

# *Administering the Suicide Screenener*



Medicine

National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre

# ***Purpose of the Suicide Screener***

- To ascertain the client's level of suicide risk;  
and
- To assist in determining what intervention and management strategies are necessary.
  
- In addition to giving structure to the assessment process, it is anticipated that the screener will be useful in communicating the client's risk to external agencies.

# Scoring the Suicide Screener

Risk level	Presentation
<u>Low</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No plans or intent</li><li>• No prior attempt/s</li><li>• Few risk factors</li><li>• Identifiable 'protective' factors</li></ul>
<u>Moderate</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suicidal thoughts of limited frequency, intensity and duration;</li><li>• No plans or intent</li><li>• Some risk factors present</li><li>• Some 'protective' factors.</li></ul>
<u>High*</u>  * Or highly changeable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frequent, intense, enduring suicidal thoughts</li><li>• Clear intent, specific/well thought out plans</li><li>• Prior attempts</li><li>• Many risk factors</li><li>• Few/no 'protective' factors.</li></ul>



# *Completing the Suicide Screener*

- If your client presents in any of the following ways: **agitated, disoriented/confused, delusional or hallucinating, intoxicated, or having recent self-harmed** & they express even mild suicidal ideation, they should be considered high risk.
- Flagged items (previous attempts; ideation; planning) immediately place the client in the moderate or high risk category.



**UNSW**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES





## *In Summary*

- Suicide risk assessment is an ongoing process that needs to occur throughout treatment
- Services require clearly documented policies and procedures to guide staff in assessing and managing suicide risk
- Risk assessments should always be conducted in consultation with a colleague or supervisor



## *Further Information*

- For further information please refer to the complete Suicide Assessment Kit (SAK), available from the National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC).
- To enquire about participating in the evaluation of the SAK, please contact Jo Ross (ph: 9385 0235 or email: [j.ross@unsw.edu.au](mailto:j.ross@unsw.edu.au))