

Non-Clinical Assessment of Suicide

- **Non-Clinical Assessment of Suicide Tool (NAS)** is an expert system designed to assist non-clinical professionals in triaging an individual's risk related to suicide
- The determined level of risk assists the non-clinical staff member in connecting the individual to the appropriate level of care in a timely and safe manner
- **NAS Risk Levels and Interventions:**
 - **Low** – Risk for suicide is low and individual could benefit from connection to counseling
 - **Medium** – Risk for suicide is present, but not imminent. Connection should be made to counseling as soon as possible and case management work should bridge the connection to care.
 - **High** – Risk for suicide is imminent. Individual should be immediately connected to mental health or other professional qualified to assess for level of care and potential behavioral health hospitalization

Verbal or Written Threat

Assess for the presence of direct and/or indirect suicidal ideation.

- Individuals with the presence of direct and/or indirect suicidal ideation are at least a **Medium** risk, unless the indirect thoughts of suicide are accompanied by minimal stressors, hope for the future, and substantial protective factors
- The presence of direct and/or indirect suicidal ideation is **High** when there are multiple stressors, and/or the presence of a plan, means, and/or intent

Have they made a direct threat of suicide such as:

- "I am going to kill myself"
- "I'm going to end it all"
- "I am considering ending it all"
- "I am thinking about killing myself"

Yes ☐ No

Have they made an indirect threat of suicide such as:

- "I don't want to be here anymore"
- "It would just be easier if I weren't here"
- "The world would be better off without me"
- "I wish someone would just kill me"

Yes ☐ No

Suicidal, Plans, Means, And Intent

Has the individual thought about ways they might die by suicide? Yes ☐ No ☐	Does the individual have a concrete plan about how they plan to die by suicide? Yes ☐ No ☐	Does the individual have access to lethal means associated with how they have thought about dying by suicide? Yes ☐ No ☐
Does the individual have easy access to a firearm? Yes ☐ No ☐	Does the individual have access to a collection of pills or other lethal drugs or substances? Yes ☐ No ☐	Does the individual have access to other lethal means? (poison, chemicals, rope, etc.)? Yes ☐ No ☐
Has the individual researched ways to die or engaged in rehearsal behaviors? Yes ☐ No ☐	Has the individual engaged in last act behaviors such as leaving a note, giving away possessions, etc.? Yes ☐ No ☐	Does the individual seem determined to die by suicide? Yes ☐ No ☐

Assess whether the individual:

- Has thought of or researched a plan for suicide
- Has access to means to carry out a suicide attempt
- Intends to engage in a suicide attempt

Individuals who have plans, means associated with that plan, and/or intent are considered High risk

Stressful Events

Have they experienced any of the following in recent days or weeks? (Check all that apply)

☐ Loss of job	☐ Loss of academic status or major	☐ Loss of intimate relationship that is important to the individual
☐ Death of a close friend or family member	☐ Terminal illness or chronic illness worsening	☐ Close proximity to an anniversary date of significant loss such as death of a loved one, loss of a relationship, etc.
☐ Recent suicide in the community, school, work, media, etc.	☐ Ongoing teasing or bullying	☐ Major trauma of any kind

Assess the presence of stressful or precipitating events.

Stressful events are considered in the context of:

- Direct/indirect suicidal ideation
- Plans, means, and intent
- Current behaviors
- Protective factors

Behavioral and Mental Health History

The presence of a significant mental health diagnosis, a prior suicide attempt, and/or a history of alcohol abuse or use of other drugs that would lower inhibition increases risk for suicide.

To your knowledge, have they been diagnosed with depression, anxiety, psychosis, mania, or other significant mental illness? Yes ☐ No	Has the individual attempted suicide in the past? Yes ☐ No	Does the individual have a history with alcohol abuse or use of other drugs? Yes ☐ No
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Current Behavior and Risk Factors

Have they experienced any of the following in recent days or weeks? (Check all that apply)

☐ Significant increase/decrease in appetite	☐ Significant sleep disturbances	☐ Poor concentration	☐ Lack of an emotional response
☐ Intense crying or experiencing of intense emotions	☐ Impulsivity, low frustration tolerance, or seeming "on-edge"	☐ Sudden changes in work or academic performance	☐ Increase in isolation or distancing from support systems
☐ Sudden improvement in depression or other negative outlook without apparent reason	☐ Frequent or significant alcohol or substance abuse	☐ Lack of interest in things previously enjoyed	☐ Hopelessness or despair about the future

- Behavioral risk factors help practitioners assess an individual's current functioning, mood, and their outlook for the future
- The presence of hopelessness or despair about the future increases risk as does the presence of two or more other behavioral risk factors

Access to Treatment and Resources

Although not directly factored into the level of risk, the individual's connection to support resources, as well prescribed medication use, should be considered when developing interventions and action plans

Is the individual working with a licensed mental health professional?

Yes ☐ No

Is the individual taking medication as prescribed?

Yes ☐ No

Supportive and Protective Influences

- Assess for the presence of supportive influences that help protect an individual from engaging in a suicide attempt
- An individual with strong social supports or other inhibitors, the ability see options for the future, and engage in discussions related to using coping skills and other strategies for keeping themselves safe present at a lower risk for suicide

Does the individual have friends or supportive people in their lives? Yes ☒ No	If they spoke of previous suicidal thoughts, were there specific supports that kept them from engaging in a suicide attempt at that time? Yes ☒ No	Are there things that would prevent the individual from engaging in a suicide attempt now? (e.g., pets, religious beliefs, loved ones, children, etc.) Yes ☒ No
Does the individual have the ability to see alternative options and choices for the future? Yes ☒ No	Does the individual have coping and resiliency skills that they are willing to use to keep themselves safe? Yes ☒ No	Is the individual willing to engage in planning for safety? Yes ☒ No