

Suicide Intervention Practice Scenarios

1. What (if any) warning signs do you notice?
2. What risk and protective factors can you identify?
3. Do you ask about thoughts of suicide? Why or why not?
4. How do you ask? Be specific and practice what you would say.
5. If you ask and they deny, what are the next steps?
6. If you ask and they confirm, what are the next steps?
7. What other questions do you ask? Practice what you might say in the conversation.
8. Do you think they are at low, medium, or high risk? What actions do you take based on this?
9. Do you talk about means safety? If so, be specific and practice what you would say.
10. Do you help write a safety plan? If so, be specific and practice creating the plan.
11. What resources or referrals might you provide? Practice what you would say.
12. Practice writing a note documenting your interaction.

Scenario 1

Ayana is a 23-year-old Black woman who lives alone. She has recently moved back to her hometown for her first job since graduating college. Many of her friends from high school have moved away, but she spends time with a small group of close friends and her mom and sister. While shopping one day, she ran into a man who had sexually abused her when she was twelve. The man was a friend of her father, who died two years ago. She never told anyone about the abuse. Since the encounter, she has been afraid to go out in public for fear of seeing him. She is having a hard time sleeping, and her doctor prescribed a sleeping aid for her. She missed two weeks of work and was fired from her job. She texted her friend and told her that she couldn't deal with the panic attacks anymore and just wanted it all to be over.

Scenario 2

Jack is a 67-year-old white man with a wife, two adult children, and a new grandchild. He was a truck driver but was recently forced to retire to do chronic back pain. He decided to rekindle an old hobby he had as a teen before he was drafted into the Army and has started building model train sets in his basement. Jack enjoys it, but his wife has expressed concern about the amount of money he spends. Jack has always been emotionally distant and has never talked to his family about his experiences in the war. He spends his weekends at the VFW talking about old times with the other vets. Recently, he has started drinking more, and his buddies have had to get him home on several occasions. His wife is upset about his drinking and says that she can't tolerate the worry he causes her. Last week, he called his oldest son and gave him the key to his safe deposit box and a detailed list of his trains and their value.

Scenario 3

Mateo is a 14-year-old Latino boy living with his parents and three brothers and sisters. Mateo and his two sisters are citizens, but his parents and older brother are undocumented. Mateo and his siblings are bilingual, but his parents only speak Spanish. The family is very involved with their Catholic church. Mateo is generally a quiet kid and has never been in trouble at school or home. He gets good grades but isn't involved in any activities. He spends his spare time drawing and writing comic books. Mateo is gay and has a secret relationship with a boy in his neighborhood. Some boys at school found out and have been picking on him. They took pictures of him in the locker room, which they used to make memes that they spread to others at school. Mateo was recently suspended for fighting with one of the boys and stabbing him with a pencil. He says that he is a disappointment to his parents and that he'll never be able to show his face at school again.