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Thomas E. Joiner Jr., Kimberly A. Van Orden, Tracy K. Witte, and M. David Rudd. *The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide: Guidance for Working with Suicidal Clients*, American Psychological Association, Washington D.C., 2009

### **Thwarted Belongingness**

#### **Do you feel alone?**

The absence of caring, meaningful connection to others  
Absence of friends or relatives patient can call when upset  
Recent losses through death or divorce

#### **Assessment Questions/Statements**

These days I am connected with people  
These days I feel like an outsider in social situations (reverse score)  
These days I often interact with people who care about me

### **Perceived Burdensomeness**

#### **Do you feel like a burden?**

Statements that others would be better off if the patient were gone  
Statements that the patient is a burden on others  
Recent stressors involving a loss of self-competency (e.g. loss of job)

#### **Assessment Questions/Statements**

The people I care about would be better off if I were gone  
I have failed the people in my life

### **Acquired Capability**

#### **Experiences of pain and provocation**

Past suicide attempts (especially multiple attempter status)  
Aborted suicide attempts  
Self-injecting drug use  
Self-Harm (i.e. non-suicidal self injury)  
Frequent exposure to, or participation in, physical violence

#### **Assessment Questions/Statements**

Things that scare others do not scare me  
I can tolerate a lot more pain than most people  
I avoid certain situations because of the possibility of injury (reverse score)

### **Current indicators**

High intent for suicide  
Fearlessness about suicide  
Long duration of ideation with preoccupation about suicide  
Highly detailed and vivid plan for suicide  
Specified time and place for suicide

**Acute Risk Factors:**Ribeiro, Jessica D., Bodell, Lindsay P., Hames, Jennifer L., Hagan, Christopher R. Joiner, Thomas E. An Empirical Based Approach to the Assessment and Management of Suicidal Behavior. *Journal of Psychology Integration*, 2013, Vol. 23, No. 3, 207-221

### **1. Social withdrawal**

Less talkative/ withdrawn/ a significant interpersonal stressor two days before a suicide attempt

### **2. Over-arousal**

Agitation and insomnia including nightmares before suicide attempt; “emotional unrest”; expression of mental anguish; fidgeting; handwringing/ pacing/severe anxiety

**Adler, Lisa D., Slootsky, Veronica, Griffith, James L., Khin, Khin Eindra. Teaching the Fundamentals of the Risk Assessment to Clinicians. Psychiatric Annals. 2016;46(5): 293-297**

#### **Empathic interview to understand trigger events**

What are your adversities right now?

How have they affecting you?

How are you coping? Do you feel trapped?

#### **Listen for inability to cope with despair, helplessness, hopelessness and isolation**

When things are at their worst does it ever feel life isn't worth living?

Have you ever wished not to live?

Have you ever thought about ending your life through suicide?

Were these just vague thoughts or did you think about specific methods of suicide?

How did you think through whether suicide would be the right thing to do?

How did you think through the best method for suicide?

Did you make a plan for suicide or implement any steps?

#### **The Wish to Die vs Hope**

On a day you when you sincerely wanted to die, what would lead you to choose to live instead?

#### **Resilience Factors**

##### **Purpose of living:**

What is important for you to accomplish in the days to come?

##### **Accountability:**

Who do you count on? Who counts on you?

##### **Core identity in your heart:**

Who do you know yourself to be?

Who is the person you want to become?

#### **Emotional Regulation**

When life feels unfair and you feel really upset, what do you do to get through hard times?

Have you had problems controlling your anger?

Have you engaged in any risky or reckless activities?

#### **Normalization to reduce shame**

Sometime people who experience the loss of a loved one like you have will have thought of killing themselves

Given the pain that you feel over the loss of your wife, have you been having thoughts of killing yourself?

#### **To Reduce Minimization**

How often do you have thoughts of killing yourself? 20%, 40% 60% etc

#### **Lethal capability**

Have you witnessed traumatic or violent acts?

Do you own a firearm? Have you ever shot a firearm?

Have you ever committed an act of self- harm? How many times? Which was the most serious?

Have you been looking on any websites about suicide? (BHF)

How much alcohol or drugs do you use?

