



# RISK FACTORS

Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to take his or her life. The more risk factors there are, the higher the risk.

**(a) Health factors:**

**(i) Mental health conditions, such as:**

- Depression;
- Bipolar (manic-depressive) disorder;
- Schizophrenia;
- Borderline or antisocial personality disorder;
- Conduct disorder;
- Psychotic disorders, or psychotic symptoms in the context of any other disorder; and/or
- Anxiety disorder.

**(ii) Substance abuse disorders.**

**(iii) Serious or chronic health condition and/or pain.**

**(b) Environmental factors:**

- Contagion (i.e., exposure to another person's suicide, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide);
- Access to lethal means, such as firearms and drugs;
- Prolonged stress factors, such as harassment, bullying, relationship problems and/or unemployment; and/or
- Stressful life events, such as the death of a loved one, divorce and/or job loss.

**(c) Historical factors:**

- Family history or suicide;
- Family history of mental health conditions;
- Previous suicide attempts; and/or
- Childhood abuse.

\* [Courtesy of American Foundation for Suicide Prevention]