

Assessing Lethality

- Talking about suicide?
- Suicide note?
- Evidence of injury?
- Means to harm self?
- Specific suicide plan?
- Previous attempt?
- Someone close - suicide?
- Ask directly
- Signs of depression?
- Expressions of hopelessness/helplessness?
- Suicide “only option”?
- Making final arrangements?
- Media Contagion

Identifying warning signs

Indirect verbal clues

- “I’m tired of life, I just can’t go on.”
- “My family would be better off without me.”
- “Who cares if I’m dead anyway.”
- “I just want out.”
- “I won’t be around much longer.”
- “Pretty soon you won’t have to worry about me.”

Direct Verbal Clues

- “I’ve decided to kill myself.”
- “I wish I were dead.”
- “I’m going to commit suicide.”
- “I’m going to end it all.”
- “If (such and such) doesn’t happen, I’ll kill myself.”

Behavioral Clues

- Any previous suicide attempt
- Acquiring a gun or stockpiling pills
- Co-occurring depression, moodiness, hopelessness

Sources:

- Slides courtesy of International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators
www.iaclea.org

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2005). Customized Information: First Responders. Retrieved Nov. 1, 2007 from
http://www.sprc.org/featured_resources/customized/first_responders.asp.

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2005). Customized Information: Law Enforcement Personnel. Retrieved Nov. 1, 2007 from
http://www.sprc.org/featured_resources/customized/first_responders.asp

- “Suicide: Know the Signs” pamphlet created by the Office of Counseling and Personal Development at Regis University

- Putting personal affairs in order
- Giving away prized possessions
- Sudden interest or disinterest in religion
- Drug or alcohol abuse, or relapse after a period of recovery
- Unexplained anger, aggression and irritability

Situational Clues

- Being fired or being expelled from school
- A recent unwanted move
- Loss of any major relationship
- Death of a spouse, child, or best friend, especially if by suicide
- Diagnosis of a serious or terminal illness
- Sudden unexpected loss of freedom/fear of punishment
- Anticipated loss of financial security
- Loss of a cherished therapist, counselor or teacher
- Fear of becoming a burden to others

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