

## ***ASSESSING SUICIDAL RISK***

1. Identifying the suicidal child/adolescent
  - Express concern and note why you are concerned
  - Ask clarifying questions
  - Listen carefully and accept what is said
  - Ask directly about suicidal thoughts and feelings
  - Remain calm and patient

If suicidal thoughts are convincingly denied or are very mild, address the problems brought up and help the child/adolescent make a plan of action in conjunction with their family, including a counseling referral.

2. Lethality assessment
  - If the child/adolescent acknowledges more than fleeting thoughts, you must assess lethality in order to know how to proceed.
  - Lethality assessment includes: frequency and intensity of thoughts, plan, access to methods involved in plan, level of supervision.
3. If lethality is low
  - Do immediate problem-solving
  - Refer for counseling
  - Create a no-suicide contract
  - Give written and verbal crisis numbers and instructions
  - Follow-up
4. If lethality is moderate
  - Do immediate problem-solving
  - Refer for counseling
  - Create a no-suicide contract
  - Ask child/youth to give you any weapons, pills, etc.
  - Check with parent regarding weapons, pills, etc. that are in the home
  - Consider immediate environmental changes (supervision, etc.)
  - Assess the use of chemicals
  - Review and reaffirm any agreements/appointments made
  - Follow-up
5. If lethality is high
  - Do not leave the child/adolescent until immediate professional help is secured.