



Introduction to Suicide Assessment and Treatment

Edge of Life Model

6-Hour Course Overview

This 6-hour introductory course presents the Edge of Life Model (ELM), a Gestalt Therapy/Humanistic and trauma-informed approach to suicide assessment and treatment. This model:

- Integrates established best practices into a relational Gestalt Therapy approach, laying a foundation to meet the standard of care for assessing and treating suicide.
- Emphasizes increasing emotional awareness for both the client and therapist.
- Provides therapists with the practical tools necessary to meet the ethical and legal obligations in treating clients at any level of suicide risk.
- Reframes suicidal ideation as a call for transformation, supporting therapists and clients to explore the meaning in the suffering, develop new coping skills, and create a life worth living.

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize ELM's approach to suicide assessment and treatment and how it differs from other evidence-based models.
2. Explain how ideation-to-action theories account for the progression from suicidal thoughts to behaviors.
3. Explain how to do an assessment and treatment plan that addresses the major risk and protective factors across 4 domains.
4. Describe how to use the Timeout Toolkit and Incident Report to build emotional awareness, manage distress, and develop an effective crisis response plan.
5. Describe how and when to conduct lethal means counseling with clients to meet the standard of care.

Course Outline

Lecture 1: Course Overview (32 Minutes)

This lecture introduces the evolution of the Edge of Life Model, its humanistic approach to treating suicide, and the therapist's role in the healing process.

Lecture 2: Humanistic Framework for Language (6 Minutes)

This lecture introduces the humanistic, Gestalt-based framework for suicide intervention, emphasizing flexible, client-led language and unconditional positive regard over prescribed terminology or interventions.

Lecture 3: Top 10 Things Learned (1 Hour and 7 Minutes)

This lecture covers the top ten findings from our comprehensive research into current theories of suicide and suicide prevention, including the importance of lethal means counseling, the Fluid Vulnerability Model, and the effectiveness of Crisis Response Plans.

Lecture 4: HEART: Humanistic Foundations (1 Hour and 18 Minutes)

This lecture presents the principles of Gestalt Therapy that form the foundation of the model, such as awareness, the phenomenological method, and the concept of an “I-Thou” therapeutic relationship.

Lecture 5: HEART: Emotional Awareness (33 Minutes)

This lecture explores how to use emotions as a navigation system and outlines the five levels of emotional awareness, which are crucial for both therapists and clients.

Lecture 6: HEART: Ethically Aligned, Responsible, Trauma-Informed, Transformative (22 Minutes)

This lecture addresses the legal and ethical responsibilities to meet the standard of care, the importance of using a trauma-informed lens, and the transformative goal of equipping clients to better navigate their lives.

Lecture 7: 10 Goals of ELM (28 Minutes)

In this lecture we discuss the ten core goals of the model, including its ability to be integrated into any therapeutic approach and its focus on reframing suicidal ideation as a call for transformation.

Lecture 8: Overview of Edge of Life Model (1 Hour)

This lecture reviews the model’s key tools, including the Life Space Map, the Courage to Live Continuum, and the ten clinical tasks for navigating suicidality with a client.

Lecture 9: Timeout Toolkit & Incident Report (24 Minutes)

This lecture dives into how to use the Timeout Toolkit (an expanded, humanistically-aligned crisis response plan) and the Incident Report to help clients and therapists build emotional awareness and manage and reduce distress.

Lecture 10: Lethal Means Counseling (22 Minutes)

This final lecture provides practical scripts and strategies for conducting lethal means counseling, with a focus on promoting the safe storage of firearms and limiting access to all lethal means.

Course Instructors

Amanda Rowan is an LCSW and the founder and CEO of the Therapist Development Center. Amanda graduated with honors from Dartmouth College where she majored in Neuroscience. She earned her Master’s in Social Welfare at UCLA. Since founding the Therapist Development Center in 2008, Amanda has prepared more than 100,000 therapists nationwide to pass their state licensing exams. She is a certified Gestalt Therapist who has worked with a wide variety of clients across a range of settings over the past 20 years. She is a highly effective instructor who has a passion for collaborating with seasoned therapists who understand what works because they do it every day.

Michelle Seely (LMFT) is a licensed therapist with a private practice in Los Angeles. She is an experienced teacher of gestalt and meditation and has trained and supervised licensed therapists and associates in the US and internationally. She has served on the core faculty at the Pacific Gestalt Institute for over a decade. She is a contributing author to the academic anthology, *The Relational Heart of Gestalt Therapy* (Routledge 2022). She was trained to teach Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) by the program’s developers, Kristin Neff, and Chris Germer, and has taught privately and with InsightLA Meditation. She is president emeritus of the Gestalt Therapy Institute of Los Angeles (GTILA), where she also served on the executive board for eight years.

Course Delivery: Asynchronous: recorded and reading-based

Who should take this course: This course is appropriate for mental health clinicians at all levels of experience to work more effectively with clients experiencing varying degrees of suicidal ideation.

How to access this course: Once registered, participants will be able to download documents and listen to recorded audio lectures through the Therapist Development Center website.

Price: \$96

Certificate of completion: The participant will be able to print their certificate of completion immediately after receiving a score of 80% or better on the posttest and completing the course evaluation.

Grievance & Refund Policy: To view our grievance policy, [click here](#). To review our refund policy and terms of use, [click here](#).

ADA accommodations: We are happy to accommodate your ADA needs, please email help@therapistdevelopmentcenter.com.

Date published: October 2025

Contact information: help@therapistdevelopmentcenter.com

Approval Statements:

Therapist Development Center, provider #1449, is approved as an ACE provider to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Regulatory boards are the final authority on courses accepted for continuing education credit.

ACE provider approval period: 5/30/24-5/30/27. Social workers completing this course receive 6 clinical continuing education credits.

**In California, the BBS accepts courses that are approved under ASWB ACE for all licensees.*

The Therapist Development Center, LLC is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #SW-0857.