

Faculty of Human and Social Sciences

Department of Psychology

Level: MA1 Clinical Psychology

Instructor: Ms. Saci Meriem

Module: English

Lesson n°1: Suicidal Risk

Introduction

Suicidal risk refers to the likelihood that an individual may attempt or die by suicide. It is a major public health concern worldwide and is often linked to psychological, social, and biological factors. Understanding suicidal risk is essential for prevention, early intervention, and effective mental health care.

I. Definition of Suicidal Risk

Suicidal risk is the probability that a person will engage in behaviors intended to end their life. It includes a range of thoughts and actions, such as:

- Suicidal ideation (thinking about suicide)
- Suicide planning
- Suicide attempts

II. Types of Suicidal Behavior

1. Suicidal Ideation

This involves thoughts about wanting to die or harm oneself. It can range from passive wishes (e.g., “I wish I were dead”) to active planning.

2. Suicide Attempt

A suicide attempt is a non-fatal act in which a person tries to end their life but survives. It is one of the strongest predictors of future suicide.

3. Completed Suicide

This refers to a fatal act where an individual successfully ends their life.

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III. Risk Factors for Suicide

1. *Psychological Factors*

- Depression and anxiety
- Hopelessness
- Previous suicide attempts
- Substance abuse

2. *Social Factors*

- Isolation and loneliness
- Family conflict or violence
- Financial problems
- Bullying or social rejection

3. *Biological Factors*

- Genetic vulnerability
- Neurochemical imbalances (e.g., serotonin)

4. *Environmental Factors*

- Access to means (weapons, medication)
- Exposure to suicide (media or personal connections)
- Warning Signs
- Recognizing warning signs is crucial for prevention:
- Talking about death or suicide
- Expressing hopelessness or feeling trapped
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Sudden mood changes
- Giving away possessions

5. *Protective Factors*

These reduce the risk of suicide:

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- Strong social support
- Religious or cultural beliefs
- Access to mental health care
- Problem-solving and coping skills

IV. Assessment of Suicidal Risk

Mental health professionals assess suicide risk through:

- Clinical interviews
- Risk assessment tools
- Evaluation of intent, plan, and means

V. Impact on Individuals and Society

Suicide has profound effects on families, communities, and healthcare systems. It leads to emotional trauma, economic costs, and long-term psychological consequences for survivors.

Conclusion

Suicidal risk is a complex issue influenced by multiple interacting factors. Early identification, proper assessment, and effective intervention are essential to prevent suicide. Promoting mental health awareness and providing support can save lives and improve overall well-being.