

Assessing suicidality

Opening strategies:

Please could you give me an idea of how happy or sad you are. Give me a number a number out of ten. 10 would be as happy as you could imagine someone being. Zero would be so low that you would definitely kill your self today no matter what I try to do to help you?

If the score is low then check: "Have things ever being so difficult that you have thought about doing something to yourself - of others."

One of the things that is really important is that I understand how safe or otherwise you might be at the moment. I'd like to ask you: have you ever felt so bad that you have wanted to take your own life or commit suicide?

Sometimes people get to the stage where they can't see anything other than ending their lives. Has that ever been the case for you, now or in the past?

If an angry person then frame more: one of the things that we should do is understand what you mean when you say that you don't want to be here anymore. Tell me what that means.

Have you had any worrying thoughts? Then summarise what they have said and clarify if they are contemplating or planning suicide.

You're saying something that could be really worrying but you don't sound worried when you say it. I'm interested in that. What I see is.... What I hear is....

Intention - thoughts

Do things ever feel that bad that you think about harming or killing yourself?

Do you ever feel that life is not worth living?

Plans

Have you made plans to end you life?

Do you know how you would kill yourself?

Actions

Have you made any actual preparations to kill yourself?

Have you ever attempted suicide in the past?

Prevention

How likely is it that you will act on such thoughts and plans?

What protects you from you killing or harming yourself at the moment?