-in for the SS model.
3. Completed SS Initial Training.
4. Implemented each of the 25 topics at least once.
5. Ongoing implementation of SS.
6. Read SS Website's FAQs<sup>2</sup>.
7. Downloaded and read "*Najavits, LM (2009). Seeking Safety: An implementation guide. In A. Rubin & DW Springer (Eds). The Clinician's Guide to Evidenced-Based Practice. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley*<sup>9</sup>."

D. Adherence Rater Training

1. Attend a one-day (6-hour) developer-approved Adherence Rater Training.
2. Rate Pre-Recorded Videos.
  - a. Adherence Rater Candidate (ARC) will be assigned two (2) pre-recorded videos to rate utilizing the SS Adherence Scale<sup>6</sup> and SS Adherence Scale Score Sheet<sup>7</sup>.
  - b. ARC will submit completed SS Adherence Scale Score Sheet<sup>7</sup> for 1<sup>st</sup> video via email and schedule telephone consultation feedback session with developer/designee via phone.
  - c. After receiving feedback for the 1<sup>st</sup> video rating, ARC will submit completed SS Adherence Scale Score Sheet<sup>7</sup> for the 2<sup>nd</sup> video and schedule telephone consultation feedback session with developer/designee via phone.
  - d. ARC will be required, at minimum, to successfully rate one (1) of two (2) videos.
  - e. ARC to successfully complete all requirements within three (3) months after attending the one-day SS Adherence Rater Training.
  - f. ARC responsible for returning the original pre-recorded videos to the developer.
  - g. Provider is responsible for any media and associated fees, including unreturned videos.
  - h. Forty-eight (48) hours advance notice is required for cancellation and/or rescheduling.

E. Supervisor Training

1. Successfully completed the SS Adherence Rater Training.
2. Downloaded and read SS Supervision Format<sup>8</sup>.
3. Attend a one-day (6-hour) developer-approved SS Supervisor Training.

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4. Record, rate, and role-play agency staff SS session.
  - a. Supervisor Candidate (SC) will rate agency staff implementing SS by utilizing SS Adherence Scale<sup>6</sup> and SS Adherence Scale Score Sheet<sup>7</sup>.
  - b. SC will only submit completed SS Adherence Scale Score Sheet<sup>7</sup> (not the recording) to developer/designee via email while ensuring client information is de-identified.
  - c. SC will schedule follow-up telephone consultation with developer/designee to role-play feedback session. SC will be evaluated on the feedback delivery of the SS Adherence Scale Score Sheet<sup>7</sup> utilizing the SS Supervision Format<sup>8</sup>. SC may require additional ratings.
  - d. SC to successfully complete all requirements within three (3) months after attending the one-day SS Supervisor Training.
  - e. Provider is responsible for any media and associated fees.
  - f. Forty-eight (48) hours advance notice is required for cancellation and/or rescheduling.

IV. Model Fidelity

- A. The following guidelines are highly-recommended by the Developer to ensure ongoing fidelity to the SS model.
  1. SS Champion will conduct SS supervision utilizing the SS Supervision Format<sup>8</sup>.
    - a. At minimum, once per month with staff implementing SS.
    - b. May be conducted in individual or group format; with up to six (6) supervisees for group format.
  2. SS Champion will conduct ongoing SS adherence ratings and provide feedback for each staff implementing SS every six (6) months.
    - a. Staff with a rating score less than 2.0 on any section will require adherence ratings every month.
    - b. Staff with a rating score of 2.0 on each section and higher will require adherence ratings every six (6) months.

References

1. SS empirical supported studies are accessible at [www.seekingsafety.org](http://www.seekingsafety.org) (Outcomes Tab).
2. SS Website's FAQs are accessible at [www.seekingsafety.org](http://www.seekingsafety.org) (FAQ Tab).
3. LAC-DMH PEI SS FAQs are accessible at the [LAC-DMH MHPA website](http://LAC-DMH MHPA website) under the PEI section.
4. SS Training Verification Form is available at [LAC-DMH MHPA website](http://LAC-DMH MHPA website) under the PEI section.
5. SS Training DVDs are available at [www.seekingsafety.org](http://www.seekingsafety.org) (Order Tab). Please contact SS Practice Lead at [seekingsafety@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:seekingsafety@dmh.lacounty.gov) to inquire regarding eligibility to receive a free copy.
6. SS Adherence Scale is accessible at [www.seekingsafety.org](http://www.seekingsafety.org) (Assessment Tab).
7. SS Adherence Scale Score Sheet is accessible at [www.seekingsafety.org](http://www.seekingsafety.org) (Assessment Tab).
8. SS Supervision Format is accessible at [www.seekingsafety.org](http://www.seekingsafety.org) (Training Tab; Training Resources).
9. "Najavits, LM (2009). *Seeking Safety: An implementation guide*. In A. Rubin & DW Springer (Eds). *The Clinician's Guide to Evidenced-Based Practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley" is accessible at [www.seekingsafety.org](http://www.seekingsafety.org) (Articles Tab).