



How Emergency Departments Can Help Prevent Suicide among At-Risk Patients: Five Brief Interventions

Video:

This nine-minute video describes the unique role that emergency department (ED) professionals can play in preventing suicide by providing five brief interventions prior to discharge. It provides action steps and tools for implementing the following interventions:

- **Brief Patient Education** — Help the patient understand their condition and treatment options and facilitate adherence to the follow-up plan.
- **Safety Planning** — Work with the patient to develop a list of coping strategies and resources they can use before or during a suicidal crisis.
- **Lethal Means Counseling** — Assess the patient's access to firearms, prescription and over-the-counter medications, and other lethal means, and discuss ways to limit access until they are no longer suicidal.
- **Rapid Referral** — Schedule a follow-up outpatient mental health appointment for the patient that ideally occurs within 24 hours of discharge.
- **Caring Contacts** — Follow up with the discharged patient via postcards, letters, e-mail or text messages, or phone calls.

To learn more about each of these interventions, see [Caring for Adult Patients with Suicide Risk: A Consensus Guide for Emergency Departments](#) [1].

Recommended Resources

[Preventing suicide in emergency department patients](#) [2]

This online course for ED healthcare professionals covers screening, assessment, brief interventions, patient-centered care, patient safety, and incorporating suicide prevention into discharge planning.



[CALM: Counseling on Access to Lethal Means](#) [3]

This free online course is designed to help mental health professionals counsel people at risk for suicide—and their families—on reducing access to lethal means.

[Zero Suicide Toolkit: Safe Care Transitions](#) [4]

This section of the toolkit provides information and resources addressing safe transitions in care.

[R3 Report Issue 18: National Patient Safety Goal \(NPSG\) 15.01.01 for suicide prevention](#) [5]

The Joint Commission realized that suicide rates have not improved over the past decade and has issued updated requirements in order to improve the...



[Recommended standard care for people with suicide risk: Making health care suicide safe \[6\]](#)

These guidelines provide the first-ever recommendations on suicide-related standard health care for primary care, behavioral health, and ED settings.

Links within this resource

[1] http://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/EDGuide_full.pdf

[2] <https://sprc.org/resources-programs/preventing-suicide-emergency-department-patients>

[3] <https://sprc.org/resources-programs/calm-counseling-access-lethal-means>

[4] <https://sprc.org/resources-programs/zero-suicide-toolkit-safe-care-transitions>

[5] <https://sprc.org/resources-programs/r3-report-issue-18-national-patient-safety-goal-suicide-prevention>

[6] <https://sprc.org/resources-programs/recommended-standard-care-people-suicide-risk-making-health-care-suicide-safe>

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