Safe Language 101: Our Words Create Our World

Presented by Thrive Education · Facilitated by Jenny Thrasher or a Thrive Education certified trainer

Length	45 minutes + 15 minutes of Q&A (90-minute version available)
Audience	Any group size, ages 12 and up. Ideal for workplaces, schools, speakers, advocates, families and community groups.
Format	In person, virtual or hybrid
Builds on	The overview of Safe Language. Pairs with Understanding Stigma and 5-Star CPR. Can be taken on its own.

Presenter

Jenny Thrasher, Founder & U.S. Lead Ambassador, Thrive Education | Second Aid

Jenny Thrasher is a mental health educator, suicide prevention advocate, author, and creator of Thrive Education, an integrative approach that combines evidence-based research, lived experience, and practical tools to reduce the risk of crisis and help people thrive every day.

For more than two decades, Jenny's work has been shaped by both professional and personal experience, beginning with the loss of her father to suicide, continuing through her own physical, mental, and emotional challenges, and ultimately helping her daughter shift from suicidal to thriving. She developed Safe Language in 2018, after seeing how often words meant to help were unintentionally causing harm.

Session Description

Safe Language is a thoughtful, respectful and empowering approach to communication that acknowledges the impact our words have on ourselves and others. It began with how we talk about mental health and suicide, and how we share our stories. Even with the best intentions, our words can reinforce stigma, and graphic details can affect people in ways we never see, because we can know who is in the room without knowing what they're carrying. In this workshop, participants discover why our words matter, learn intentional ways to talk about hard things, and practice communication that creates safe spaces at work, at home and within ourselves. Safe Language isn't about political correctness or avoiding hard conversations. It's about awareness, so people feel safe enough to connect, learn, grow and thrive.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. **Explain** why our words matter, including how language shapes our sense of safety.

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2. **Identify** stigmatic language and unnecessary graphic detail, and choose intentional ways to talk about mental health, suicide and the stories we share.
3. **Apply** intentional communication, including simple phrases that acknowledge, ask and connect, to create safe spaces for others and ourselves.

What Participants Walk Away With

- Why Safe Language was created, and its three goals: reduce stigma, prioritize well-being, acknowledge the power of our words
- Examples of stigmatic vs intentional language
- How to share stories without unnecessary graphic detail, and how to give people a choice when details are necessary
- For speakers: disclose graphic detail when booked, when promoted, and before sharing it
- A taste of reframing: the everyday words that keep us stuck
- What to say when we don't know what to say, and how to create a safe space
- The Safe Language guide (free on the website)

Curriculum Content

SEGMENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVE	MINUTES
Welcome	All	2
Part 1: Why our words matter	1	10
Part 2: How we talk about hard things	2	18
Part 3: Creating safe spaces	3	13
Where to turn for support	All	2
Q&A	All	15
Total		**60**

Peer-Reviewed Research References

- Dodds, P. S., Alshaabi, T., Fudolig, M. I., Zimmerman, J. W., Lovato, J., Beaulieu, S., Minot, J. R., Arnold, M. V., Reagan, A. J., & Danforth, C. M. (2026). Ousiometrics: The essence of meaning aligns with a power-danger-structure framework instead of valence-arousal-dominance. *Science Advances, 12*, eadr4039. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adr4039
- Niederkrotenthaler, T., Braun, M., Pirkis, J., Till, B., Stack, S., Sinyor, M., Tran, U. S., Voracek, M., Cheng, Q., Arendt, F., Scherr, S., Yip, P. S. F., & Spittal, M. J. (2020). Association between suicide reporting in the

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media and suicide: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ, 368*, m575. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m575

- Edmondson, A. C., & Bransby, D. P. (2023). Psychological safety comes of age: Observed themes in an established literature. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 10*, 55–78. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-055217

Books

No books are required for this session. Jenny's upcoming book, *You Say*, is the foundation for Safe Language. She is also the author of *Growing Through Grief: A Guide to Healing After Losing a Loved One to Suicide* and is happy to donate copies for events.

Evaluation (for CE credit)

- A short quiz on the three learning objectives (minimum passing score 80%)
- A course evaluation form: were the objectives met, how relevant and usable the content was, how effective the teaching was, and ideas for improvement
- Certificates of completion are issued once both are complete

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