



Success Story: Mental Health First Aid Recertification

CLIENT PROFILE: National Council

TOP BENEFITS

- 1. Up-to-date content:** Provides the latest information on mental health and substance use disorders
- 2. Time-saving:** Learners can receive recertification in 90 minutes or less
- 3. Anytime access:** Learners can take the online recertification course based on their schedule
- 4. Relevant practice:** Learners apply the ALGEE Action Plan to real-life scenarios

THE BUSINESS GOAL

National Council needed a way to allow nearly 750,000 people certified in Mental Health First Aid to easily renew their certification. The certification program is a one-day workshop, but they wanted to also provide an eLearning offering that allows learners to take the course wherever they are. Certified individuals need to renew their certification every three years, and for many mental health first aides, their recertification date was approaching.

THE BEHAVIORAL GOAL

Learners should be able to apply the ALGEE action to a series of behavioral health scenarios.

THE PROCESS

Relias worked with the National Council to capture the best aspects of the workshop. The challenges they faced:

- Condensing a 6-hour workshop into a 90-minute online course
- The need to preserve the best part of the workshop: scenario based learning

- Does not duplicate the certification workshop content, but provides foundational information and opportunities for application

For this project, Relias was asked to create a learning solution that could meet these learning objectives while providing the needed information in a concise and engaging format.

THE SOLUTION

We decided upon a two-format solution; the first part of the course would provide a refresher on the ‘Mental Health First Aid Action Plan,’ and then branching scenarios would allow learners to apply the techniques recommended by the action plan.

The Information Gathering Process

In the early stages, an instructional designer attended the workshop to get a feel for the initial certification process. This helped to frame the online experience in terms of the certification requirements. They were able to see how the information was presented, how the workshop facilitators engaged with the participants, and what real-life examples both the participants and facilitator shared.

Having attended the workshop, the instructional designer now had the experience and the source materials needed to design the course.

Relias decided, in collaboration with the National Council project team, to focus on four specific scenarios. This allowed us to concentrate on situations we felt would be most commonly encountered.

Relias was able to tap into the expertise of two credentialed clinicians experienced in social work and behavioral health. We crafted four branching scenarios with multiple decisions points. The instructional goal was to allow the learner to move through the scenario, make mistakes, gain feedback, correct course and help the person in distress. Ultimately, National Council wanted to teach that when providing assistance to a person in distress, perfection is not the goal. “It’s more important to be genuinely caring, than to ‘say the right thing.’” See Figure 1 below.

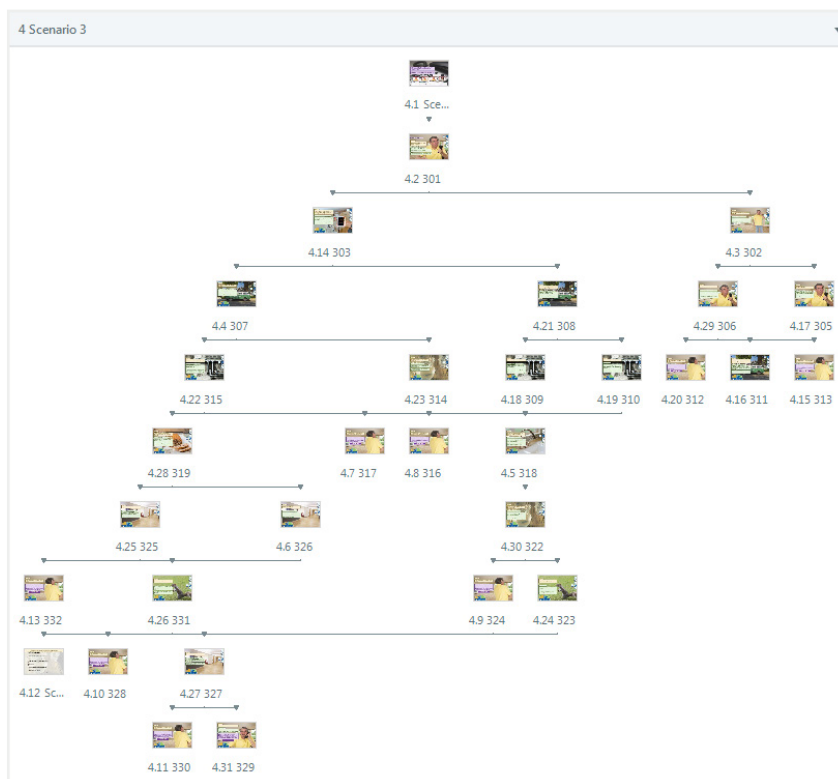


Figure 1: The branching scenario with multiple decision points.

Employing multiple learning levels

The first part of the course presents the information the learner will need to recall and comprehend: what are the components of the ALGEE Action Plan? What specific behaviors are more helpful when working with a person experiencing distress? See Figures 2 and 3 below.

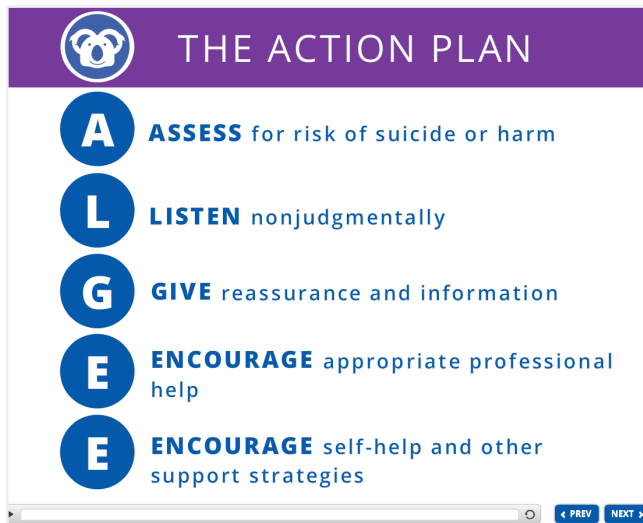


Figure 2: The first section of the course provides the review of the ALGEE Action Plan.

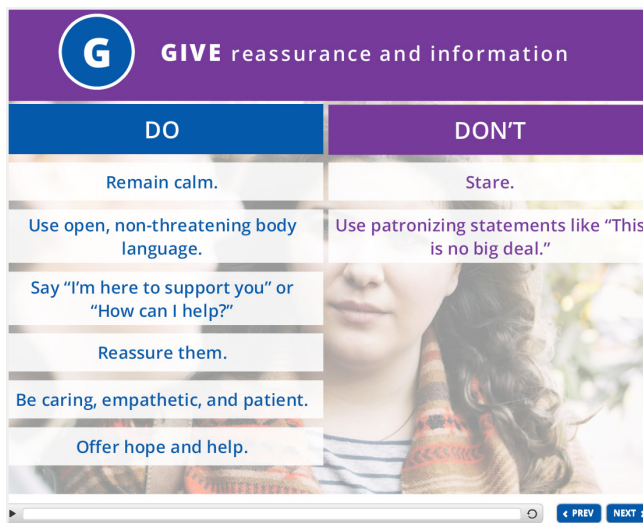


Figure 3: The course provides concrete examples of more and less helpful behaviors.

The Key: Relevant, true-to-life scenarios

Once we determined the structure of the scenarios, we created the content, including the audio scripts for the characters. These were reviewed by key people on the National Council team to ensure that an inclusive, respectful tone was used and realistic dialogue and situations were present. See Figures 4 and 5 below.

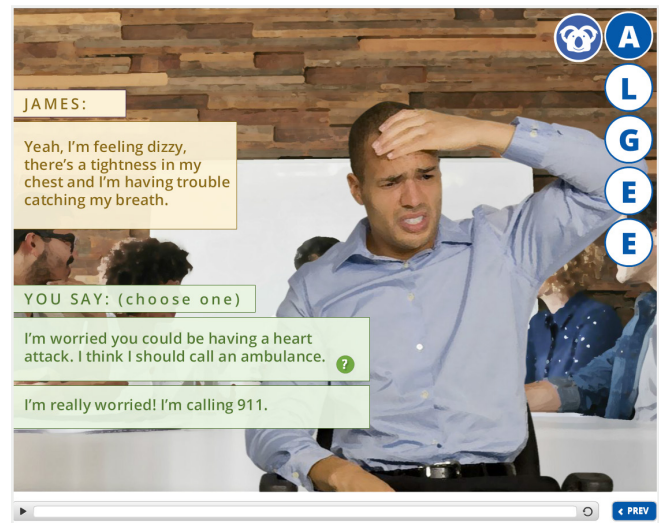


Figure 4: The decision point where the learner needs to apply the ALGEE Action Plan.



Figure 5: The learner receives feedback on the helpfulness of the choice and another decision point is presented.

“It’s more important to be genuinely caring, than to ‘say the right thing.’”

As the learner moves through the scenario, they receive immediate feedback on whether their choice was more or less helpful via the ALGEE Meter. The use of the word ‘helpful’ was quite deliberate, rather than using the word ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect.’ The course aims to meet the learner where they are and increase awareness. Based on their responses, the learner either proceeds through the scenarios by providing helpful assistance to their character, or they are informed they were not successful. See **Figure 6 to the right**.

Additionally, learners receive collective feedback on their performance and move forward to the next scenario only if they have performed 80% of the Action Plan in a ‘More Helpful’ way. See **Figure 7 to the right**.

CONCLUSION

Working collaboratively with the team from the National Council, we were able to create a Recertification program that learners can take online in 90 minutes or less while retaining the best of the workshop experience. The course is currently offered on Relias Academy.

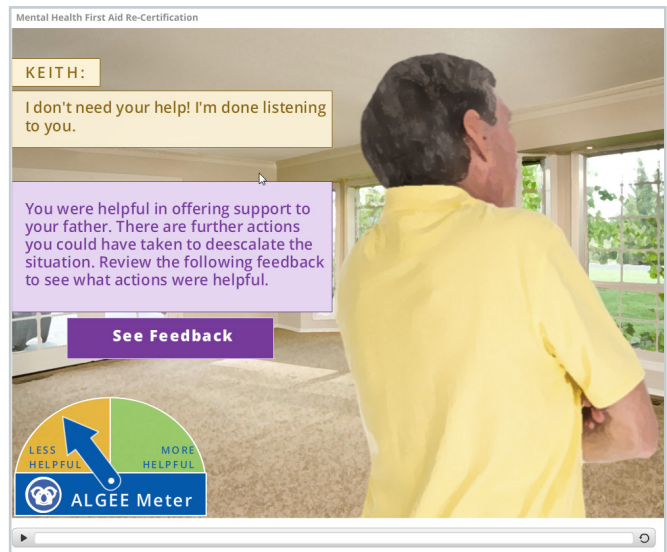


Figure 6: A less Helpful scenario conclusion.

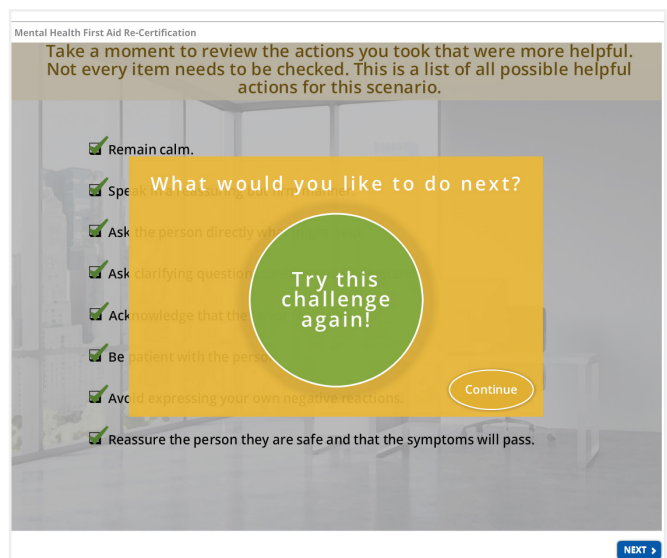


Figure 7: The feedback screen. This is graded based on the learner’s scenario performance.