



Suicide Prevention in Primary Care: Practical Strategies for Managing Risk

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Disclosures

None



Objectives



Describe trends in youth suicide



Describe rationale for suicide screening in primary care



Evaluate risk and summarize elements of safety planning, including means reduction

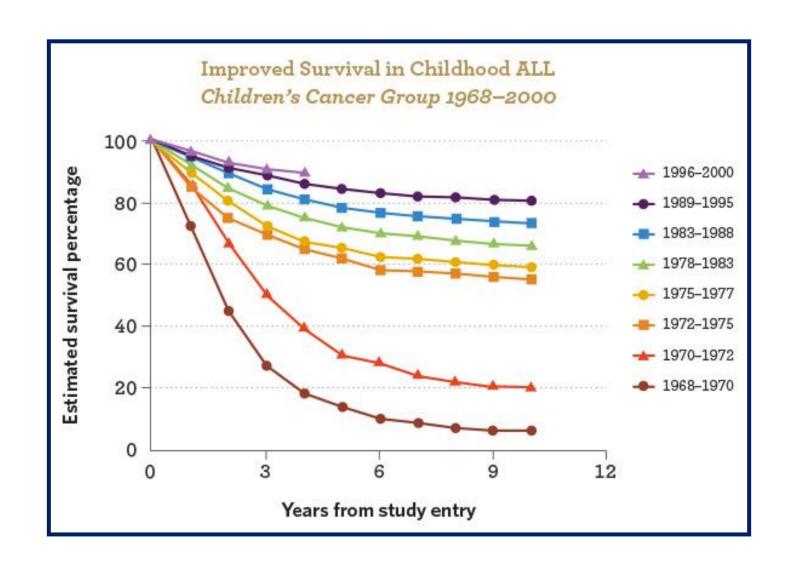


Please be Kind to Yourself





Hope





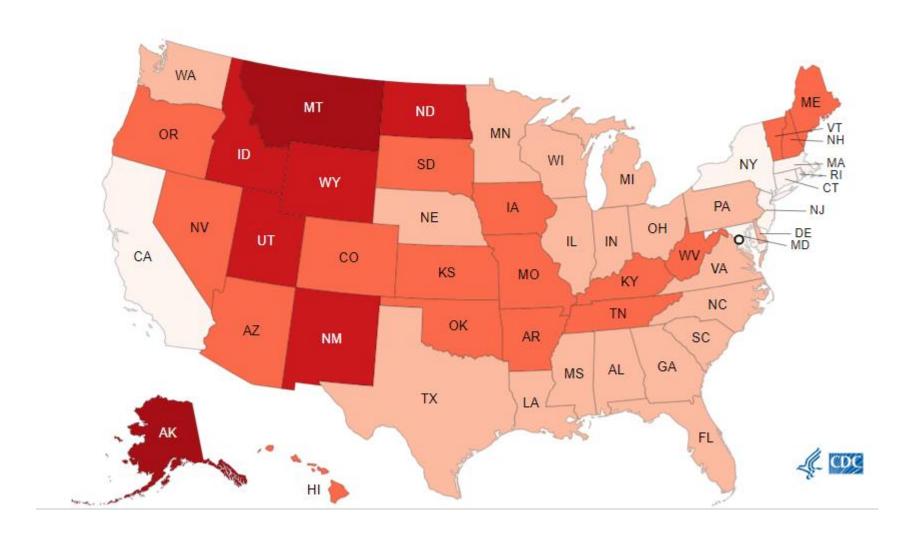
Suicide Data: National and Arizona Trends



Suicide Mortality by State

Year

2022 🕶





10 Leading Causes of Death, United States

2022, All Deaths with drilldown to ICD codes, All Sexes, All Races, All Ethnicities

1-4 5-9 10-14 15-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+ All Ages Unintentional <u> Inintentional</u> Unintentional Inintentional <u> Inintentional</u> Jnintentional Malignant Congenital Malignant Heart Disease Heart Disease Anomalies Injury Injury. Injury: Injury Injury Injury. Neoplasms Neoplasms 567,365 702,880 1,288 726 926 14,669 33,058 36,972 3,970 33,363 105,133 Congenital Malignant Malignant Malignant Short Gestation Suicide Suicide **Heart Disease Heart Disease** Heart Disease Homicide 2 Anomalies Neoplasms Neoplasms Neoplasms 493 8,663 2,884 6,262 12,258 32,298 85,733 441 393 452,490 608,371 Congenital Malignant Malignant Unintentional Unintentional Unintentional Sids <u>Homicide</u> Suicide Homicide Covid-19 3 **Anomalies** Neoplasms Neoplasms Injury Injury Injury 1,529 343 6,040 6,712 146,320 241 442 11,177 31,394 34,017 227,039 Inintentional Malignant Malignant Heart Disease Suicide Covid-19 Covid-19 Cerebrovascular Covid-19 <u>Homicide</u> Homicide 4 Neoplasms Neoplasms Injury 180 366 3,789 8,185 9,678 24,252 142,513 186,552 1,354 266 1,421 Maternal Chronic Low. Influenza & Influenza & Congenital Malignant Diabetes Heart Disease Liver Disease Liver Disease Respiratory Pregnancy Cerebrovascular **Anomalies** Mellitus Pneumonia Pneumonia Neoplasms Disease Comp. 848 5,501 9,401 165,393 3,641 17,410 129 77 205 1,215 125,803 Chronic Low. Chronic Low. Placenta Cord Alzheimer's Heart Disease Heart Disease Heart Disease Covid-19 Liver Disease Suicide Respiratory Respiratory Homicide Disease Membranes 7,781 73 4,765 103 145 447 1,786 Disease Disease 649 118,525 17,138 147,382 Alzheimer's Congenital Diabetes Unintentional **Bacterial Sepsis** Covid-19 Covid-19 Covid-19 Covid-19 Covid-19 Liver Disease Anomalies Mellitus Injury. Disease 636 101 62 69 1,640 3,841 16,484 72,616 412 7,364 120,122 Chronic Low. Chronic Low. Respiratory Diabetes Diabetes Diabetes Diabetes Diabetes Perinatal Period Respiratory Respiratory Cerebrovascular Cerebrovascula 8 Distress Mellitus Mellitus Mellitus Mellitus Mellitus 62 5,563 14,173 Disease Disease 456 324 1,188 2,879 71,985 101,209 48 58 Chronic Low. Chronic Low. Intrauterine Septicemia Cerebrovascular Respiratory Cerebrovascular Respiratory Suicide Nephritis Nephritis Cerebrovascular 9 Hypoxia 7,864 60 45 55 Disease 599 2,150 Disease 47,086 57,937 362 197 2,987 Circulatory Influenza & Influenza & Complicated Parkinson's Nephritis Septicemia Nephritis Liver Disease Cerebrovascular Homicide 10 System Disease Pneumonia Pneumonia Pregnancy Disease 49 33 1,029 2,740 6,668 54,803 356 54 168 591 38,931

Unintentional Injury Homicide Suicide

Source: Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS), CDC



Suicide Data: Arizona



Suicide is a public health problem and leading cause of death in the United States. Suicide can also be prevented – more investment in suicide prevention, education, and research will prevent the untimely deaths of thousands of Americans each year. Unless otherwise noted, this fact sheet reports 2021 data from the CDC, the most current verified data available at time of publication (January 2024).



leading cause of death in Arizona

2nd leading

cause of death for ages 10-24

2nd leading

cause of death for ages 25-34

6th leading

cause of death for ages 35-44

7th leading

cause of death for ages 45-54

9th leading

cause of death for ages 55-64

17th leading

cause of death for ages 65+

Suicide Death Rates

	Number of Deaths by Suicide	Rate per 100,000 Population	State Rank	
Arizona	1,475	19.38	18	
Nationally	48,183	14.04		

See full list of citations at afsp.org/statistics.

91% of communities did not have enough mental health providers to serve residents in 2023, according to federal guidelines.

Almost **four times** as many people died by suicide than in alcohol related motor vehicle accidents.

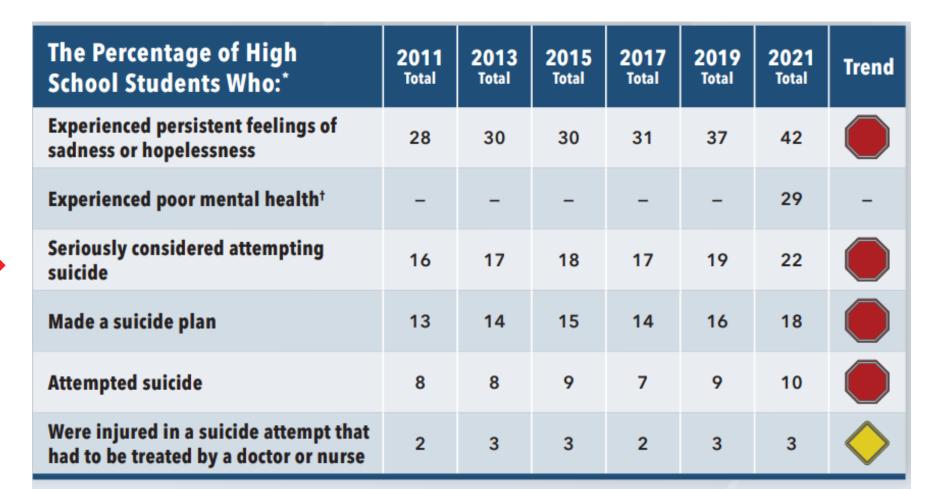
The total deaths to suicide reflected a total of **29,733 years** of potential life lost (YPLL) before age 65.

64% of firearm deaths were suicides.

60% of all suicides were by firearms.







^{*}For the complete wording of YRBS questions, refer to the appendix.

*Variable introduced in 2021.

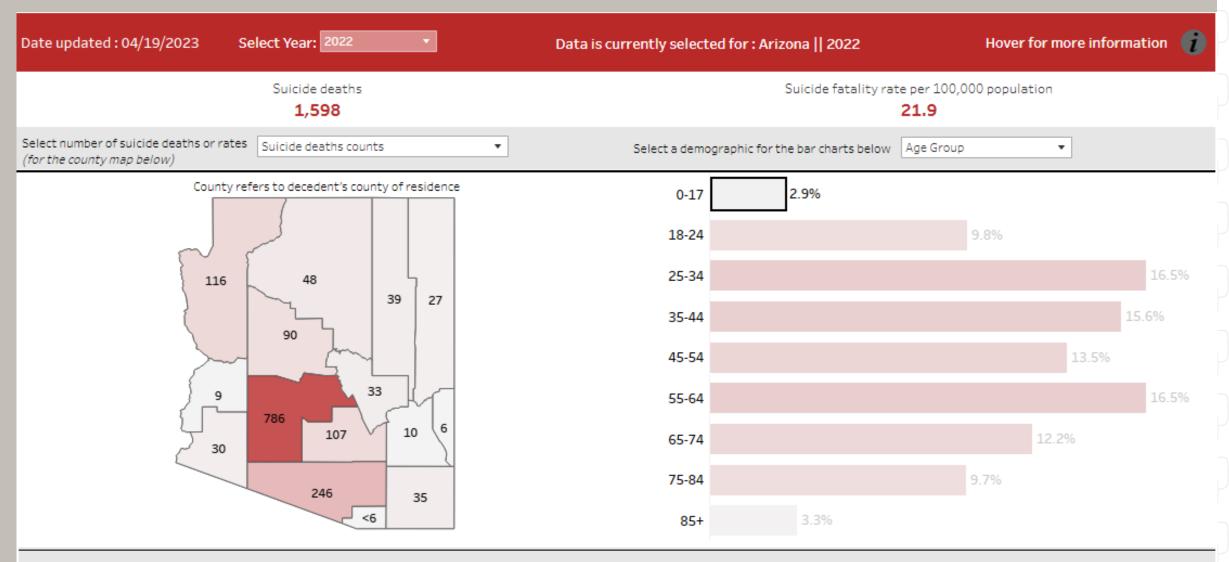


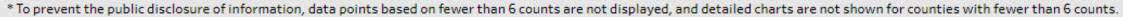
In wrong direction

No change

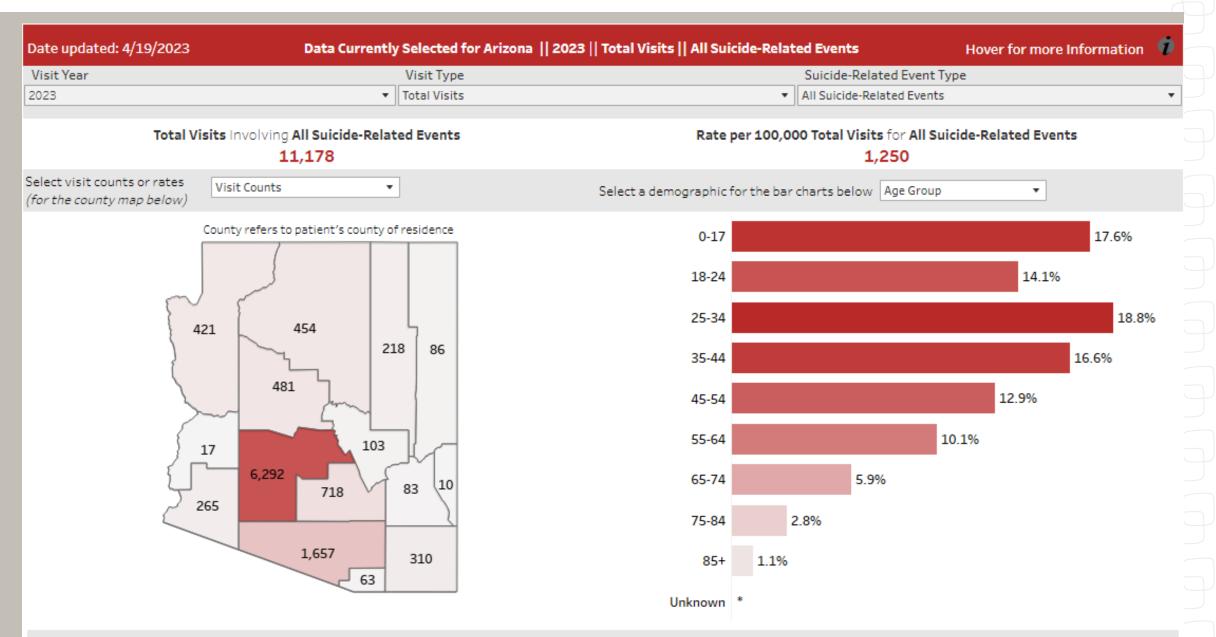
In right direction











^{*} To prevent the public disclosure of information, data points based on fewer than 6 counts are not displayed, and detailed charts are not shown for counties with fewer than 6 counts.







Early identification is critical

Youth firearm suicides increased 60% btw 2007 - 2014; only 18% were receiving mental health treatment at time of death (Fowler et al, 2017)

Lethal suicide attempts occur most often on 1st attempts w/ firearms; 1/3 had no psychiatric dx (McKean et al, 2018)

In Arizona, suicide deaths increased 30.3% for 10-24 y/o btw 2007 - 2018 (Curtin, 2020)

Early identification is critical

During Feb-Mar '21, suspected suicide attempt ED visits were 50.6% higher among girls aged 12–17 years than during the same period in 2019; visits among boys increased 3.7%. (Yard et al, 2021)

The gap between male: female suicide deaths is narrowing, w/ younger females using more lethal means (Ruch et al., 2019)

Sharp increases have occurred for Black youth (Lindsey, 2019)

Suicide Screening

Many kids at risk are not receiving mental health care, but they show up for medical care

Universal screening of 90k visits identified 3% positive rate; 0.3% acute (Roaten et al., 2021)

We are missing opportunities to intervene in primary care





The importance of primary care

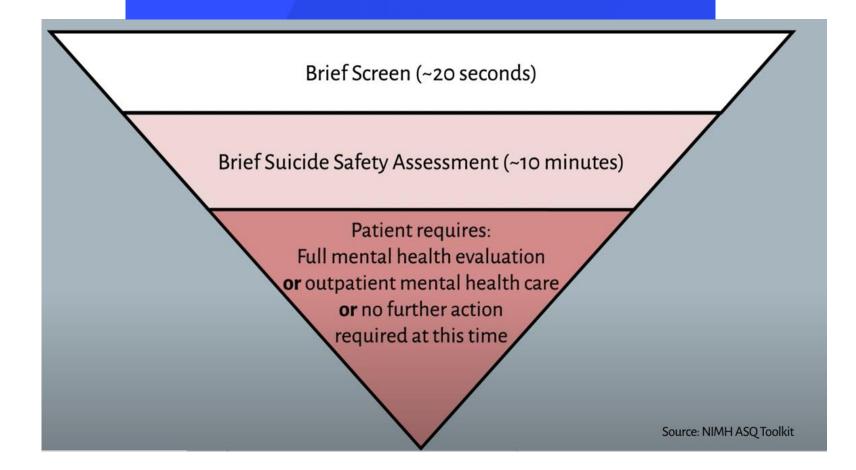
- You have the context
- You have the relationship
- Parents trust you
- Half of kids with mental health disorder are not receiving treatment (Whitney and Peterson, 2019)
- Those that die by suicide are most likely to have seen their PCP in the month preceding their death relative to any other provider (Ahmedani et al., 2014)
- You already know how



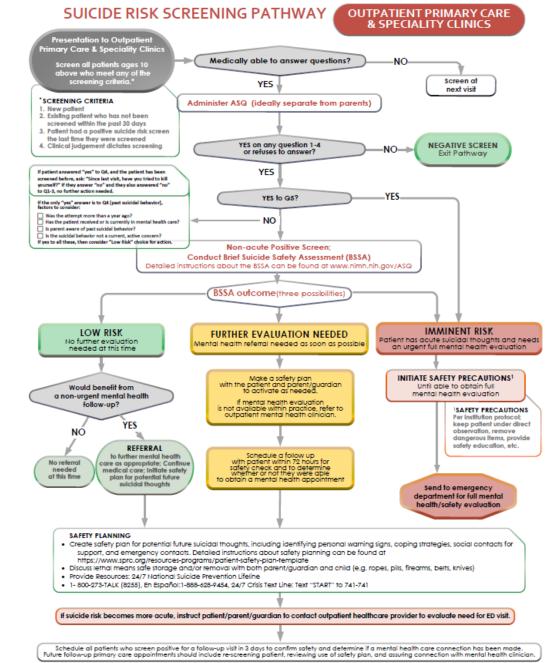
Patient Care

Suicide: Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention

Home / Patient Care / Suicide: Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention

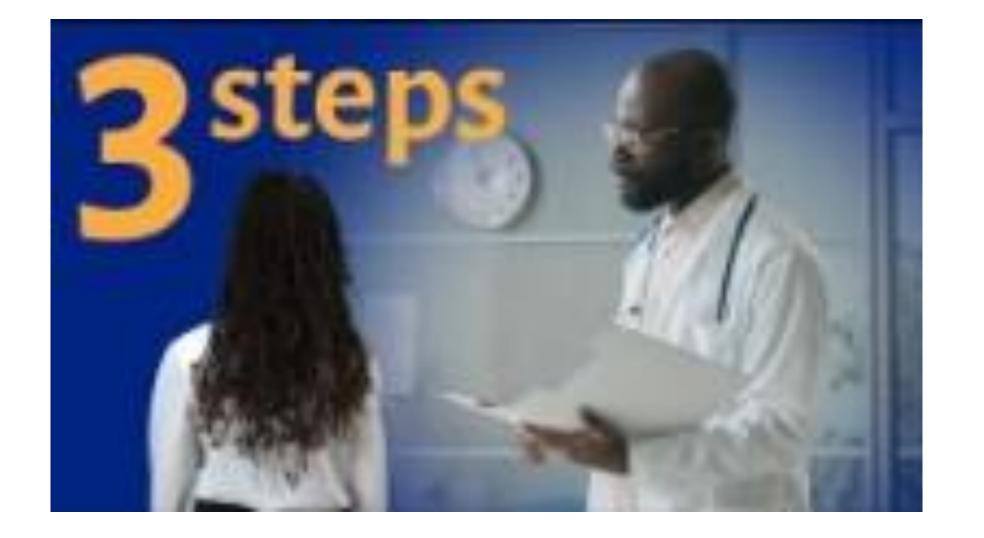




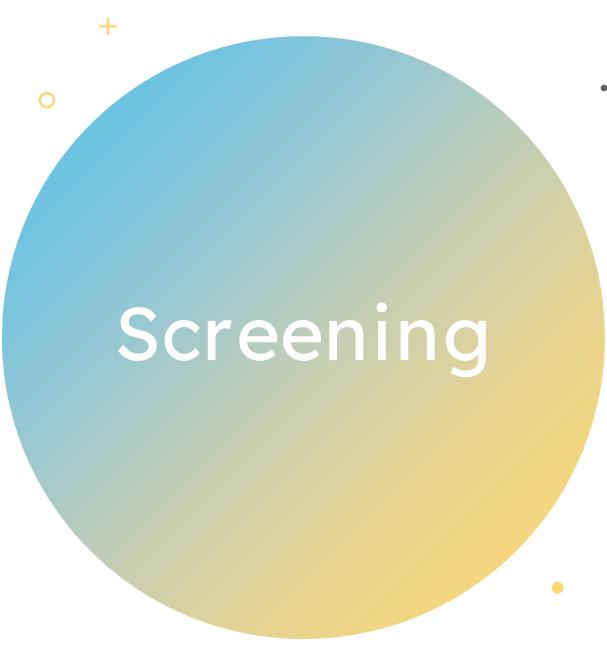




AAP's Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention







- Logistics
 - Well checks and sick visits
 - Develop workflow before asking questions
 - Use self-report screeners, then clinical interview w/ patient and parents separately
 - Don't promise confidentiality
 - Take your time
 - Honor/validate disclosures and patient's perception of stressors
 - Intent matters: Your perception of actual lethality is not as important
 - Parents may not be best informants or judge of risk
 - Ages 12 and up

Screening

- Use validated measures because:
 - Some youth may be more likely to 'open up'
 - It'll help you make sure your assessment is complete
 - It'll help you effectively communicate risk
- Tools:
 - ASQ: Ask Suicide Screening Questions
 - Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale
 - SAFE-T
 - PHQ: Not recommended. Depression screening alone missed 1/3 of kids at risk (Horowitz et al., 2021)
- Zero Suicide offers webinars in how to choose



ASQ: Ask Suicide Screening Questions

In the past few weeks, have you wished you were dead?

In the past few weeks, have you felt that you or your family would be better off if you were dead?

In the past week, have you been having thoughts of killing yourself?

Have you ever tried to kill yourself?

ASQ: Suicide Screening Questions

5. If "yes" to any of the above, are you having thoughts of killing yourself right now?





Brief Suicide Safety **Assessment**

. Use after a patient (8 - 24 years) screens positive for suicide risk on the asQ · Assessment guide for mental health clinicians, MDs, NPs, or PAs

· Prompts help determine disposition

What to do when a pediatric patient screens positive for suicide risk:

WORKSHEET

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	WORKSHEEI page 1 of 4		
Patient name:	DOB:		
Interviewer name:	Assessment date:		
Praise patient for discussing the	eir thoughts		
"I'm here to follow up on your responses to things to talk about. Thank you for telling us	the suicide risk screening questions. These are hard . I need to ask you a few more questions."		
Assess the patient Review patient's responses from the asQ			
□ Fraguency of suicidal though	hte		

rrequency of suicidal thoughts

(If possible, assess patient alone depending on developmental considerations and parent willingness.) Determine if and how often the patient is having suicidal thoughts.

Ask the patient: "In the past few weeks, have you been thinking about killing yourself?"

If yes, ask: "How often?" (once or twice a day, several times a day, a couple times a week, etc.) "When was the last time you had these thoughts?"

	"Are you having thoughts of killing yourself right now?"	(If "yes," patient requires an urgent/ STAT ment
_	health evaluation and cannot be left alone. A positive re	esponse indicates imminent risk.)

Suicide plan

Assess if the patient has a suicide plan, regardless of how they responded to any other questions (ask about method and access to means). Ask the patient: "Do you have a plan to kill yourself?" If yes, ask: "What is your plan?" If no plan, ask: "If you were going to kill yourself, how would you do it?"

Note: If the patient has a very detailed plan, this is more concerning than if they haven't thought it through in great detail. If the plan is feasible (e.g., if they are planning to use pills and have access to pills), this is a reason for greater concern and removing or securing dangerous items (medications, guns, ropes, etc.).

Past behavior

Evaluate past self-injury and history of suicide attempts (method, estimated date, intent). Ask the patient: "Have you ever tried to hurt yourself?" "Have you ever tried to kill yourself?" If yes, ask: "How? When? Why?" and assess intent: "Did you think [method] would kill you?" "Did you want to die?" (for youth, intent is as important as lethality of method) Ask: "Did you receive medical/psychiatric treatment?"

Note: Past suicidal behavior is the strongest risk factor for future attempts.





Assess the patient Review patient's responses from the asQ

Symptor	ns Ask the patient about:
	on: "In the past few weeks, have you felt so sad or depressed that it makes it hard to do you would like to do?"
	"In the past few weeks, have you felt so worried that it makes it hard to do the things you to do or that you feel constantly agitated/on-edge?"
☐ Impulsivit	y/Recklessness: "Do you often act without thinking?"
□ Hopeless	ness: "In the past few weeks, have you felt hopeless, like things would never get better?"
Anhedon make you	ia: "In the past few weeks, have you felt like you couldn't enjoy the things that usually happy?"
☐ Isolation:	"Have you been keeping to yourself more than usual?"
Irritability	"In the past few weeks, have you been feeling more irritable or grouchier than usual?"
	e and alcohol use: "In the past few weeks, have you used drugs or alcohol?" : "What? How much?"
	tern: "In the past few weeks, have you had trouble falling asleep or found yourself o in the middle of the night or earlier than usual in the morning?"
☐ Appetite:	"In the past few weeks, have you noticed changes in your appetite? Have you been less more hungry than usual?" $\frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{2} \right) = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{2} \right) \left(\frac{1}{2} $
Appetite:	
Appetite: hungry Other con feeling?"	more hungry than usual?"
Appetite: hungry or Other con feeling?" Social St	more hungry than usual?" ncerns: "Recently, have there been any concerning changes in how you are thinking or
Appetite: hungry or Other con feeling?" Social St Support n counselor	more hungry than usual?" ncerns: "Recently, have there been any concerning changes in how you are thinking or Jpport & Stressors (For all questions below, if patient answers yes, ask them to describe.) letwork: "Is there a trusted adult you can talk to? Who? Have you ever seen a therapist/
Appetite: hungry or feeling?" Social St Support n counselor Family sit	more hungry than usual?" ncerns: "Recently, have there been any concerning changes in how you are thinking or Jpport & Stressors (For all questions below, if patient answers yes, ask them to describe, letwork: "Is there a trusted adult you can talk to? Who? Have you ever seen a therapist/?" If yes, ask: "When?"
Appetite: hungry or Other con feeling?" Social St Support in counselor Family sit School fu can't take	more hungry than usual?" ncerns: "Recently, have there been any concerning changes in how you are thinking or Jpport & Stressors (For all questions below, if patient answers yes, ask them to describe, letwork: "Is there a trusted adult you can talk to? Who? Have you ever seen a therapist/?" If yes, ask: "When?" udion: "Are there any conflicts at home that are hard to handle?" nctioning: "Do you ever feel so much pressure at school (academic or social) that you
Social Su Support in counselor Family sit School fur can't take Bullying:	more hungry than usual?" ncerns: "Recently, have there been any concerning changes in how you are thinking or Upport & Stressors (For all questions below, if patient answers yes, ask them to describe, letwork: "Is there a trusted adult you can talk to? Who? Have you ever seen a therapist/?" If yes, ask: "When?" udion: "Are there any conflicts at home that are hard to handle?" nctioning: "Do you ever feel so much pressure at school (academic or social) that you it anymore?"





26

WORKSHEET page 3 of 4

If patient is ≥ 18 years, ask patient's permission for parent/guardian to join. Say to the parent: "After speaking with your child, I have some concerns about his/her safety. We are glad your child spoke up as this can be a difficult topic to talk about. We would now like to get your perspective."			
"Your child said (reference positive responses on the asQ). Is this something he/she shared with y "Does your child have a history of suicidal thoughts or behavior that you're aware of?" If yes, say: "F			plain."
'D	oes your child seem: Sad or depressed?" Anxious?" Impulsive? Reckless?" Hopeless?" Irrit Unable to enjoy the things that usually bring him/her pleasure?" Withdrawn from friends or to be keeping to him/herself?"	able?"	
'Ha	ave you noticed changes in your child's: 🔲 Sleeping pattern?" 🚨 Appetite?"		
'De	oes your child use drugs or alcohol?"	☐ Yes	□ No
'Ha	as anyone in your family/close friend network ever tried to kill themselves?"	Yes	□ No
'He	ow are potentially dangerous items stored in your home?" (e.g. guns, medications, poisons, etc.)		
	pes your child have a trusted adult they can talk to?" (Normalize that youth are often more infortable talking to adults who are not their parents)	☐ Yes	□No
'Ar	re you comfortable keeping your child safe at home?"	☐ Yes	□No
AI I	he end of the interview, ask the parent/guardian: "Is there anything you would like to tell me in	n private	
	he end of the interview, ask the parent/guardian: "Is there anything you would like to tell me in large anything you would like you would like you would l		
re sa		parent/s naking a r give a f elop a sa	guardian, if alse fety
re san	ake a safety plan with the patient Include the ate a safety plan for managing potential future suicidal thoughts. A safety plan is different than me fety contract"; asking the patient to contract for safety is NOT effective and may be dangerous of security. Say to patient: "Our first priority is keeping you safe. Let's work together to deven for when you are having thoughts of suicide." Examples: "I will tell my mom/coach/teacher." "I	parent/g naking a r give a f elop a sa I will call	guardian, if alse fety the
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Determine disposition

For all positive screens, follow up with patient at next appointment.

After completing the assessment, choose the appropriate disposition plan. If possible, nurse should follow-up with a check-in phone call (within 48 hours) with all patients who screened positive.

- ☐ Emergency psychiatric evaluation: Patient is at imminent risk for suicide (current suicidal thoughts). Send to emergency department for extensive mental health evaluation (unless contact with a patient's current mental health provider is possible and alternative safety plan for imminent risk is established).
- Further evaluation of risk is necessary:

Review the safety plan and send home with a mental health referral as soon as patient can get an appointment (preferably within 72 hours).

☐ Patient might benefit from non-urgent mental health follow-up:

Review the safety plan and send home with a mental health referral.

No further intervention is necessary at this	time.
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Provide resources to all patients

- 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) En Español: 1-888-628-9454
- 24/7 Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741-741



Implementing the Safety Plan: 6 Step Process

Step 1: Warning Signs

- Ask: "How will you know when the safety plan should be used?"
- Ask: "What do you experience when you start to think about suicide or feel extremely depressed?"
- List warning signs (thoughts, images, thinking processes, mood, and/ or behaviors) using the patient's own words.

Step 2: Internal Coping Strategies

- Ask: "What can you do, on your own, if you become suididal again, to help yourself not to act on your thoughts or urges?"
- Assess likelihood of use: Ask: "How likely do you think you would be able to do this step during a time of crisis?"
- If doubt about use is expressed, ask: "What might stand in the way of you thinking of these activities or doing them if you think of them?"
- Use a collaborative, problem solving approach to address potential roadblocks and ID alternative coping strategies.

Step 3: Social Contacts Who May Distract from the Crisis

- Instruct patients to use Step 3 if Step 2 does not resolve the crisis or lower risk.
- Ask: "Who or what social settings help you take your mind off your problems at least for a little while?" "Who helps you feel better when you socialize with them?"
- Ask for safe places they can go to be around people (i.e. coffee shop).
- Ask patient to list several people and social settings in case the first option is unavailable.
- Remember, in this step, the goal is distraction from suicidal thoughts and feelings.
- Assess likelihood that patient will engage in this step; ID potential obstacles, and problem solve, as appropriate.



- Instruct patients to use Step 4 if Step 3 does not resolve crisis or lower risk.
- Ask: "Among your family or friends, who do you think you could contact for help during a crisis?" or "Who is supportive of you and who do you feel that you can talk with when you're under stress?"
- Ask patients to list several people, in case one contact is unreachable. Prioritize the list. In this step, unlike the previous step, patients reveal they are in crisis to others.
- Assess likelihood patient will engage in this step; ID potential obstacles, and problem solve.
- Role play and rehearsal can be very useful in this step.

Step 5: Professionals and Agencies to Contact for Help

- Instruct the patients to use Step 5 if Step 4 does not resolve the crisis or lower risk.
- Ask: "Who are the mental health professionals that we should identify to be on your safety plan?" and "Are there other health care providers?"
- List names, numbers and/or locations of clinicians, local urgent care services.
- Assess likelihood patient will engage in this step; ID potential obstacles, and problem solve.
- Role play and rehearsal can be very useful in this step.

Step 6: Making the Environment Safe

- Ask patients which means they would consider using during a suicidal crisis.
- Ask: "Do you own a firearm, such as a gun or rifle??" and "What other means do you have access to and may use to attempt to kill yourself?"
- Collaboratively identify ways to secure or limit access to lethal means: Ask: "How can we go about developing a plan to limit your access to these means?"



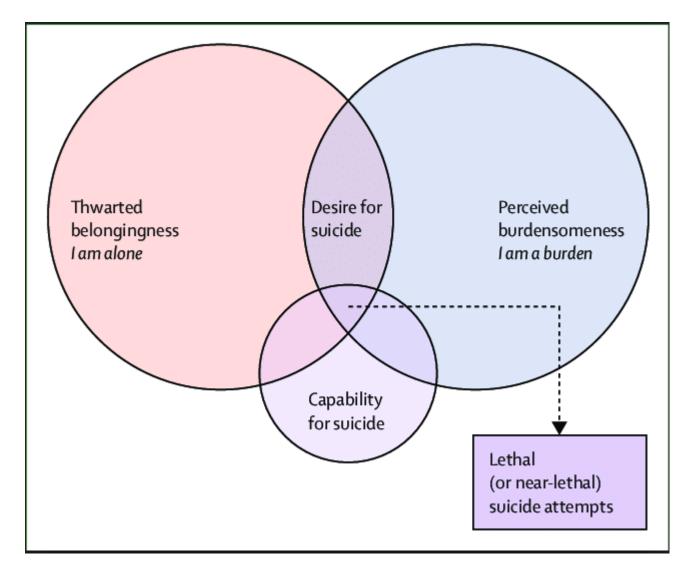
The Power of Caring: Social Connection



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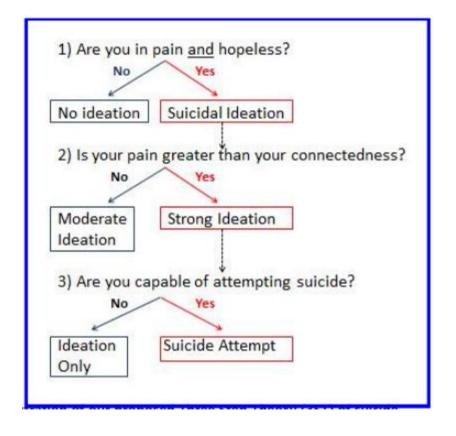
Interpersonal Theory of Suicide



Joiner (2005)



Klonsky and May's Three-Step Theory





Klonsky & May (2015)

How to respond

Thank you for telling me

You are not alone

We care about you and the world is better with you in it

I know you don't feel it now, but there is reason for hope

We have effective treatments and we are going to help you

If you know they've been through tough times before, remind them; if not, ask De-stigmatize mental health problem: it's not a character flaw, it's a medical condition



The power of hope

- Elicit reasons to live
- Consider use of virtual hope box app:



Virtual Hope Box

T2 Health & Fitness

E Everyone

Add to Wishlist

Install

**** 802 .











Making the Environment Safer















Means Restriction

Modifying the environment to decrease access to suicidal means:

One of the most effective strategies for suicide prevention

(Yip, PA, Caine E, Yousuf S, Wu K, Chen Y, 2012)



Rationale for Means Restriction

- Many suicidal crises are short lived
 - 47% of those who attempted suicide reported less than 10 minutes passed between making the decision and acting (Deisenhammer et al, 2009)



 Highest death rate associated with methods that are readily available, easy to use and highly lethal



Rationale for Means Restriction

Inability to interrupt an attempt (i.e., firearms, jumping) make means restriction even more important (Barber & Miller, 2014)

Approximately 90% who survive an attempt will not go on to die by suicide (O'Donnel, Arthur, Farmer, 1994)



Mortality Rates by Method

Most lethal

Firearm: 89.6%

Drowning: 56.4%

Suffocation/hanging:

52.7%

Poison by gas: 30.5%

Least lethal

Jumping: 27.5%

Drug ingestion: 1.9%

Non-drug poisoning: 1.1%

Cut/pierce: 0.7%



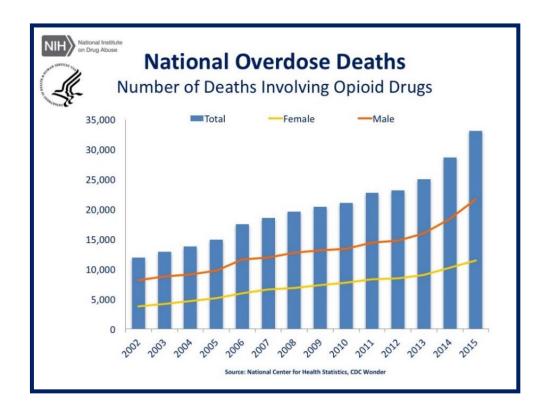


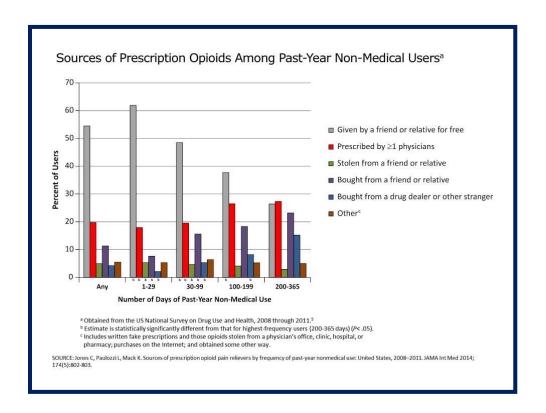
Arizona could lead in gun safety

- Storing guns locked, unloaded with ammunition locked up separately reduces unintentional firearm injuries (Grossman, et al 2005)
- 82% of youth who use a firearm in suicide use a gun belonging to a family member (National Violent Death Reporting System, 2016)
- 75% of parents feel pediatricians should advise about safe firearm storage practices, but only 12.8% have had this discussion (Garbut et al, 2016)



Opioids + Suicide







Medication safe storage best practices

- Use pill boxes to limit access for daily medications
- Dispose of old meds. FDA has a helpful website for specific guidance: https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm
- Look for medication take back days
- Dispose of meds in a Ziploc mixed with coffee grounds or kitty litter, sealed, into the trash
- OTC medicines, like Tylenol and Advil, are particularly dangerous. Avoid easy access to Costco-sized bottles
- When you prescribe opioids, discuss what to do with any leftovers



Open Door Policy



After arguments or when emotions run hot, the bedroom door should remain open



Increase monitoring and supervision during times of emotional or social distress



Especially after cell phone or social media restrictions, particularly following a shameful event





Why does this matter?

- The state of the science tells us that:
 - Hospitalization doesn't treat suicidality
 - Pharmacotherapy doesn't treat suicidality
 - No suicide contracts don't work
- Bottom line: we must connect with people and make environment as safe as possible
 - TIP: The first encounter may be the only chance you have to make a difference
 - Consult with peers and document your thought process



Resources

- ASQ Ask Suicide Questions: https://www.nimh.nih.gov/research/research-conducted-at-nimh/asq-toolkit-materials
- AAP: Blueprint for Youth Suicide: https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention/?srsltid=AfmBOopmBUYRqkbYluRDNy1gcyrXaFTWsjAX27sW4MRuLdBAnqHLiv-o
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: https://afsp.org/
- CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey and National Vital Statistics Service
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: https://www.sprc.org/settings/primary-care
- Suicide lifeline: 988
- Teen Lifeline: 602-248-TEEN or 1-800-248-TEEN
- Youth Suicide Warning Signs: https://www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org/
- Zero Suicide: http://zerosuicide.sprc.org/webinar/screening-and-assessment-suicide-health-care-settings



Thank you

You have the power to catch kids earlier

You are a lifeline

Please email with any questions: callan1@phoenixchildrens.com





Thank you!