

# Is Your Patient at ACUTE Risk for Suicide?

64% of suicide decedents saw their primary care provider in the year before death.

45% saw their primary care provider in the month before their death.

70% of those who die by suicide in Deschutes County are between the ages of 25 and 64.

76% of those who die by suicide in Deschutes County are male.

## ASSESS

### Warning Signs of ACUTE Suicidal Risk:

- ◆ Talking about suicide
- ◆ Seeking lethal means
- ◆ Purposeless
- ◆ Anxiety or agitation
- ◆ Insomnia
- ◆ Substance abuse
- ◆ Hopelessness
- ◆ Social withdrawal
- ◆ Anger
- ◆ Recklessness
- ◆ Mood changes

If your patient is thinking about suicide, has a plan, and access to the means described in their plan, they are at ACUTE Suicidal Risk.

### Other Risk Factors:

- ◆ **Past suicide attempt** increases risk for a subsequent attempt or suicide; multiple prior attempts dramatically increase risk.
- ◆ **Triggering events** leading to humiliation, shame, or despair elevate risk. These may include loss of relationship, financial or health status—real or anticipated.
- ◆ **Firearms** accessible to a person in acute risk magnifies that risk. Inquire and act to reduce access.

Patients may not spontaneously report suicidal ideation, but 70% communicate their intentions to significant others. Ask patients directly if they are feeling suicidal. Seek collateral information from family members and friends.

## ASK

### If you see signs or suspect ACUTE risk or Imminent Danger, Regardless of Chief Complaint, ASK:

1. Have you thought that life was not worth living?
2. Have you ever thought about suicide?
3. Have you ever attempted suicide?
4. Are you currently thinking about ending your life?
5. Have you thought about how you might end your life?
6. Do you have access to those means?

These questions represent an effective approach to discussing suicidal ideation and attempt history; they are not a formalized screening protocol.

*Establishing trust with your patient, will increase the likelihood that your patient will respond truthfully. Using a nonjudgmental, collaborative approach that conveys concern for the patient's welfare will help establish that trust.*

## ACT

If your patient is in ACUTE suicidal risk, ACT by calling the Deschutes County Crisis Line immediately, (541) 322-7500 ext. 9. Keep the patient under observation until they can be further evaluated. If there is a safety risk to the patient or staff, call 911 first.

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**To Promote and Protect the Health and Safety of our Community**

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