

How were research goals that were suggested by the survey participants in Round Zero (Idea-Generating Round) used to identify the 12 Aspirational Research Goals?

First, we identified the set of responses that constituted true aspirational research goals (as opposed to those responses that were thoughts about what is important in suicide prevention, but that did not specify a research goal).

How was this done? Two experienced suicide researchers reviewed all responses to the open-ended aspirational goal survey questions and independently decided whether each response constituted a possible aspirational research goal. These experts then compared their ratings and discussed discrepancies in ratings in order to come to consensus. The consensus guidelines were subsequently applied to the additional comments questions to identify aspirational goal suggestions included in these responses. This process resulted in identification of the suggested research goals considered in developing the “Short List” for subsequent rounds of the survey.

Second, those responses judged to be research goals were sorted according to their approach to suicide prevention research, using a broad set of “research domains” developed by the coders after initial coding attempts. These research domains included: screening and risk identification; universal prevention strategies; selected prevention strategies; indicated interventions and treatments; health services/policy research; postvention; and research methods and infrastructure. Some suggested research goals from survey participants included content that implied multiple research targets or that fit in multiple domains. Where this was the case, the single suggested goal was broken apart so that each individual target could be categorized separately, or where the same research target applied to multiple domains, the suggested goal was coded for the two primary applicable domains and then considered in each of these domains during subsequent analyses.

How was this done? A team of graduate research assistants, working with an experienced suicide researcher, independently categorized research goals into research domain categories. Each research goal was categorized independently by at least 2 raters, who then compared their ratings. Discrepant ratings on both primary and secondary domain assignments were discussed in order to arrive at a consensus about which domain best captured each response. These coding rules were subsequently applied to the additional goals contained in the ‘Additional Comments’ question of the survey. This procedure used the following research domains: screening and risk identification; universal prevention strategies; selected prevention strategies; indicated interventions and treatments; health services/policy research; postvention; and research methods and infrastructure.

Third, the list of suggested research goals placed within each domain was reviewed to further group the individual goals into common themes. A set of overarching aspirational research goal statements were then written to summarize the ideas found within each of these within-domain themes, and these represent the goals being submitted back to survey participants for consideration during the remaining survey rounds.

How was this done? As a team, four staff members of the Research Task Force (RTF) reviewed all of the research goals by each domain. Working in pairs of two, the team reviewed a set of research goals submitted early in the survey after these suggested goals had been categorized into domains. The responses categorized into the domains listed above were grouped further into discrete candidate overarching goals, and summary goal statements were written that captured the ideas found within these within-domain groupings. Next, the team rated a second set of survey responses within each domain in order to cross-validate and refine the overarching candidate aspirational research goal statements. This process resulted in a total of 15 candidate aspirational research goals (approximately 1-3 goals from each domain). Methods and research infrastructure, while important considerations for the success of the overall agenda, were set aside to be considered during a later stage of the agenda development process, when the research pathways to achieve final Aspirational goals will be devised.

Finally, the set of candidate aspirational research goals was subjected to further review.

How was this done? The RFT reviewed the set of 15 candidate aspirational goals, along with examples of response clusters that fell under each in order to collect additional feedback regarding the degree to which the candidate aspirational research goals captured the overarching themes suggested by survey respondents. Through consensus, the RTF regrouped the goals to arrive at a more concise set of 12 goals that are believed to accurately capture survey responses.