



Addressing Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Substance Abuse Treatment: A Treatment Improvement Protocol TIP 50

Setting
Mental Healthcare

Type of Program
Protocols & Guidelines

NSSP Goals Addressed
7.2, 7.3

Program Description

Research consistently shows a high prevalence of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts among persons with substance abuse problems who are in treatment. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration publication TIP 50, *Addressing Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Substance Abuse Treatment*, is designed to assist substance abuse counselors in working with adult clients who may be suicidal, and will help clinical supervisors and administrators support the work of substance abuse counselors. Part I, for counselors, provides the "what" and the "why" and the "how" of working with clients in substance abuse treatment with suicidal thoughts and behaviors. It covers background information about suicide and substance use disorders, including risk factors and warning signs for suicide and a four-step process for addressing suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Part 2, for administrators, clarifies why program administrators should be concerned about this clinical issue. Part 3 is for clinical supervisors, interested counselors, and administrators and consists of three sections: an analysis of the available literature, an annotated bibliography and a general bibliography. Part 3 is available only online at www.kap.samhsa.gov.

The recommendations contained in each TIP (Treatment Improvement Protocol) are grounded in evidence that a particular practice will produce a specific clinical outcome (measurable change in client status). Evidence includes scientific research findings and the opinion of the TIP consensus panel of experts. In making recommendations, the consensus panel engages in a process of "evidence-based thinking" in which they consider scientific research, clinical practice theory, practice principles, and practice guidelines, as well as their own individual clinical experiences. Through this process, they arrive at recommendations for optimal clinical approaches for given clinical situations. Citations to relevant research outcome reports, theoretic formulations, and practice principles and guidelines are provided.

Program Objectives

Users of *Addressing Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior in Substance Abuse Treatment* should have:

1. Increased knowledge of best practices for working with clients in substance abuse treatment who have suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Program Development

Addressing Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior in Substance Abuse Treatment was developed through a consensus process that included input from multiple experts and informants from the fields of medicine, substance abuse prevention, and suicide prevention. Advisory panels, stakeholder groups, and field experts contributed to the final document.

Contact Information

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Health Information Network
Voice: 1-877-726-4727
Website: www.samhsa.gov/shin

Costs

Addressing Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Substance Abuse Treatment is available for free. It can be downloaded from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration website: <http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/products/manuals/tips/pdf/TIP50.pdf>

*The content of programs listed in Section II (Expert and Consensus Statements) of the SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry address specific goals of the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* and have been reviewed by a panel of three suicide prevention experts and found to meet standards of importance, likelihood of meeting objectives, accuracy, safety, congruence with prevailing knowledge, and appropriateness of development process. Programs were not reviewed for evidence of effectiveness. Additional information about the Best Practices Registry can be found at www.sprc.org.

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