

Risk Factors for Suicide and Suicidal Behaviors I.

Chronic Risk Factors (If present, these increase risk over one's lifetime.)
<i>A. Perpetuating Risk Factors – permanent and non-modifiable</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics: White, American Indian, Male, Older Age (review current rates¹), Separation or Divorce, Early Widowhood
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Suicide Attempts – especially if repeated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior Suicide Ideation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Self-Harm Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Suicide or Suicidal Behavior in Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental History of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violence - Substance Abuse (Drugs or Alcohol) - Hospitalization for Major Psychiatric Disorder - Divorce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Trauma or Abuse (Physical or Sexual)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Psychiatric Hospitalization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Frequent Mobility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Violent Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Impulsive/Reckless Behaviors
<i>Predisposing and Potentially Modifiable Risk Factors</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Axis I Psychiatric Disorder, especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mood disorder, - Anxiety Disorder - Schizophrenia - Substance Use Disorder (Alcohol Abuse or Drug Abuse/Dependence) - Eating Disorders - Body Dysmorphic Disorder - Conduct Disorder...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Axis II Personality Disorder, especially Cluster B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Axis III Medical Disorder, especially if involves functional impairment and/or chronic pain) • Traumatic Brain Injury
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-morbidity of Axis I Disorders (especially depression and alcohol misuse), of Axis I and Axis II (especially if Axis II Disorder is Antisocial PD or Borderline PD), of Axis I and Axis III Disorders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Self-esteem/High Self-hate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerant/Accepting Attitude Toward Suicide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to Another's Death by Suicide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Self or Familial Acceptance of Sexual Orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perfectionism (especially in context of depression)

¹ Available from <http://webapp.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate.html>

Risk Factors for Suicide and Suicidal Behaviors II.

Contributory Risk Factors

- Firearm Ownership or Easy Accessibility
- Acute or Enduring Unemployment
- Stress (job, marriage, school, relationship...)

Acute Risk Factors (If present, these increase risk in the near-term)

- Demographics: Recently Divorced or Separated with Feelings of Victimization or Rage
- Suicide Ideation (Threatened, Communicated, planned, or Prepared for);
- Current Self-Harm Behavior
- Recent Suicide Attempt
- Excessive or Increased Use of Substances (alcohol or drugs)
- Psychological Pain (acute distress in response to loss, defeat, rejection, etc.)
- Recent Discharge from psychiatric hospitalization
- Anger, Rage, Seeking Revenge
- Aggressive Behavior
- Withdrawal from Usual Activities, Supports, Interests, School or Work; Isolation (e.g. lives alone)
- Anhedonia
- Anxiety, Panic
- Agitation
- Insomnia
- Persistent Nightmares
- Suspiciousness, Paranoia (ideas of persecution or reference)
- Severe feelings of confusion or disorganization
- Command Hallucinations Urging Suicide
- Intense affect states (e.g. desperation, intolerable aloneness, self-hate...)
- Dramatic Mood Changes
- Hopelessness, Poor Problem-solving, Cognitive Constriction (thinking in black and white terms, not able to see gray areas, alternatives...), Rumination, Few Reasons for Living, Inability to Imagine Possibly Positive Future Events
- Perceived Burdensomeness
- Recent diagnosis of terminal condition
- Feeling Trapped, Like There is No Way Out (other than death); Poor Problem-Solving
- Sense of Purposelessness or Loss of Meaning; No Reasons for living
- Negative or mixed attitude toward help-receiving
- Negative or mixed attitude by potential caregiver to individual
- Recklessness or Excessive Risk-Taking Behavior, Especially if Out of Character or Seemingly Without Thinking of Consequences, Tendency toward Impulsivity

Precipitating or Triggering Stimuli (Heighten Period of Risk if Vulnerable to Suicide)

- Any Real or Anticipated Event Causing or Threatening:
 - Shame, Guilt, Despair, Humiliation, Unacceptable Loss of Face or Status
 - Legal Problems (loss of freedom), Financial Problems, Feelings of Rejection/Abandonment
- Recent Exposure to Another's Suicide (of friend or acquaintance, of celebrity through media...)