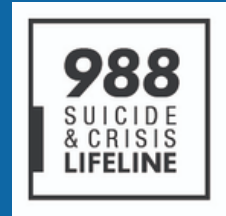


Warning Signs of Suicide: A Fact Sheet for Clinicians



People who are considering suicide may show signs that they are thinking about or planning to attempt suicide. These are known as *warning signs of suicide*. Research evidence suggests that warning signs of suicide can vary from person to person. For this reason, it is important for clinicians to be aware of a range of warning signs. This fact sheet is intended to act as a brief reference tool to help clinicians recognize signs that may indicate a client (i.e., patient) is at immediate or acute risk of suicide (i.e., risk of suicide in the following minutes, hours, or days).

Common Warning Signs of Suicide



Talking about:

- Killing oneself
- Feeling unbearable pain
- Death or a recent fascination with death
- Feeling hopeless, worthless, or “trapped”
- Feeling guilt, shame, or anger
- Feeling like a burden to others
- Emotional distancing from family, friends, and community
- Social isolation and/or loss of social support systems



Changes in behavior or mood:

- A recent diagnosis or episode of depression, anxiety, psychosis, or emotional distress
- Changes in eating patterns
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Violent behavior or experiencing violence
- Expressing rage
- Recklessness
- Recent suicide attempt
- Planning a suicide attempt
- Increased substance use
- Losing interest in personal appearance or hygiene
- Withdrawing from family, friends, or community
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Giving away prized possessions



Other clinical presentations to consider in a clinical setting:

In addition to the common warning signs listed above, there are other clinical presentations that may appear to be normal but could be uncharacteristic of the client and indicate increased risk of suicide. Thoughtfully exploring these presentations could provide additional information about the client’s safety and potential risk of suicide.

- Changes in energy levels
- Talking about feeling helpless
- Talking about worrying a lot of the time
- Unexplained somatic symptoms
- Phase of life problems

Disclaimer

The content of this fact sheet is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute or substitute for medical or clinical advice, consultation, diagnosis, intervention, or treatment from a licensed health care professional.