

Suicidal behaviour

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Rationale

Suicidal behaviour is a common psychiatric emergency and a major cause of death across age groups. It causes major distress to surviving relatives and others.

Causal Conditions

(list not exhaustive)

- Psychiatric disorder (e.g., depression, schizophrenia)
- Psychosocial stressors (e.g., divorce, adverse childhood experience)
- Substance use
- Other (e.g., serious chronic disease)

Key Objectives

Given a patient with suicidal behaviour, the candidate will determine the degree of risk and institute appropriate management.

Enabling Objectives

Given a patient with suicidal behaviour, the candidate will

- list and interpret critical clinical findings, including
 - a. potential contributing conditions identified through an appropriate history and physical examination;
 - b. assessed and quantified risk for suicide, including imminent risk, recent stresses and life events;
- list and interpret critical investigations, including

- a. illicit drug and alcohol screen, where appropriate;
- construct an effective initial management plan, including
 - a. ensuring the safety of patient at imminent risk for self harm (e.g., urgent hospitalization), including continuous observation while arrangements are being made;
 - b. assessing capacity to make decisions if patient demands to leave;
 - c. initiating management of underlying problems if the risk for suicide is not imminent (e.g., depression, psycho-social stressor);
 - d. maintaining confidentiality while recognizing the benefits of support networks (e.g. family, culturally specific interventions);
 - e. referring the patient for specialized care, if necessary.