Phone Operator Role in Suicide Prevention

Patient presents
on phone with
suicidal
behavior/
thoughts

Identify patient's location and phone number. Do not put the patient on hold.

If disconnected or hung up, call patient back or call the police if unable to reach patient

Contact
patient's PCP,
BHC, or next
available
clinician

Conduct warm handoff to clinician

Risk Factors, Protective Factors, and Warning Signs

WARNING SIGNS

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

RISK FACTORS

- Prior suicide attempt
- Misuse/abuse alcohol/other drugs
- Mental disorders (depression, etc.)
- Access to lethal means
- Knowing someone who died from suicide
- Social isolation
- Chronic disease/disability
- Lack of access to BH care
- End of relationship or marriage
- Death of a loved one or pet
- An arrest
- Serious financial problems

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Effective BH care
- Close connections to individuals, family, community & social institutions
- Life skills (coping, problem-solving)
- Self-esteem/sense of purpose or meaning
- Cultural, religious, or personal beliefs discouraging suicide