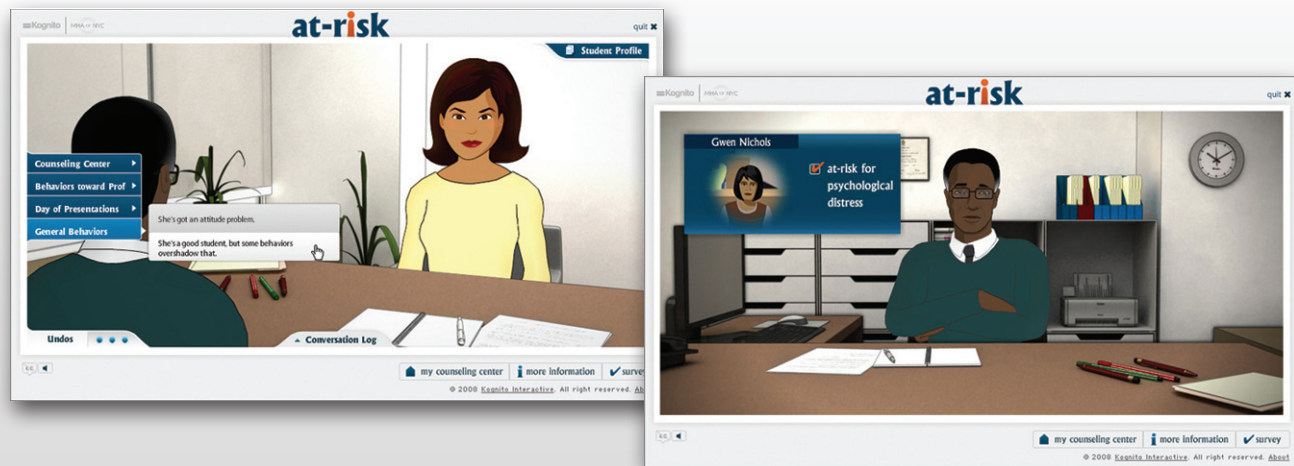


# at-risk

## for University Faculty

Identify and Refer Students in Mental Distress



### OVERVIEW

*30% of all college students report feeling so depressed it is difficult for them to function*

*6% of college students say they have seriously considered suicide in the past year*

*Close to 80% of students who commit suicide go unnoticed*

*At-Risk for University Faculty* is an online, interactive gatekeeper training program that uses virtual role-play to help faculty and staff identify at-risk students. Through simulations of conversations with potentially at-risk students, the program examines common indicators of psychological distress and methods for approaching an at-risk student for referral to the counseling center.

### SAMHSA SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry

Launched in 2009, the program has been adopted by more than 75 universities, assessed in two studies, and added to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Best Practices Registry for suicide prevention programs. *At-Risk* is the first and only simulation-based training program to be included in this prestigious national registry.

Unlike any other Web-based gatekeeper program, *At-Risk* uses a virtual environment to enhance the learning experience. Users assume the role of a university faculty member and engage in simulated conversations with fully animated students exhibiting behaviors associated with depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety and drug abuse. After experiencing this hands-on practice, learners become more confident and proficient in handling similar situations in real life.

## CONVERSATION SIMULATIONS

In these role-play scenarios, the learner practices talking with a student, using open-ended questions, reflective listening and other motivational interviewing techniques to achieve several goals:

- Broach the topic of psychological distress
  - Motivate the student to seek help
  - Avoid common pitfalls, such as attempting to diagnose the problem or giving unwarranted advice
- 

## INSTITUTIONAL BENEFITS

*At-Risk for University Faculty* provides a cost-effective solution that benefits academic institutions in several ways:

- Promotes early intervention
  - Increases student retention and academic performance
  - Reduces the stigma associated with mental illness
  - Increases visibility for campus mental health initiatives
- 

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing the training, faculty and staff will be better equipped to do the following:

- Identify warning signs of mental distress, including verbal, behavioral and situational clues
- Manage conversations with students to determine the need for referral
- Develop awareness of negative stereotypes and misconceptions about mental distress and illness
- Understand their school specific process for student referral and the counseling services available for students



# CUSTOMIZATION AND SPECIAL FEATURES

*At-Risk* includes a number of components and other tools that can assist in marketing the product to stakeholders and learners:

## Built-in Assessment

*At-Risk* is equipped with a built-in survey that collects feedback from your faculty and staff about their experience with the course. A two-month follow-up survey also will be administered to collect longitudinal data.

## Materials for On-Campus Promotion

*At-Risk* includes materials to assist in on-campus promotion of the course:

- Suggested language for an email to learners
- Customizable flyer
- PowerPoint presentation with guidelines
- An animated and narrated trailer about the program
- A list of suggested marketing strategies

## Integration of Campus-Specific Information

Your school receives a customized “My Counseling Center” web page, where you can enter information about your counseling center and other campus resources. Users will be able to access/print this page while viewing the course.

## 24/7 Accessibility via the Web

Users can access *At-Risk* via a computer with internet access. The course saves the user’s progress along the way, thereby allowing users to complete it in multiple sittings.

## Tracking

The course records the name and email address of each user as well as their progress throughout the course. This “Completion Report” is updated in real-time, and available to download from your Administrator Account.

**Jared Bailey**

Academics Behavior Appearance

**Grades**

Assignment 1	Group Presentation	Midterm	Assignment 2	Group Project
B	C-	F		

Cumulative Grade: C-

**Comments:**  
Jared's grades have been getting worse. His first assignment was fine, but then he had problems with his group members and got a low grade on their presentation. On the midterm, his responses were very disorganized. He went on one-page tangent about the FDA, most of which I highly doubt was accurate, and he didn't answer the last two questions.

**Participation & Attendance**

**Comments:**  
Jared has become less and less interactive in class and more frequently absent. He was always quiet, but now when he's in class he mostly just sits there and stares at the wall. Sometimes he chuckles to himself for no reason. I'm not sure if he's listening to me or not, but I don't think he is.

Back to Class FLAG Talk to Student

**Katie Lim**

Academics Behavior Appearance

**Grades**

Assignment 1	Group Presentation	Midterm	Assignment 2	Group Project
B+	A-	C+		

Cumulative Grade: B

**Comments:**  
Katie's grades are good, though her midterm grade was lower than she expected.

**Participation & Attendance**

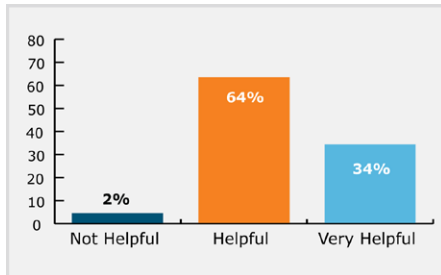
**Comments:**  
Katie often raises her hand and asks challenging questions. However, if she doesn't like the way I answer a question, she'll make a face and challenge me in front of the whole class. Once, she complained that I was lecturing on something I had already talked about. When I said I needed to review it for the other students, she acted bored and started talking with a nearby student. Her attendance is excellent.

Back to Class FLAG Talk to Student

## TRAINING EFFICACY

*At-Risk for University Faculty* has been assessed in two studies providing evidence to its effectiveness:

### National Study at 72 Universities



***Respondents who agree that the simulated conversations effectively prepared them for similar conversations in real life***

*At-Risk for University Faculty* has been assessed in two studies providing evidence to its effectiveness. Since May 2009, more than 1,450 participants have completed a survey about their experience with *At-Risk for University Faculty*.

Below are some highlights from their responses.

#### Changes in Knowledge and Skill:

- 89% reported they were better prepared to identify, approach, and refer students as a result of the course
- 85% reported they were more confident in their ability to help a suicidal student

#### Changes in Perception and Motivation

- 87% reported an increased likelihood of approaching and referring students who exhibit signs of mental distress
- 84% reported an increased awareness that it is part of their role to identify and refer at-risk students

#### Effectiveness of Instructional Approach

- 96% said the simulated conversations were realistic representations of conversations they have had with students
- 94% said they would recommend *At-Risk* to their colleagues

### Empirical Study in Four Colleges

Researchers at four universities in New York City are currently conducting an empirical study on the efficacy of *At-Risk*. The study analyzes the learner's ability to apply best practices after taking *At-Risk* compared to a control group that receives a printed manual covering the same best practices. Preliminary results show a significant increase in awareness and relevant skills among the experimental group participants:

- Recognition that they are responsible for talking to students about academic and behavioral concerns and making a referral
- Increased likelihood that they will approach a student who is experiencing problems in their class
- Ability to communicate effectively with students and make the right decision about whether to make a referral (approaching significance with 1/4 of the sample collected).

# WALKTHROUGH OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE



## 1 Identification

In this highly interactive simulation, learners (faculty, staff and/or administrators) assume the role of Professor Hampton, who is teaching a class in which three students are experiencing psychological distress. Throughout the simulation, learners guide Professor Hampton through the task of identifying, approaching and referring these three at-risk students.



In identifying these students, learners review the students' profiles, which detail their academic performance (i.e., grades, participation and attendance), class behavior and appearance. If they believe there is sufficient information to suggest the student might be at-risk, they can choose to "Talk to Student," which brings the student into Professor Hampton's office for a chat.

The symptoms exhibited by the five students in their profiles and during their conversations have been carefully chosen to reflect those that often indicate the most common and most severe psychological illnesses among young adults, including:

- Alcohol/Substance Abuse
- Bipolar Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Panic Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Social Phobia

## 2 Approach and Referral

Each conversation takes 5-7 minutes to complete. The objective of each conversation is two-fold: 1) decide whether the student is at-risk (i.e., must be referred to the counseling center); and 2) successfully refer those students deemed at-risk. The learner controls the conversation by choosing what topic(s) to discuss and what specific things to say or ask. The available topics depend on the student's profile and on the decisions made by the learner throughout



Snapshot of Sample Conversation Menu

the conversation (i.e., new topics appear and others disappear as the conversation unfolds).

The virtual student is an animated character who responds to the learner's decisions with realistic speech and body language. Some statements and questions make the student more comfortable and increase the likelihood that they will open up to the learner. Other statements and questions make the student more defensive, reducing the opportunities to make a successful referral.

Throughout the conversation, learners receive encouragement and constructive criticism on their decisions to reinforce best practices. In addition, the student's body language and verbal responses are strong indicators to the learner about the effectiveness of their actions. As the conversation unfolds, users determine whether the student needs to be referred. If so, they must refer the student and use appropriate language to convince and motivate him/her to seek help. In certain situations, the simulation suggests that the teacher take a more active role and contact the support services themselves.

### 3 Feedback

Upon concluding each conversation, learners receive an analysis of the student, a review of their symptoms in class and in conversation, advice on how to refer other students with similar symptoms and a reminder to follow up with the student.

### 4 Completion

Once learners complete the course, they receive a certificate of completion. At that point, they are provided with access to a printable summary of best practices and asked to complete the online survey.



Snapshot of Student's Reaction



Snapshot of Advice Provided to User



Snapshot of Faculty Discussing Counseling Services

## SAMPLE CLIENT LIST

At-Risk is currently being used at over 85 colleges and universities nationwide. Below you can find a sample list of schools using At-Risk to train their faculty. For a complete list of universities using At-Risk, please visit <http://www.kognito.com/atrisk/clients.html>.

Colorado State University

George Mason University

Indiana University Purdue -  
University of Indiana

James Madison University

Kansas State University

New York University

Ohio State University

Penn State University - Altoona

Santa Monica College

Seton Hall University

University of Idaho

University of Illinois

University of North Carolina

Vanderbilt University

### CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions, please contact us at  
212-675-9234 or [info@kognito.com](mailto:info@kognito.com).