COVID-19 and Suicide

June 19, 2020
News Type: Weekly Spark, Weekly Spark News

According to experts, mental health professionals can take the following key steps to reduce clients’ suicide risk during COVID-19: (1) use evidence-based approaches, such as the Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality [2] and Safety Planning Intervention [3]; (2) screen all clients for suicide risk, including those who do not have a history of suicidal thoughts or behaviors; (3) work with the person at risk on strategies to keep them safe in a crisis, such as identifying sources of support and removing lethal means from their home; (4) follow telepsychology guidelines [4] when providing mental health services over phone or video; and (5) educate clients and their families about how to recognize and respond to the warning signs of suicide in members of their community. It is also critical that mental health professionals prioritize self-care. “If we want to have the stamina and capacity to help other people, we have to take care of ourselves,” said Jill Harkavy-Friedman, vice president of research at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.


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