

SUICIDE RISK FACTORS - SAD PERSONS APPROACH

To help in learning the warning signs of potential suicidal behavior, the acronym *SAD PERSONS* was developed. Knowledge of the major behavioral, psychological and demographic factors associated with suicide risk is a key component in assisting individuals at risk to get help.

S SEX

Women attempt suicide more frequently than do men, yet men are much more likely to actually kill themselves than are women.

A AGE

Persons who are adolescents and young adults are at risk. Men over 45 and woman over the age of 55 are also at risk.

D DEPRESSION

Persons who are depressed are at higher risk for suicide. The presence of depressive symptoms-especially feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, helplessness-along with the absence of future plans are a risk factor.

P PREVIOUS ATTEMPT

Persons who have made prior suicide attempts are at higher risk for suicide. About half of those who kill themselves have previously attempted suicide.

E ETHANOL and DRUG ABUSE

Persons who abuse and/or are addicted to alcohol, drugs, or both are at risk for suicide.

R RATIONAL THINKING LOSS

Suicide risk is high when judgment and rational thought are impaired. If the individual is hearing voices telling them to hurt herself/himself and is experiencing paranoid delusions, the risk is very high.

S SOCIAL SUPPORTS LACKING

Persons who have made prior suicide attempts are at higher risk for suicide. About half of those who kill themselves have previously attempted suicide.

O ORGANIZED PLAN

The individual who has a specific plan that uses an available, lethal method is at high risk.

N NO SPOUSE

Separated, divorced, widowed and single persons have a higher risk of suicide.

S SICKNESS

Chronic, debilitating, severe and painful illnesses and diseases are a suicide risk factor.

TAKE ACTION and SAVE LIVES!