

Assessing Suicidal Risk



- ✓ 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.

Assessing Suicidal Risk



- ✓ Lethality assessment
 - More than fleeting thoughts, assess lethality in order to know how to proceed.
 - Lethality assessment includes: frequency, intensity plan, access to methods, level of supervision.

- ✓ If lethality is low
 - Problem-solve
 - Refer for counseling
 - Create a no-suicide contract
 - Give written and verbal crisis numbers and instructions
 - Follow-up

Assessing Suicidal Risk



- ✓ 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

Assessing Suicidal Risk



- ✓ If lethality is high
 - Do not leave the child/adolescent until immediate professional help is secured.