

## Resource Sheet #2: The Language of Suicide

<p><b>Suicidality</b></p> <p><b>Completed suicide or death by suicide</b> Death from self-inflicted injury, poisoning, or suffocation where there is evidence that the act was intentional and led to the person's death.</p> <p>The concept of suicide requires that the action was self-inflicted and the person had the <b>intent</b> (purpose, aim, or goal) of death...the end of life as we know it.</p> <p><b>Suicide attempt</b> A potentially self-injurious behavior with a nonfatal outcome, for which there is evidence that the person had the <b>intent</b> to kill himself or herself, but failed, was rescued or thwarted, or changed one's mind. A suicide attempt may or may not result in injuries.</p> <p><b>Suicide ideation</b> Self-reported <u>thoughts</u> of engaging in suicide-related behavior. Suicide ideators are individuals who think about suicide, but do not make an explicit attempt. They may or may not form intent; they may or may not have a plan. Ideation may be transient or ruminative, active or passive, acute or ongoing.</p>	<p><b>Deliberate Self-harm (DSH)</b> Deliberate self-harm refers to intentional self-injurious behavior where there is no evidence of intent to die. DSH includes various methods by which individuals injure themselves, such as self-laceration, self-battering, taking overdoses, or exhibiting deliberate recklessness.</p> <p><b>Accident</b> Self-inflicted behavior or behavior inflicted by another person with fatal or nonfatal outcome. An accident happens by chance, i.e., there is no intent to die or kill.</p>
<p><b>Suicide Attempt Survivors</b> Individuals who have survived a prior suicide attempt.</p> <p><b>Suicide Survivors</b> Family members, significant others, or acquaintances who have lost a loved one due to suicide. Note: sometimes this term is used, but used incorrectly, to mean suicide attempt survivors. It's important to clarify the use of this term when discussing or writing about suicide behavior and survivors.</p>	<p><b>Suicidology</b> The scientific study of suicide and suicidal behaviors.</p> <p><b>Prevention</b> Interventions designed to stop suicide attempts or completions from occurring by focusing efforts on at-risk individuals, environmental safeguards, and/or the availability of lethal methods.</p> <p><b>Intervention or Treatment</b> The care of suicidal people by licensed mental health caregivers, health care providers, and other caregivers with individually tailored strategies designed to change the behavior, mood, environment, or biology of individuals and help them identify and satisfy their needs without engaging in self-destructive behaviors.</p> <p><b>Postvention</b> This term is used to describe actions taken after a suicide has occurred largely to help survivors such as family, friends, and co-workers cope with the loss of a loved one.</p>

The graph on the next page presents the differences among various terms related to suicide.

Behavior	Intent to die	No intent to die	Unknown intent	Fatal outcome	Nonfatal outcome	Which scenario fits?
Suicide	x			x		
Attempt	x				x	
Deliberate self-harm		x			x	
Deliberate self-harm		x		x		
Accident		x			x	
Accident		x		x		
Accident			x	x		
Accident			x		x	
Ideation	x					
Ideation		x				
Ideation			x			
Undetermined			x			

**Scenarios: Match each scenario to the behavior (above) it best exemplifies (answers will be provided during the workshop).**

- suicide* 1. 39 year old man wrote in a note stating that "life sucks, I'm outa here," put a gun to his head, and died of blunt force trauma. He had a history of troubles with the law and drug abuse.
- undetermined* 2. 46 year old woman is found dead from an overdose of cocaine.
- Ideation* 3. 67 year old man reported to his therapist that he had been thinking about hanging himself in the closet.
- self-harm* 4. 14 year old female ingested her mother's antidepressant medications (an estimated 20 pills) after having a fight with her boyfriend, went into a coma, and died 2 weeks later.
- self-harm* 5. 12 year old male stabbed himself with a penknife on the back of his hand while in class...just as a test was about to start.
- Attempt* 6. 54 year old female told her therapist that "she couldn't stand being depressed anymore" and that she "wanted to die." She had tied a telephone cord to the door knob, placed the cord loosely around her neck, but stopped herself and did not follow through. She did not tell her therapist that she would soon try again.
- Ideation* 7. 40 year old woman with chronic history of depression reported to her therapist that she just wants to go to sleep and never wake up.
- Attempt* 8. A 54 year old female was despondent over her husband's declaration that he wanted a divorce. She stabbed herself in the chest with a 6" kitchen knife, missing her heart by an inch.
- accident* 9. A 21 year old male, whose girlfriend recently broke up with him, crashed into a tree along a winding road when driving home from a party where there had been much drinking.