

[Free online training simulations for middle and high school personnel to learn to recognize signs of psychological distress and connect students to support services](#)

Stress can have a negative impact on a student's health and academic performance. Teachers and staff are in the ideal position to recognize when students' behavior or changes in behavior may be signals of distress. By increasing the number of "trusted adults" able and ready to connect with students, we increase the chances of intervening with youth who may be struggling due to the stresses of bullying, challenges at home or emerging signs of psychological distress. In this unique, virtual practice environment users learn by engaging in interactive role-play conversations with emotionally responsive student avatars. Three courses are available:

- At-Risk for Middle School Educators ([overview](#))
- At-Risk for High School Educators ([overview](#))
- Step In Speak Up! – Supporting LGBTQ Students ([overview](#))

At-Risk for Middle School Educators and **At-Risk for High School Educators** are [research-proven](#) gatekeeper training simulations designed to prepare teachers, administrators and staff to: (1) recognize when a student is exhibiting signs of psychological distress, and (2) manage a conversation with the student with the goal of connecting them with the appropriate support. In these 1-hour online trainings, users enter a virtual environment, assume the role of an educator, and engage in conversations with three emotionally responsive student avatars that exhibit signs of psychological distress, including thoughts of suicide.

Step In, Speak Up! for supporting LGBTQ youth is a 30-minute online training to prepare educators and school staff to support students who may be struggling due to harassment or exclusion related to sexual identity, sexual orientation or other differences.

To take the online trainings:

- 1) Go to: <http://illinois.kognito.com/>
- 2) Click on "Train Now" under Trainings Available/K-12 School Personnel and create your account
 - Choose "Other" if you work with multiple schools or are a partner agency.
- 3) Take the brief pre-training survey, followed by the training (about 50 minutes, and can be completed in multiple sittings)
- 4) Please also take the post training survey to assist in the program evaluation
- 5) Print your certificate of completion

If you experience any technical difficulties, please email support@kognito.com

Additional information

- **Spread the word:** You can help spread the word about the availability of these trainings to other school personnel by utilizing the following [Tips & Resources](#) materials, which include an administrator guide, outreach material (e.g., power point presentation, flyers, sample email texts, and web banners/buttons,) discussion guide, 3-minute video walk through and other materials.
- **CPDU/CEU:** Continuing Professional Development Units (CPDU) for school personnel and Continuing Education Units (CEU) for social workers and counselors are provided by the Illinois Association of School Social Workers. Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) are available for the three K-12 courses.
- **School code requirement:** The At-Risk trainings meet the school code requirement for school personnel to be trained in identifying the warning signs of suicidal behavior
- **Sponsoring agency:** Through federal funds, the Illinois Department of Public Health is able to offer these trainings at no cost to all Illinois schools (public and private.) All Illinois schools are pre-enrolled.
- **Contact information:** For additional information about the trainings please contact Jennifer Martin, MSW, Illinois Department of Public Health, Suicide Prevention Program at Jennifer.L.Martin@illinois.gov or 217-558-4081.