



ThinkAskLearn
Health Professional Education

Mental Health Assessment

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www.thinkasklearn.com.au



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Beware Confronting Issues Ahead

- Need help
 - Lifeline 13 11 14
 - <http://www.lifeline.org.au>
 - Beyond Blue
 - www.beyondblue.org.au
 - Kids Helpline
 - 1800 55 1800

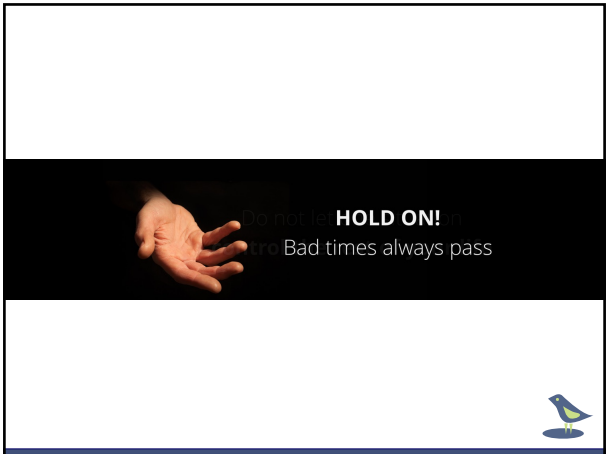


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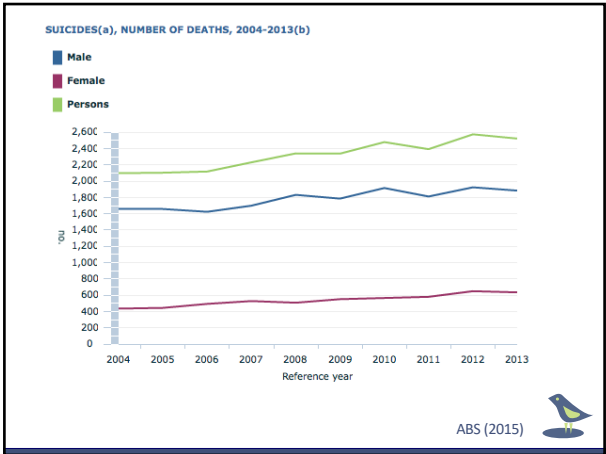
**MENTAL HEALTH FOR
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS**
A REFERENCE GUIDE

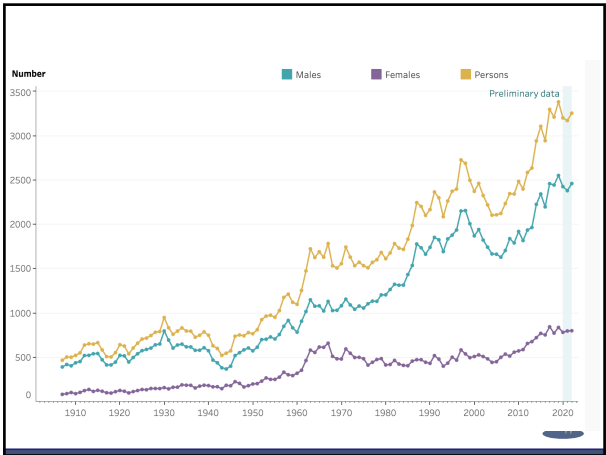
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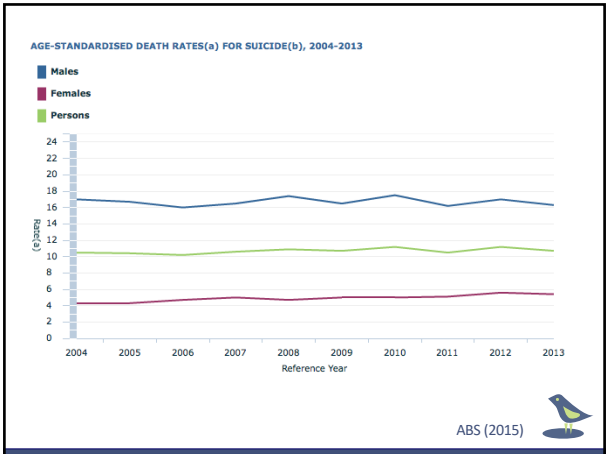
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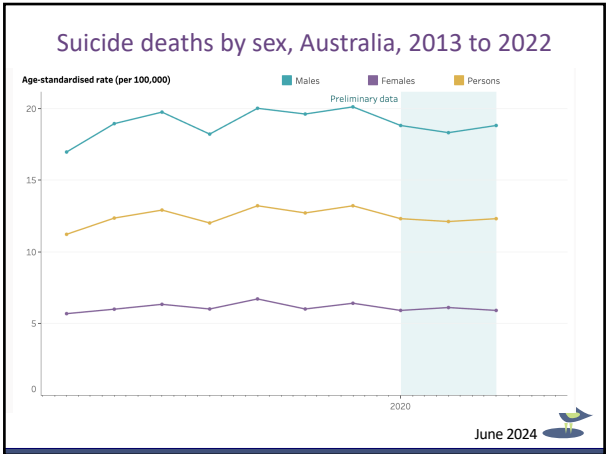
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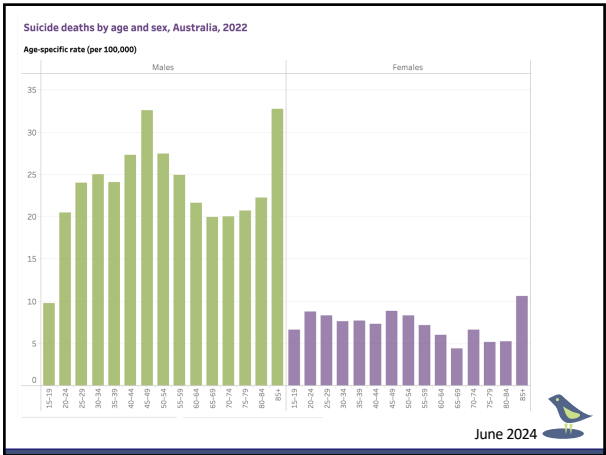
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What do the numbers tell us

- Increasing number of suicides, rates steady over 10 years
- Young people are of a concern
- 40-50 years are highest risk
- Another risk group is over 85 years
- Suicide rates – different definition per state
 - Data skewed in youth suicide – underreported?
- But they also only tell us those that have died



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Risk Factors for Suicide – Clinical

- Psychiatric diagnosis
- Recent discharge from psychiatric hospital
- Past suicide attempt
- Family history of suicide
- Child sexual abuse/rape
- Childhood history of trauma

Gordon & Melville 2014



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Triage of Mental Health Patients

Introduce yourself to the patient by name and title, ask what you can do to help, and do your best to understand the patient's concerns. Consider both your own observations and the reported behaviour/history. Urgency, risk and level of observation may need to be reviewed if the person's behaviour/symptoms alter.



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Major Risks in the Mental Health

- Patients at risk who abscond
- Aggression
- Self-harm/suicide
- Mental illness not being recognised
- Misdiagnosis or missing a physical cause for the problem
- Severity of risk/s not being identified
- Attempting to manage risks without the available resources, especially in rural EDs.



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Ask about suicide



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Nice Quote

“It should be noted that asking an adolescent if they have suicidal ideation does not make them suicidal; rather, inquiry about suicidal thinking is likely to lead the adolescent to feel they are being listened to and that they are not alone.”

Gordon & Melville 2014



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Suicide Risk Assessment

- Thoughts of Suicide but no formal plan
- Plan of action but has no undertaking
- Acted out plan but now regrets attempt
- Acted out plan but no regrets attempt



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Open Ended Questions

- Do you ever feel like giving up?
- Do your symptoms/things ever become too much to cope with?
- Do you ever feel hopeless about your situation?



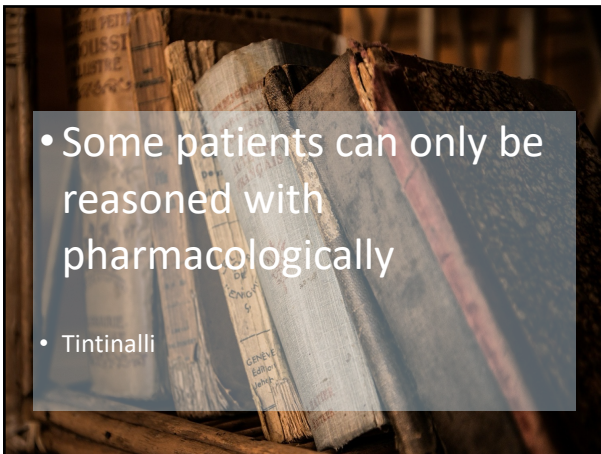
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Closed Ended Questions

- Follow open with closed questions
- Do you ever think about going to sleep and not waking up?
- Do you think that you would be better off if you weren't alive?



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- Some patients can only be reasoned with pharmacologically

- Tintinalli

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Take Home Messages

- Look for organic causes
- Beware of safety issues
 - Don't be paralysed by them
- Provide basic care
- Use a structured approach to assessment
- Create links with service providers



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