



Suicide Risk Factors SAD PERSONS

To help in learning the risk factors for potential suicidal behavior, the acronym SAD PERSONS was developed to assist healthcare professionals. (These factors have been found to be associated with suicide and increase the risk of suicidal behavior. Risk factors do not cause or predict suicide.)

- S** **SEX** Women attempt suicide more frequently than do men, and men are more likely to actually kill themselves than are women.
- A** **AGE** Persons who are adolescents and young adults are at risk. Also men over 45 and women over the age of 55 are at risk.
- D** **DEPRESSION** Individuals who are depressed are at higher risk for suicide. The presence of depressive symptoms—especially feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness and helplessness with the absence of future plans are at risk.
- P** **PREVIOUS ATTEMPT** Persons who have made previous suicide attempts are at higher risk for suicide.
- E** **ETHANOL and DRUG ABUSE** Individuals who abuse and/or addicted to alcohol, drugs or both are at risk for suicide.
- R** **RATIONAL THINKING LOSS** Suicide risk is high when judgment and rational thought are impaired. If the person is hearing voices telling them to hurt them self, and is experiencing paranoid delusions, the risk is very high.
- S** **SOCIAL SUPPORTS LACKING** Individuals who are alone and feel lonely and helpless, isolate themselves and who lack social, work and religious supports are at risk for suicide.
- O** **ORGANIZED PLAN** The individual who has a specific plan that uses an available lethal method is at high risk.
- N** **NO SPOUSE** Separated, divorced, widowed and single persons have a higher risk.
- S** **SICKNESS** Chronic, debilitating, severe and painful illnesses and conditions are a suicide risk factor.