

# Suicide Signs and Risk

Presented by Kate Lamphere, LICSW



April 24, 2020



# Welcome

Poll Questions



# Who is in the “Room?”

Location

Role

Comfort/Familiarity Rating

# Language Matters

- ◆ Died by Suicide
- ◆ Killed Self
- ◆ Had a suicide attempt

NOT:

- ◆ Committed Suicide
- ◆ Failed Suicide Attempt
- ◆ Successful Suicide

Why is this important?

# Myths And Reality

- ◆ Suicide only affects certain people
  - ◆ Suicide can affect anyone
- ◆ If I ask someone about suicide, I might put the idea in their head
  - ◆ Asking can show genuine concern, offer hope and provide assistance
- ◆ If a person decides to kill themselves, there is nothing I can do
  - ◆ Effective interventions can be helpful and reduce suicide risk
- ◆ People who talk about suicide are not truly suicidal, it's the people who don't make any mention are the most at risk
  - ◆ People who talk about suicide are at risk, and often seeking help

# Signs

- ◆ Threatening to Hurt or Kill Self
- ◆ Speaking of Hopelessness or No Reason to Live
- ◆ Speaking of a Loss in Purpose
- ◆ Unbearable Pain
- ◆ Sleep Disturbance
- ◆ Giving Away Possessions
- ◆ Seeking Access to Lethal Means
- ◆ Acting Recklessly
- ◆ Withdrawing from Family and Friends
- ◆ Dramatic Change in Mood
- ◆ Loss of Interest/Irritability

# Risk Factors

- ◆ Gender/Age
- ◆ Suicidal Behavior: History of Prior Attempts
- ◆ Current/Past Psychiatric Conditions
- ◆ Substance Use/Acute Intoxication
- ◆ Co-Morbidity and Recent Onset of Illness/Ongoing Medical Conditions
- ◆ Precipitants/Stressors/Interpersonal
- ◆ Family Turmoil
- ◆ Social Isolation
- ◆ Discharge from Psychiatric Treatment
- ◆ Access to Lethal Means
- ◆ Child Abuse and Neglect: History of Trauma
- ◆ LGBTQ+

# Risk Factors – COVID-19

Isolation

Loss of Job –  
Purpose

Financial  
Distress

Increase in  
Substance  
Use

Relational  
Distress

Other?



# Protective Factors

## Internal

- Skills in Managing Distress, Coping with Stress
- Religious Beliefs
- Distress Tolerance/Frustration Tolerance

## External

- Family and Community Connections
- Effective Clinical Interventions
- Access to Supports and Services

# What Can We Do?

- ◆ Ask
  - ◆ With all that is going on, have you had thoughts of killing yourself?
  - ◆ Are you thinking about killing yourself?
- ◆ Show Genuine Concern
- ◆ Share Observations
- ◆ Ask Without Dread
- ◆ Validate and Offer Hope
- ◆ Get Help
- ◆ Follow Up

# Offering Hope

- ◆ People Can and Do Recover
- ◆ Treatment can Help
- ◆ Alleviating Stressors – Tangible Assistance: Food, Transportation, Check in Calls
- ◆ Refrain from Judgment
- ◆ Show Genuine Concern
- ◆ Do Not Leave a Person Talking About Suicide Alone
- ◆ Call for Help Together, Make Decisions Together

# Managing Stress and Anxiety-COVID19

- ◆ Keep a Schedule
- ◆ Get Outside and Get Exercise
- ◆ Challenge Catastrophic Thinking-balance with reality
- ◆ Try mindfulness practices-meditation, breathing practices
- ◆ Keep a journal, write down feelings
- ◆ Listen to music, embrace joy and laughter
- ◆ Limit media/social media-if you are not learning something new or it is causing distress-turn it off
- ◆ Shared Experiences
- ◆ Get Help-mental health care is an essential service and providers are ready to help

# Resources

- ◆ **HCRS Crisis Line** 800-622-4235 (24/7)
- ◆ **HCRS Warm Line** 800-917-1622 (7:30am-10:30pm, 7 days per week)
- ◆ **Suicide Help Line** 800-273-8255 (24/7)
- ◆ **VT Text Line** - Text VT to 741741 (24/7)
- ◆ **HCRS Access Lines:**
  - ◆ Brattleboro 855-220-9428
  - ◆ Hartford 855-220-9430
  - ◆ Springfield 855-220-9429

Questions?



[www.nationalcouncil.org](http://www.nationalcouncil.org)

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

[www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov)

[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

[www.healthandlearning.org](http://www.healthandlearning.org)



# Statistics