

At-Risk for High School Educators

A Longitudinal Study with 22,132 Educators in 43 States

Glenn Albright, PhD, Kristen Shockley, PhD, Jennifer Spiegler, BA

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

At-Risk for High School Educators is an online, interactive simulation for high school educators that builds awareness, knowledge, and skills about mental health and suicide prevention. The simulation prepares users to lead real-life conversations with students that build resilience, strengthen relationships, and connect them with support. In the simulation, users enter into a virtual environment and engage in three role-play conversations with virtual students who exhibit signs of psychological distress including anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. To complete the simulation, users must successfully refer the three students to support services.

The simulation was developed by Kognito with input from nationally recognized mental health experts and over 250 high school educators in the U.S. Introduced in 2010, the simulation is listed in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP) and in the SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry. A demo can be viewed at www.kognito.com.



Snapshot of Kognito's *At-Risk for High School Educators*

SUMMARY OF STUDY RESULTS

The study included 22,132 high school educators in districts and schools across 43 states.

Key findings include:

1. Mental Health Skills

The study found a statistically significant increase ($p < 0.01$) in Total Mental Health Skills from pre-simulation to 3-month follow-up. Total Mental Health Skills included the ability to: (1) identify when a student's behavior or appearance is a sign of psychological distress, (2) discuss concern with a student and motivate them to seek help, and (3) make a referral to mental health support services.

2. Behavior Change

Three months after completing the simulation, participants reported an increase of 27% in the number of students they approached to discuss concerns with and 16% in the number of students they referred to support services ($p < 0.05$).

3. Speaking with Colleagues About At-Risk Students

Three months after completing the simulation, 56% of participants reported an increase in the number of conversations they had with other adults in their school about students they were concerned about.

4. Satisfaction with Learning Experience

Ninety-nine percent rated the simulation as good, very good, or excellent. Ninety-five percent said they would recommend it to their fellow colleagues.

"The scenarios and conversations were realistic. I liked the ability to choose different tactics and see where they lead." - Teacher

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

The study was conducted between May 2014 and June 2018 with 22,132 high school teachers and personnel in districts and schools across 43 states. Sixty-five percent of participants were female, and 12% received prior training on this topic. Additional demographic information is shown in Fig. 1.

Participants first completed a pre-survey (baseline) and then the online simulation, followed immediately by a post-simulation survey. Participants later completed a 3-month follow-up survey. All surveys were conducted online at a computer of the participant's choosing. Participants were educators in institutions that purchased the simulation

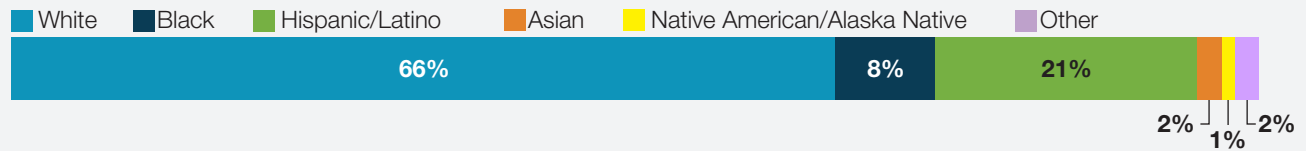
from Kognito and chose to have Kognito embed the survey tools into the simulation to assess its effectiveness. Most participants (54%) learned about the simulation via an email sent by their principal or state agency, and 26% heard about the simulation from a colleague. Participants had the option to take the simulation and were not compensated; some participants were required by their school administration to complete the simulation. Study results were analyzed using a repeated measures analysis of variance to determine the change in dependent variables across all three measurement points or a repeated measures t-test for those with only two time points.

Fig. 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

Age



Race/Ethnicity



Role



Years Working in Education



RESULTS

1. Total Mental Health Skills

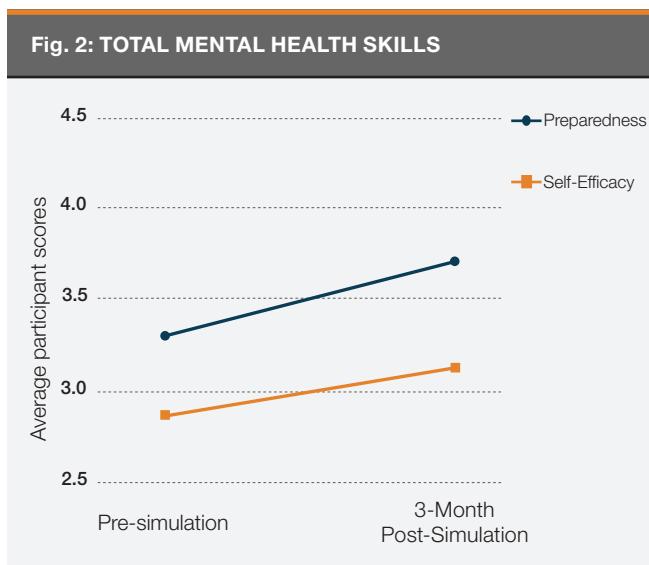
The study found a statistically significant increase ($p < 0.01$) in Total Mental Health Skills from pre- to post-simulation that remained significant at 3-month follow-up (Fig. 2). Total Mental Health Skills included three self-perceived preparedness measures that include the ability to: (1) identify when a student's behavior or appearance is a sign of psychological distress, (2) discuss concern with a student and motivate them to seek help, and (3) make a referral to mental health support services. Participants reported their preparedness for each measure using a five-point Likert scale from very low (1) to very high (5).

2. Behavior Change and Referral Rates

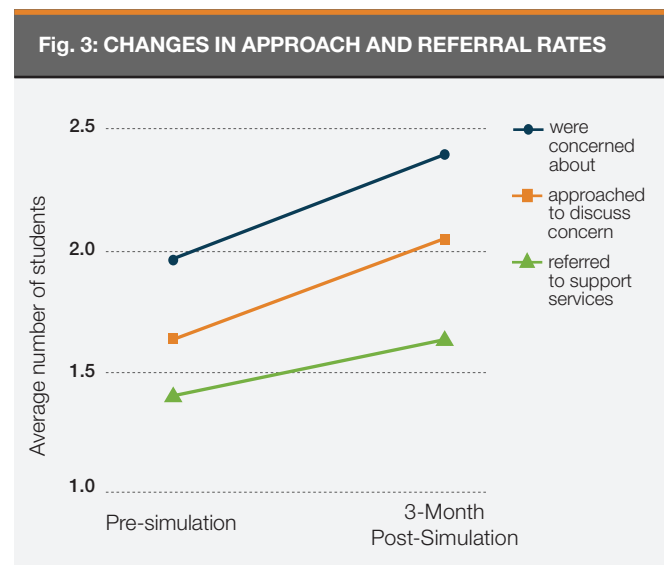
The study found significant and sustainable behavior changes on two levels:

A. APPROACH AND REFERRAL RATES: Study participants reported statistically significant increases ($p < 0.05$) at 3-month follow-up in terms of the number of students they were concerned about, approached, and referred to support services (Fig. 3). Specifically, there was an increase of 27% in the number approached by participants and 16% in the number of students referred by participants to support services (Table 1).

B. SPEAKING WITH COLLEAGUES ABOUT AT-RISK STUDENTS: The study found that 56% of participants reported an increase in the number of conversations they had with other adults in their school about students they were concerned about.



Changes in total mental health skills from pre-simulation to 3-month follow-up point



Changes in the number of students that participants were concerned about, approached, and referred

Average number of students that participants...	Pre-simulation	3-Month Post-Simulation	Percent change
Were concerned about	1.95	2.40	23%
Approached to discuss concerns	1.62	2.06	27%
Referred to support services	1.40	1.63	16%

*Only answers by participants who completed the pre- and follow-up surveys at least two months into the academic year were included.

3. Satisfaction and Learning Experience

Participants highly ranked the simulation's learning experience and design. For example, 95% said they would recommend the simulation to their colleagues and 94% said it was based on scenarios relevant to their work with students (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5).

The study also found that after taking the simulation, 94% of participants agreed that acting as a mental health gatekeeper is part of their role. This number increased to 97% in the 3-month follow-up survey.

Fig. 4: PARTICIPANT RATINGS

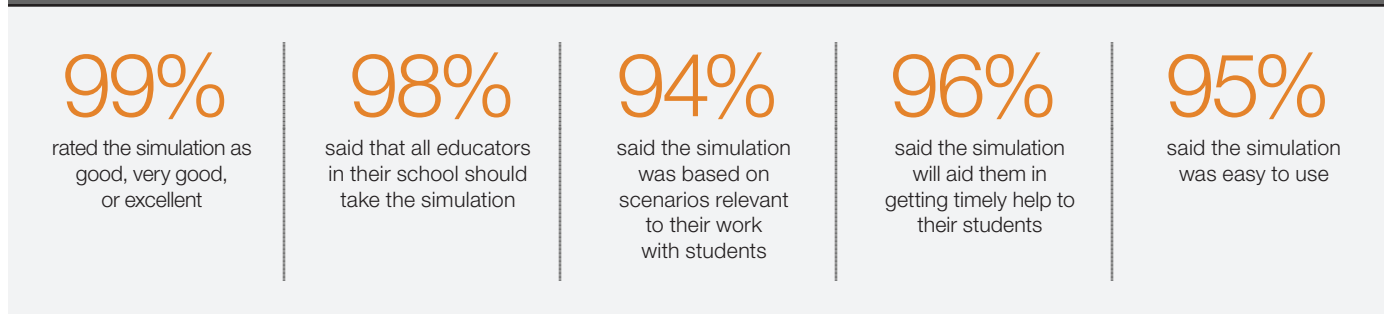


Fig. 5: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



Correspondence to:
Glenn Albright, Ph.D.
Kognito
(212) 675-9234 / info@kognito.com

Glenn Albright, Ph.D. is Co-Founder and Director of Research at Kognito and an associate professor at the City University of New York's Baruch College. Kristen Shockley, Ph.D. is an independent statistical consultant for Kognito and an associate professor at the University of Georgia. Jennifer Spiegler is the Senior Vice President of Strategic Partnerships at Kognito. This study is not affiliated with or endorsed by the authors' educational institutions.