

Suicide Prevention Guide for Pharmacists

1. Find a private place to talk
2. Allocate necessary time
3. Listen attentively



Assess all patients with 1 or more **risk factors*** present (esp. those with psychiatric disorder or prior suicide attempt)

Determine the presence of any **protective factors****



Determine

- 1) Current mental state
- 2) Patients' plan
- 3) What their support system is



Determine level of risk



LOW
-Some ideation
-No plan



MODERATE
-Ideation
-Vague plans but no immediate plans



HIGH
-Ideation
-Specific plan and timeframe established



- Offer emotional support
- Talk through the suicidal feelings
- Reflect on how earlier problems were resolved without resorting to suicide
- Refer the person
- Meet at regular intervals



- Offer emotional support
- Explore alternatives
- Make a contract
- Refer the person ASAP
- Contact the family, friends, social support



- Stay with the person
- Remove means of suicide
- Make a contract
- Call 911 and arrange for an ambulance and hospitalization
- Inform the family and enlist its support

Risk Factors*	Protective Factors**
Depression	Children at home
Prior suicide attempt	Pregnancy
Alcohol or substance abuse	Married
Schizophrenia	Religious beliefs
Painful and/or chronic conditions	Employed
Male	Positive social support
Teenage or elderly	Positive therapeutic relationship
Widowed, divorced, single	
Stressful life events	
Easy availability of suicidal means	

What to Determine	What to Ask (not an extensive list)
1) Current mental state	"Do you feel sad?" "Have you ever felt that life was not worth living?" "Did you ever wish you could go to sleep and just not wake up?" "Have things ever reached the point that you've thought of harming yourself?"
2) Patients' plan	"How likely do you think it is that you will act on them in the future?" "Have you made a specific plan to harm or kill yourself?" (If so, what does the plan include?) "Is the means readily available to you?" "When are you planning to do it?"
3) Support system	"What things would lead you to feel more (or less) hopeful about the future?" "What things in your life make you want to go on living?"