



Risk Factors for Suicide

Risk factors are those characteristics associated with suicide—they might not be direct causes.

Risk Factors

- ❖ Family history of suicide
- ❖ Family history of child maltreatment
- ❖ Previous suicide attempt(s)
- ❖ History of mental disorders, particularly clinical depression
- ❖ History of alcohol and substance abuse
- ❖ Feelings of hopelessness
- ❖ Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- ❖ Cultural and religious beliefs (e.g., belief that suicide is noble resolution of a personal dilemma)
- ❖ Local epidemics of suicide
- ❖ Isolation, a feeling of being cut off from other people
- ❖ Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- ❖ Loss (relational, social, work, or financial)
- ❖ Physical illness
- ❖ Easy access to lethal methods
- ❖ Unwillingness to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental health and substance abuse disorders or to suicidal thoughts
- ❖ Protective factors buffer individuals from suicidal thoughts and behavior.

Protective Factors for Suicide

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Protective Factors

- ❖ Effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance abuse disorders
- ❖ Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for helpseeking
- ❖ Family and community support (connectedness)
- ❖ Support from ongoing medical and mental health care relationships
- ❖ Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent ways of handling disputes
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support instincts for self-preservation