

Glossary of Terms Related to Suicide Prevention

Source: These definitions are abridged and adapted from the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, 2001 and from the Mayo Clinic On-Line Health Information website.

| Description | How would you describe this idea in your own words? |
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| <p>Anxiety is a state of uneasiness and apprehension, about future uncertainties. Common anxiety symptoms include feeling apprehensive or powerless; having a sense of impending danger, panic, or doom; having an increased heart rate; breathing rapidly; sweating; and feeling weak or fatigued. In some cases, anxiety is a diagnosable mental health condition that requires treatment. Generalized anxiety disorder, for example, is characterized by persistent worry about major or minor concerns. Other anxiety disorders - such as panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) - have more specific triggers and symptoms.</p> | |
| <p>Depression is a diagnosable mental health condition that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Depression can also cause physical symptoms, such as insomnia. When a person is depressed, they may have trouble doing normal day-to-day activities. Depression may make a person feel as if life isn't worth living.</p> | |
| <p>Gatekeeper is an individual who, in the course of his/her activities, comes into frequent contact with and is respected by their communities.</p> | |
| <p>Insomnia is not being able to fall asleep or remain asleep for an adequate length of time.</p> <p>Common causes of insomnia include stress, anxiety, depression, and medical conditions that cause chronic pain. Insomnia may cause problems during the day, such as tiredness, difficulty concentrating, and irritability. Insomnia can sap not only an individual's energy level and mood but also affect their health, work performance, and quality of life.</p> | |
| <p>Means are the instruments or objects by which a self-destructive act is carried out (i.e., rope, firearm, poison, medication).</p> | |

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| <p>Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions - disorders that affect mood, thinking and behavior. Examples of mental illness include clinical depression and anxiety disorders.</p> | |
| <p>Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a diagnosable mental health condition that develops after a traumatic event.</p> <p>Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, and uncontrollable thoughts about the event. In some cases, the symptoms can get worse or last for months or years.</p> | |
| <p>Protective factors are factors that make it less likely that individuals will develop poor health outcomes. Protective factors may include biological, psychological, or social factors in the individual, family, and environment.</p> | |
| <p>Resilience is the capacity within a person to maintain mental health and well being in the face of hardships, losses, and trauma. Resilience provides protection from factors that might otherwise place that person at risk for poor health outcomes.</p> | |
| <p>Risk factors are factors that make it more likely that individuals will develop poor health outcomes. Risk factors may include biological, psychological, or social factors in the individual, family, and environment.</p> | |
| <p>Self-injury is the act of deliberately harming your own body (such as cutting or burning yourself) and is an unhealthy way to cope with emotional pain, intense anger, and frustration. While it may not be meant as a suicide attempt, self-injury comes with the possibility of inflicting serious and even fatal injuries.</p> | |
| <p>Screening is the administration of an assessment tool to identify persons in need of more in-depth evaluation or treatment.</p> | |
| <p>Stressors are situations and pressures that are experienced as a perceived threat to one's well being or position in life.</p> | |
| <p>Substance abuse is the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, or other chemicals in a way that causes problems with a person's physical and mental health, relationships, employment, and the law.</p> | |

| Description | How would you describe this idea in your own words? |
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| Suicidal ideations are thoughts of engaging in suicide-related behavior. | |
| Suicide is the voluntary and intentional taking of one's own life. | |
| Suicide attempt is a potentially self-injurious behavior with a nonfatal outcome, for which there is evidence that the person intended to kill himself or herself. A suicide attempt may or may not result in injuries. | |
| Suicide attempt survivors are individuals who have survived a prior suicide attempt. | |
| Suicide prevention gatekeepers are individuals trained to identify persons at risk of suicide and refer them to appropriate treatment or supporting services. | |
| Suicide survivors are family members, significant others, or acquaintances who have experienced the loss of a loved one due to suicide. | |
| Torture is the act of inflicting terrible physical or mental pain as punishment or revenge, as a means of getting a confession or information, or for sheer cruelty; a method of inflicting such pain. | |
| Trauma is a serious injury or shock to the body from violence or an accident; an emotional wound or shock that creates substantial, lasting damage to the psychological development of a person; an event or situation that causes great distress and disruption. | |