



The Impact of Social Isolation on Suicide

Clinical Considerations for Quarantine

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Disclosures

There is no potential conflict of interest or financial interest by the faculty to be disclosed.

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Prevalence of Suicide in the U.S.

- 10th leading cause of death
- The scope of suicide:
 - 9.3 million adults with thoughts of suicide
 - 2.7 million adults made suicide plans
 - 1.3 million adults attempted suicide
 - 44,965 died by suicide
 - 1 death by suicide every 11.7 minutes

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Increases in Suicide Rates

Are linked to:

- Increased social isolation
- Disappointment regarding both social & economic well-being
- Fewer people seeking help
- Economic downturn
- Themes related to loss and lack of connection and support

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Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicidal Behavior



The desire to die by suicide & the ability to make an attempt is increased by:

- feeling like a burden to others
- feeling lonely and disconnected
- overcoming fears related to pain, injury, or death

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Risk Factors for Suicide

- Stressors or loss leading to humiliation, shame, or despair
- Current and/or symptomatic psychiatric illness
- Inadequate or overwhelmed coping skills for acute distress
- Non-suicidal self-injury/self-inflicted injury
- Anxiety/insomnia
- Increased irritability and/or becoming easily frustrated
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Social isolation and/or withdrawal from friends, family, supports
- Hopelessness/helplessness/lack of reason for living
- Access to lethal means/recently obtained a weapon
- History of trauma or loss e.g. abuse as a child, bereavement, or economic loss

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Risk Factors for Suicide

- Suicide attempt in the last 30 days
- Acts of furtherance/suicidal behaviors
- Intent on dying by suicide
- Suicidal planning
- Suicidal ideation
- Impulsivity
- Recent discharges from inpatient unit
- A past suicide attempt
- Family history of suicide
- Medical illness/morbidity
- Physical or chronic pain or impairment

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Internal Protective Factors for Suicide

- Beliefs that discourage aggression and/or harming self or others
- Hopeful
- Future planning and/or identifies reasons for living
- Sense of responsibility to family, children, and/or pets
- Frustration tolerance
- Religious beliefs/spirituality
- Ability to cope with stress
- Optimistic outlook
- Positive coping skills
- Fear of death or the actual act of killing oneself

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External Protective Factors for Suicide

- Engaged in treatment and/or willing to access treatment and support
- Maintains therapeutic relationships
- Supportive community, social network, family and friends supports
- Presence of pets for whom the individual has a strong affinity
- Able to identify natural and institutional supports
- Engages in work or school

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Suicide Mortality and Coronavirus Disease 2019: A Perfect Storm?

- Economic Stress
- Social Isolation
- Decreased Access to Community & Religious Support
- Barriers to Mental Health Treatment
- Illness and Medical Problems
- Outcomes of National Anxiety
- Health Care Professional Suicide Rates
- Firearm Sales
- Seasonal Variation in Suicide Rates

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Suicide Prevention Opportunities

- Physical Distance, Not Social Distance
- Tele-Mental Health
- Increase Access to Mental Health Care
- Distance-Based Suicide Prevention
- Media Reporting

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Additional Considerations

- Optimistic Considerations e.g. reduction in suicides after 9/11
- Hidden deaths as a result of mass casualty events e.g. increase in suicide rates in the face of SARS or the earthquake and nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan

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