Suicide risk assessment: Implications for practice

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Disclosures

Hilary Boyd, MSN, RN, APNP, PMHNP-BC, Jerry Halverson, MD, FACPsych, DFAPA, and Rachel Leonard, PhD, have each declared that they do not, nor does their family have, any financial relationship in any amount occurring in the last 12 months with a commercial interest whose products or services are discussed in the presentation

The presenters have each declared that they do not have any relevant nonfinancial relationships

Additionally, all planners involved do not have any financial relationships

Learning objectives

Upon completion of the instructional program, participants should be able to:

- 1. Summarize three essential elements of the suicide risk assessment process
- 2. Apply at least two evidence-based interventions for suicide prevention

What we'll cover in this webinar

An overview of suicide risk assessment

- Suicide risk trends
- Risk factors; epidemiology
- Assessment process; assessment tools

Best practices and implementation

- Best practices
- Care planning
- Prevention strategies
 Clinical documentation

Future state recommendations

- Integration into clinical workflow
- Regulatory implications
- Using technology for decision support

Moderated Q&A

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

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Epidemiology of suicide

(world health organization, 2021)

- A global public health crisis
- Fourth leading cause of death in age group 15-29, over 700,000 people die from suicide annually
- More deaths to suicide than HIV/AIDS, malaria, war and homicide
- Male rate of suicide is 2.3 times greater than female rate
- · Firearms account for half of deaths by suicide in US
- 77 percent of suicide deaths were in low- and middle-income countries
- Global suicide rate per age increased only in the North Americas from 2000-2019

Previous suicidal Age Gender (male) behavior or Family history attempts Psychiatric Self injurious Recent visit(s) to hospital Veteran status behaviors PCP or ED discharge Presence of mood Hopelessness, disorder, anxiety disorder, SUD, trauma, psychosocial Chronic medical Physical pain, chronic pain condition psychosis, BPD stressors Financial stressors Access to means vulnerable populations (Ahmedani et. al, 2014; Chung et. al, 2017; AFSP, 2021; Nelson et. al, 2017; Pisani et al, 2016; Ramchand et. al, 2021)

	Talking about death or killing self								
ns	Researching suicide								
sig	Statements of hopelessness, helplessness								
ing	Changes in sleep, mood, energy, interaction, substance use								
arn	Feeling or stating one feels like a burden to others								
8	Ending relationships, saying "goodbye", giving things away, planning for others								
	Accessing means								
	(American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2021)								

Best practices in suicide risk assessment: Themes in the literature

- Multiple suicide prevention models without a confirmed gold standard model
- Multiple standardized assessment tools and practice guidelines
- · Multimodal assessment approach is best practice
- Assessment of suicidal ideations, risk factors, protective factors, means, communication, safety planning are elements in various risk assessments

(Brodsky et. al, 2018; Nelson et. al, 2017; Nazem et. al, 2019)

Best practice: Assessment

- Determine risk factors currently and previous risk factors
- Determine protective factors, assessing support systems
- Assess risk temporally/acutely and globally
- Be direct with questions yet
 therapeutic
- · Use a standardized tool for screening

(Nazem et. al , 2019; Pisani et al 2016; Stanley et. al, 2019)

- Assess suicidal thoughts, presences of plan, intent, means
- Consider environment and access to means
- Continuous assessments, continuous documentation
- Strong probability patient will not divulge SI unless the clinician directly asks (Horowitz et. al, 2018)

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Best practice: Interventions

- Follow up communications (phone calls)
- Increase frequency in visits, higher levels of care
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy
- · Collaboration with other care providers
- Safety planning
- · Means restriction
- Psychopharmacology

(Vaiva et. al, 2019; Nazem et. al, 2019; Brodsky et. al, 2018; Nelson et. al, 2017)

Best practice: Cultural considerations

- Limited research body, needing more studies with different cultures and populations
- Risk factors or meaning of suicide may be different per individual, per culture
 - Study from Chu et. al (2017) included Asian Americans, Latinos, and Caucasians
 - Hopelessness, despair, need for escape, lack of meaning in life, feeling like a failure more common in Caucasian and Asian Americans as reasons for suicide
 - Latinos more impacted by intrapersonal relationship; feeling burdensome as a reason to consider suicide. Additionally, a need to escape a social situation or environmental stressor such as poverty, enduring racial trauma

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- · Shame can prevent one from seeking help
- Fear of not following cultural expectation of not sharing problems outside of the home can prevent Latinos from seeking help
- Difficulty with balancing , contrasting cultural differences between home culture
 and new culture
- Trauma passed down, discrimination, lack of access to resources may profoundly impact an individual from a minority group disclosing their suicidal thoughts

(Clay, 2018)

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Best practice: Patient care

- · Be aware of cultural differences
- · Be aware of biases, this helps achieve culturally safe care
- Be aware of stereotype threat
- Provide appropriate resources
 - · Interpreter services are required by law



(Mkandawire-Vlhmu, 2018)











Prevention strategies: Act fast when a patient is not where you expect them!

Reach out to patient and then emergency contact if they do not arrive to treatment

Ensure you have an accurate address for the patient and know variations in this (e.g., minors going between households of divorced parents)

or virtual treatment – ask each date of service the address from hich the individual is participating

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Integrating strategies into care plan

Include interventions specific to the patient's risk level:

- Physician orders to restrict access to means (e.g., sharps restriction)
- · Frequency of suicide risk check-in ratings
- · Frequency of rounds/observation
- · Counseling with family/support network around means restriction
- Medication limits (e.g., medication refills only for one week at a time)

Additional data

Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology Self-Report (QIDS-SR; Rush et al., 2003) suicide item (thoughts of death or suicide)

Response options:

- I didn't think of suicide or death
- I felt that life was empty or wondered if it was worth living
- I thought of suicide or death several times for several minutes over the past 7 days
- I think of suicide or death several times a day in some detail, or I have made specific plans for suicide or have actually tried to take my life

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Interventions for suicide prevention

- · Some promising evidence in support of the following treatments:
 - Cognitive therapy for suicide prevention (CT-SP; Brown et al., 2005)
 - Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT; Linehan et al., 2006) for those with borderline personality disorder
 - Problem solving therapy (PST; Hatcher, Sharon, Parag, & Collins, 2011)
 - Mentalization-based treatment (MBT; Bateman & Fonagy, 1999)
 - Psychodynamic interpersonal therapy (PIT; Guthrie et al., 2001)
- Several gaps in the literature, sampling, and methodological concerns further research is needed (Brown & Jager-Hyman, 2014)

Clinical documentation

- Document thoroughly each of these steps, and rationale for overall risk determination
- Safety plan should be a living document that changes over time based on changes in risk, identification of new skills/strategies, changes in environment



Regulatory and future state Regulatory implications Future state Use of screening tools Using technology for decision support eC-SSRS Artificial intelligence – suicide algorithm

• Population screening approaches

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Joint Commission update effective 7/2020

- These new requirements are at National Patient Safety Goal (NPSG) 15.01.01 and are designed to improve the quality and safety of care for those who are being treated for behavioral health conditions and those who are identified as high risk for suicide
- Because there has been no improvement in suicide rates in the U.S., and since suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the country, The Joint Commission re-evaluated the NPSG in light of current practices relative to suicide prevention

Joint Commission's Leading the Way to Zero® initiative: <u>https://www.jointcommission.org/performance-improvement/joint-commission/leading-the-way-to-zero</u>

Regulatory implications

- NPSG.15.01.01: Reduce the risk for suicide
 - All patients in psych inpatient units or in gen med hospitals being treated for psych diagnoses. Environmental risk assessment – mitigate risk
- NPSG 15.01.01, EP 2:
 - BHC: Screen all individuals served for suicidal ideation using a validated screening tool.
 - HAP: Screen all patients for suicidal ideation who are being evaluated or treated for behavioral health conditions as their primary reason for care using a validated screening tool

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Expectations for suicide risk assessments

- Organizations are required to develop and follow written policies and procedures addressing the care of patients identified as at risk for suicide, including guidelines for suicide risk <u>reassessment</u>.
- Reassessment guidelines should address how often reassessments will occur as well as additional criteria that trigger a reassessment; for example, a change in patient status, endorsement of suicidal ideation, and/or suicidal or self-harm behaviors or gestures.
- An evidence-based process must be used to conduct suicide risk reassessments for individuals who have screened positive for suicidal ideation and were further assessed for suicide risk.
- At a minimum, reassessments must directly ask about suicidal ideation, plan, intent, suicidal or self-harm behaviors, risk factors, and protective factors.

Joint Commission's Leading the Way to Zero® initiative

Expectations for suicide risk assessments

- The use of an <u>evidence-based assessment tool, in conjunction with</u>
 <u>clinical evaluation</u>, is an evidenced-based process effective in
 determining overall risk for suicide. The use of evidence-based tools
 is strongly encouraged, and it is acceptable for organizations to use
 language that is more appropriate for the population they serve.
- The evidence-based process must determine a <u>level of suicide risk</u> (for example, high, moderate, low). This <u>overall level of risk must be</u> <u>clearly documented</u>, with clinical justification, as well as the plans to <u>mitigate the risk for suicide</u>.

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Expectations for suicide risk assessments

If the organization does not use an evidence-based tool, the following conditions must be met:

- The organization can demonstrate the evidence-based resource(s) upon which its reassessment is based.
- The reassessment asks directly about suicidal ideation, plan, intent, suicidal or self-harm behaviors, risk factors, and protective factors.
- · How level of risk was determined is clearly documented.

Joint Commission's Leading the Way to Zero® initiative

Evidence-based suicide risk screening tools

Examples of validated screening tools include:

- ED Safe Secondary Screener
- PHQ-9
- · Patient Safety Screener
- TASR Adolescent Screener
- ASQ Suicide Risk Screening Tool
- Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale can be used for both screening and more in-depth assessment of patients who screen positive for suicidal ideation using another tool







eC-SSRS

- Computer or tablet administered self-report version of Columbia Severity Suicide Risk Severity (C-SSRS)
- Has been in use for over 15 years with robust support, but historically in trials and not ubiquitously in clinical arenas

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Computer-automated assessment of suicidality, circa 1973

"Patients preferred the computer interview to talking to a physician ... the computer was more accurate than clinicians in predicting suicide attempts."

(Greist et al, 1973)



Benefits of eC-SSRS

- · Self report with provider alert vs provider administered
- · Consistent administration
- Easier to fit into provider workflow
- Add on to "usual care" at point of care
- Indirect assessment of suicide risk factors appears to be more sensitive than direct assessment

(Greist et al., 2014)

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SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR Check all that apply, so long as these are separate events; must ask about all types)	Since Last Visit
Actual Attempt: A potentially self-injunious act committed with at least some with to die, as a result of act. Behavior was in part thought of as method to kill oneself. Intent does not have to be 100%. If there is any intendedine to die associated with the act, then it can be considered an actual suicide attempt. There does not	Yes No
have to be any infury or harm, just the potential for injury or harm. If persons pulls tagger while gun is in mouth bug gun is treaden so no nijury renults, his is considered an attengt. Inform finete: Even if an individual denies intent/visito de, it may be inferred clinically from the behavior or circumstances. For example, a highly while are that is chard it can be done intent for mucca can be intered if a number base, impact to be ski, purget four base, interest of the done intent for mucca can be intered if an undividual denies in the done can be intered if an undividual denies in the done can be intered if an undividual denies in the done of the high floor though. Just of the done intert for mucca can be intered if any much to be ski, purget four which do the high floor though. There you made a strict de attempt? Hare you made any thing is done more worker? What did you do? Did you as a way to end your life? Did you, as a way to end your life? Did you wont to die (cere a link) when you? We rey to mide a sup to the done of the hard if the did of the direct of the done of the high when you? Or did you do link its trans possible you could have died for? Or did you done in this it sup sossible you could have died for?	Total # of Attempts
(mphate), or get sometiming ease to impress). (Seli-injulision Belavity, manon maximum many If yet, describe.	Yes No
Has subject engaged in Non-Suicidal Self-Injurious Behavior? Interrunted Attempt:	
When the perior is interupted (by an outside circumstance) from starting the potentially self-injurious act (if not for that, actual attempt would have occurred). Overdose: Perior has pills in hand but is stopped from ingesting. Once they ingest any pills, this becomes an attempt rather than an interrupted attempt.	Yes No
Shooting Perton has jun pointed toward edf, gun is taken away by tomeorde elev, or is comehow prevented from polling trigger. Once they guld the trigger, even if the gun fails to fee, it is an sterny humging. Pertons i poised to jump, is grabed and taken down from ledger. Hanging, Feron has aboore around neck but has not yet started to hang. is tropped from doing so. Has there been at time when you started to do something to end your life but someone or something stopped you before you actually did anything?	Total # of interrupted

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Should clinicians start updating their CVs?

- This is a complementary tool decision support at the point of care to be integrated with other known data
 - Computer interview standardization
 - · Greater patient disclosure to computer
 - Clinician knowledge, experience, intuition, integration
 - Can be better together than either alone
- Most eC-SSRS reports are negative only needing brief clinical attention while positive alerts can help to organize and guide clinician action















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Activities / Interventions	icide Rink Score		maph	
Medication Ltd. C	nditions			
Nates	icidal Steation	Act of soft-harm 11/25/2017 17-30		
Alexies 10	cent history of loss	Yes 11/29/2017 17-30		
Personal & Personnel	icide of relative	Ne 11/29/2007 17:00		
	fusional	No		
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Suicide Risk				

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Figure 3. Zoomed view of Figure 2 A B B B S S B 1005 - 0 0 0 CareDecisions Outcome Summary



Documentation expectations

Along with your daily note documentation, please check the suicide risk algorithm tabs

score results are consistent with your clinical judgement	No need to document references to algorithm in your daily note
If the suicide risk trend and suicide risk score results are inconsistent with your clinical judgement	Please document in your daily note the rational for why you disagree with the algorithm

Population screening

Connecting youth to care initiative

- Montana community with recent adolescent suicides
- Four middle and high school screenings in rural Ohio, Montana
- 518 students screened; completion rate 100%
 - Report arrives <1 minute after its completed to mental health treaters
- 6% high risk; seen that day
- 12% moderate risk; seen within three days
- 82% low risk
- No parental complaints and found several suicide attempts that were unknown
- · Screening package was eC-SSRS, PHQ-A, GAD-7, and WSAS-Y (social adjustment) with mean completion time of 8.2 min



Start Da	te 👻	End Date	-	External V P	HQ Scc - GA	AD Scc - C	D-RISC -	Intervene	~
11/18/3	1 16:59	11/18/21	17:09	VIKXN	11	8	24	ASAP	
11/18/.	1 16:56	11/18/21	17:09	e2Wv1	24	15	12	ASAP	
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11/10/-	1 10:58	11/10/21		NAME		10	12	ASAD	
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11/18/3	1 17:00	11/18/21	17:08	EsLuP	10	9	29	Within three days	
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11/18/3	1 17:02	11/18/21	17:10	IfEsn	3	3	28	Within three days	
11/18/2	1 17:00	11/18/21	17:10	rIUBk	12	16	15	Within three days	
11/18/3	1 17:01	11/18/21	17:10	AGLQb	16	14	26	Within three days	
11/18/3	1 16:56	11/18/21	17:00	cKpFm	3	1	38	Only as indicated by PHQ-A and GAD Scores	
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11/18/3	1 16:56	11/18/21	17:02	paAVJ	3	0	38	Only as indicated by PHQ-A and GAD Scores	
11/18/3	1 16:58	11/18/21	17:02	aOSyR	2	1	33	Only as indicated by PHQ-A and GAD Scores	
11/18/3	1 16:58	11/18/21	17:02	hsctc	0	0	40	Only as indicated by PHQ-A and GAD Scores	
11/18/3	1 16:56	11/18/21	17:02	JTPSL	0	0	33	Only as indicated by PHQ-A and GAD Scores	
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11/18/3	1 16:56	11/18/21	17:03	GvzQw	3	5	31	Only as indicated by PHQ-A and GAD Scores	
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11/18/3	1 16:59	11/18/21	17:05	VSSML	0	4	29	Only as indicated by PHQ-A and GAD Scores	
11/18/3	1 16:56	11/18/21	17:05	Qq58a	2	0	29	Only as indicated by PHQ-A and GAD Scores	





