

Risk Assessment

1. Make First Contact

When greeting the person, think about the attitude you want to convey and the words you choose. The first impression you make sets the tone for the entire communication.

2. Establish Rapport

Show interest and concern by using open-ended questions and giving the person the opportunity to open up and get it out. Keep the focus on the thoughts and feelings of the person you are talking with, not on yourself.

3. Explore The Present Situation

Maintain the focus on what the person is thinking and feeling, not just facts and information. Use silence. Validate and acknowledge to find out what is going on in his/her life at this time.

4. Look For Warning Signs

Be aware of behaviors, thoughts and feelings that demonstrate potential for suicide risk. When examining warning signs, our focus is a series of "changes" in that person's normal behavior, not one or two isolated signs.

5. Assessing The Degree of Risk

Always assess a person's degree of risk and let him or her know that you are willing to talk about whatever he/she is feeling, including suicide.

For Example:

"Are you to the point that you are thinking of suicide?"

--If he/she says "**NO**" - then you say:

"Well, even if you're not right now, I want you to know if you ever do feel that way, you can always tell me..."

--If he/she says, "**YES**" - then you ask:

"Do you have a plan/Have you thought about how you'd do it?" "Do you have the means available to act out the plan?" "Have you set a time?"

The more yes's to the suicide assessment questions, the higher the person's degree of risk. If someone has suicidal thoughts, a plan, means and has set a time, do not leave them alone.

humantold

6. Explore Options

Base your options on the person in crisis's need and your responsibilities. Look at the supports and/or services that are appropriate and available before determining what, if any, course of action you will take or suggest.

Risk Factors to consider when assessing for suicide risk:

1. History of psychiatric illness/ Diagnosis of Depression or Bipolar Disorder
 2. Feelings of hopelessness
 3. Difficult life stressors such as loss of job, loss of relationship, recent death in family
 4. Lack of support system
 5. History or family history of suicide attempts
 6. History of impulsive/aggressive behaviors
 7. Access to weapons
-

Resources:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800.273.TALK
NYC WELL	888.NYC.WELL or Text "WELL" to 65173
Substance Use/Addiction and Mental Health	800.662.HELP
Trans Lifeline	877.565.8860
Samaritans Suicide Prevention Hotline	212.673.3000