

EndingSuicide.com  
Usability test report  
Usability testing conducted June 30, 2003



*Report Prepared By*  
Shannon Magee, MS, Usability Team Lead  
Clinical Tools, Inc.  
August 2003

*Report Prepared For*  
Mary P. Metcalf  
EndingSuicide.com Website Team  
Website Funded By SBIR Contract N44 MH22045  
National Institute of Mental Health  
Clinical Tools, Inc.

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY --DO NOT DISEMINATE WITHOUT APPROVAL

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Methods.....	3
Recruiting.....	3
Participants.....	3
Environment.....	4
Roles.....	4
Procedure.....	4
Quantitative Results .....	5
Qualitative Results.....	6
Discussion and Recommendations.....	8
Revisions.....	8
Home page.....	8
Search tool.....	9
Future Considerations.....	9

## INTRODUCTION

This usability test was conducted during development of the website titled, [www.EndingSuicide.com](http://www.EndingSuicide.com). The goal of the test was to test if the site organization and navigation structures were logical and easy to use. A secondary goal was to determine if participants felt the appearance of the site (the colors and graphics) was appropriate for the topic, Suicide Prevention.

## METHODS

### RECRUITING

Participants were recruited from an existing pool of potential usability test and focus group participants. Participants were screened for gender and computer use in an attempt to test a more diverse sample.

### PARTICIPANTS

#### Demographic Information

<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>
1	30-59	Female	White	Not Hispanic or Latino
2	60 and over	Male	Asian	Not Hispanic or Latino
3	60 and over	Female	White	Not Hispanic or Latino
4	30-59	Female	White	Not Hispanic or Latino

#### Computer Experience

<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Length of time using computers</b>	<b>Length of time using the Internet</b>	<b>Use of the Internet</b>	<b>Use of the Internet to find health information</b>	<b>Use of Internet search engines</b>
1	25 yrs	10 yrs	Daily	Sometimes	Often
2	2-3 yrs	2-3 yrs	Weekly	Rarely	Rarely
3	12 yrs	7 yrs	Daily	Sometimes	Often
4	17 yrs	5 yrs	Weekly	Often	Often

### ENVIRONMENT

The test environment was set up to simulate a home or office workstation. Each participant was placed at a desk with an IBM compatible desktop PC with a 17' monitor. The EndingSuicide.com website was displayed on the monitor and viewed using the Internet Explorer 6.0 Internet browser.

## ROLES

The usability testing team consisted of one test moderator and one test observers. The test moderator read to the participant from the introduction and debriefing scripts, facilitated the task and interview sessions, provided post-test questionnaires, answered any participant question. The test moderator and observers also noted the navigation paths followed by the user, the time to complete each task, any comments made by the user, and any observable errors.

## PROCEDURE

All participants were welcomed in the Clinical Tools office and walked to the usability testing lab. Participants were seated at a desk with an IBM compatible desktop PC, facing a 17' monitor displaying the EndingSuicide.com web site. The test moderator introduced the participants to the usability testing process by reading from a prepared script. The script was used to standardize the testing experience. Participants were then presented with informed consent and demographic forms, and were instructed to complete the forms. As part of the scripted introduction, each subject was told that the purpose of the study was to “determine the user friendliness and effectiveness of the online version of the EndingSuicide.com website.” In order to reassure participants of this main objective, the test moderator reiterated that “we are testing the website and not your performance. The usability team’s role here today is to discover both the flaws and advantages of this website from your perspective.”

Participants were notified that once they began the tasks, the research team would be unable to answer further questions, which was an attempt to simulate a natural web browsing experience. They were also told that at various times throughout the test, they might be asked to stop working on a task, and to please follow the instructions of the test moderator. The final instruction given to the participants was to use the “think out loud” protocol. They were told to voice aloud the reasons why they made certain decisions, such as why they chose to look for particular information by using a certain link or tab. This was an attempt to allow the test moderator and observers to follow the user’s stream of thought and identify any problems with the organization of information or intuitiveness of the navigation tools.

To begin each task, the test moderator would ask the participant where he/she thought he/she would find a particular piece of information on the EndingSuicide.com website, just by looking at the website homepage. After the participant provided an answer, he/she was told to use the website to find the information requested. While participants conducted the various tasks, the test moderator and observer recorded notes on the navigation used, comments made aloud, the time required for each task, and whether or not the user successfully completed the task. Upon completion, all participants received a post-test questionnaire. After the questionnaire was completed, the test moderator initiated the interview. During the interview, participants were asked about their preferences, their likes and dislikes about using the site, and to provide suggestions for improving the site. Both moderator and observer noted these responses. If participants had further questions, they were answered following the interview. Respondents immediately received compensation for their time subsequent to the conclusion of the session.

## QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

<b>Objective: Logic of Organization</b>
<b>Task: Where would you find suicide prevention resources in your area?</b>
<p>Results:</p> <p>#1 – Used the search tool.</p> <p>#2 – The “Education” tab.</p> <p>#3– Selected appropriate state in search tool and then selected “State” tab.</p> <p>#4 – The “State” tab.</p>
<p>Issue:</p> <p>States are not listed alphabetically in the search tool, making it difficult to quickly locate a specific selection.</p>
<p>Issue:</p> <p>Participants were confused by the search tool on the home page. Part of the confusion was due to it's incompleteness (the results for 'Alabama' were returned no matter what state was selected). However, two participants appeared to think that selecting a state in the search tool automatically customized the information on the website to that state.</p>
<p>Issue:</p> <p>One participant equated resources with continuing education for researchers or professionals and thought the information would be located in the “Education” section of the website.</p>
<b>Task: Where would you find information about suicide and teenagers?</b>
<p>Results: All four participants selected the search tool.</p>
<p>Issue:</p> <p>It is not clear that teenagers are a part of the youth category in the search tool. One participant said that she thought youth implied children younger than 13.</p>
<p>Issue:</p> <p>One participant did not realize the options in the search tool could be changed.</p>
<b>Objective: Communication of Purpose and Credibility</b>
<b>Task: Where would you find information about who created and maintains this website?</b>
<p>Results: 3 of 4 participants correctly identified the location of this information.</p>
<p>Issue:</p> <p>While most participants were able to find this information, none of them were able to easily navigate back to the home page. Each one looked for a “home” link and used the back button on the browser when he/she did not find it.</p>
<b>Task: What would you say the purpose of this website is?</b>

***Objective: Communication of Purpose and Credibility***

Results:

#1 - "Providing information on preventing suicide." Thinks it will have information such as indicators of possible suicide risk and action plans.

#2 - "What kind of help people can get." Thinks it will have stories, information on what kind of people commit suicide, population trends.

#3 - "Define your search. Search for help regarding your interest." Thinks it will have information on suicide prevention.

#4 - "Prevent people from committing suicide and help people contemplating suicide." Thinks it will have practical information and resources for loved ones, family, friends.

Issue:

One participant thought the whole point of the site was to use the search tool.

## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

<i>Interview Questions</i>
<b>1. Did you like using this website? What did you like about it?</b>
<p>#1 – “Yes. It seems to have the information divided pretty well. It has indicators of where you are, a nice amount of information on each page.” Liked being able to search and liked the shadow on the home page graphic.</p> <p>#2 - “Yes. It has a lot of data.”</p> <p>#3 - “Yes. I liked the categories.”</p> <p>#4 - “Yes, it was friendly.”</p>
<b>2. What didn't you like about it?</b>
<p>#1 – Not clear on what the tab colors meant. Liked the grouping but wasn't sure what it was for.</p> <p>#2 – Titles were not always explicit, made it hard to get at the data.</p> <p>#3 – No home button. Font on internal pages is way too small for older users. Not really sure about the categories for national, federal, and state.</p> <p>#4 – The information under ' Education' and ' Tools' was identical.</p>
<b>3. Did you think the website was easy to use? Why or why not?</b>
<p>#1 – “Generally yes.” Confused when new windows opened up. Liked that there were multiple ways to get at the information. Thought the footer was really hard to read.</p> <p>#2 – Yes, after you used it for a while. Logical once you get to the information.</p> <p>#3 - “Yes. I liked that there were subcategories to drill down.”</p> <p>#4 – Yes. Just point and click for most things. Quiz would be good.</p>
<b>4. Did you think the website appeared professional?</b>
<p>#1 - “ Yes. Professional yet approachable.”</p> <p>#2 – Doesn't know how to answer this.</p> <p>#3 – The cartoon takes away a little bit. Might be better to have a collage of pictures. That would broaden the message, right now it seems to focus on youth. Would be better to change the defaults in the search tool to “select.”</p> <p>#4 – Yes.</p>
<b>5. Did you find that the words used were easy to understand?</b>
<p>#1 - “Generally easy.”</p> <p>#2 – Acronyms were difficult to understand.</p> <p>#3 – Basically.</p> <p>#4 – Yes. Expand youth selection to youth and teen.</p>
<b>6. Did you think the site was organized in a logical, structured way?</b>
<p>#1 – Generally good. The search categories were confusing.</p> <p>#2 – No. Would like us to change the order of the links – start with project info and work back to feedback.</p> <p>#3 – Yes.</p> <p>#4 – Yes. Think about combining education and tools – pages look exactly the same.</p>
<b>7. Do you think it would be easy for people to learn how to use this site?</b>

**Interview Questions**

- #1 – Yes.
- #2 – “ I think so.”
- #3 – Yes.
- #4 – Yes – everything looks clear.

**8. Did you think the information presented on the website was credible and reliable? How do you determine credibility/reliability?**

- #1 – Seemed to be. Had a variety of sources, variety of news, statistics didn' t seem to be wild claims, provided access to different resources.
- #2 – I don' t know. Base it on prior knowledge and experience.
- #3 – As far as I went in reading. It varies – I trust WebMD. Looks to see who else uses or recommends the website. Referrals from the site to another credible party (UNC).
- #4 – Yes. Mentioned the NIH, looks at authors, credits, and sources.

**9. Did you like the graphics on the website? Why or why not?**

- #1 – Yes. Appropriate for the topic. Table could be larger. Liked that it was promoting the positive and not using scare tactics.
- #2 – Yes. Appropriate for the topic.
- #3 – Appropriate for the topic. Would add a collage. The title “Ending.com” is hard to read on black background. Add bios to “About us” to enhance credibility.
- #4 – Yes. Appropriate for the topic. Does not like the graphic on the “Public” page. Overall looks useful.

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### REVISIONS

#### Home page

1. Add a “home” link to the banner or tabs

Most of the participants looked for a “home” link in the banner and could not find one. Instead, they all used the back button on the browser to return to the home page.

2. Change the color of the words Ending.com in the banner to a color that contrasts more with the black background.

The blue text is difficult to read on the black background. This text should be lightened or changed to a different color.

3. Add the word “resources” to the state, federal, and national tabs.

It was not clear to participants what they would find in these sections of the website. Adding the word resources to the tabs would clarify the organization for the user.

#### Search tool

4. List the states alphabetically in the search tool option.
5. Change the “youth” selection in the search tool to “youth and teens.”
6. Change the default selection in the search tool options to “Select one.”

### FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

1. Add more bios on researchers/developers.
2. Review the reasons for having separate “education” and “tools” sections. The content in both sections looks very similar.
3. Think about changing the font on internal pages to a larger size font (12pt.)
4. Consider the image you want the site to convey to users