

Shanice, a 15-year-old whose school performance has declined recently, is spending less time with friends and has withdrawn from usual activities. When her friend noticed cut marks on Shanice's arms, she urged her to get help.

When you meet with Shanice, she says cutting is no longer relieving her pain, and she has thought about taking all the pills in the medicine cabinet.

After assessing her for depression and suicide risk, you recommend outpatient CBT. Shanice agrees to try it and to have her foster mother meet with you. Role play the conversation with her foster mom, focusing on lethal means reduction.

Role play that conversation, focusing on lethal means reduction..

School Counselor

Foster mom

Luis, 18, has been angry and not sleeping for several nights. This evening, he took two of his mother's sleeping pills thinking these might help him sleep. When he was still restless, he drank two beers. His uncle, with whom Luis and his mother live, called the Poison Control Center to see if that might be a lethal combination. The PCC specialist found no acute poisoning risk but suggested that they set up an appointment for Luis at a behavioral health center.

Your assessment finds that Luis had no suicidal intent and has never considered suicide; his aim was to relieve his emotional pain so he could sleep.

The uncle asks to speak with you, and you receive Luis's permission.

You share that Luis says this was not a suicide attempt.

How do you raise the issue of suicide risk and home safety?

Counselor

Luis' Uncle

Tom, 24, was recently released from a rehab center following a drunk driving car crash causing significant injuries to his spinal cord. (He was the drunk driver.) He has moved back home with his parents, and you have been providing in-home physical therapy. He is making excellent progress in his upper body, but there is still marked disability in both his legs. Today, during therapy, he is not cooperative. When you ask what is going on, he says, "What's the point? I'm going to be stuck in this chair for the rest of my life. I should make things easier for everyone and just end it all."

Physical Therapist

Tom

James is a 27-year-old Army veteran. He completed one tour in Afghanistan. He struggles with PTSD and major depression. His wife called you (his peer support buddy) and reported that he had locked himself in the bathroom last night and wouldn't respond to her. He eventually came out and was quite calm though his wife was clearly shaken.

Today he says that he isn't sleeping and is plagued by hypervigilance, and feelings of being useless. But he insists that he's not suicidal and that he wouldn't put his family through that. He wants to "get better" for his wife and kids.

When you ask about whether he has any firearms, he says that he has to have a loaded firearm at his bedside at night and worries that without it his anxiety will get worse.

What can be done to increase his safety?

You

James

Wife

MaryAnn recently gave birth to her second son in two years. She and her husband split up during her first trimester. You are a nurse making the second new baby home visit. This time, MaryAnn seems disinterested in both boys, the house is really dirty with stinky diapers on the coffee table, and she has trouble making eye contact. You know that she was taking antidepressants before this pregnancy but discontinued them while pregnant. Her PCP suggested she go back on them, and she filled a 3-month prescription last week. When you ask if they're helping, she replies, "I think the only way they'll do me any good is if I swallow the whole bottle and never wake up again." Then she starts to cry.

What do you do next?

Visiting Nurse

MaryAnn

Harold is 72 years old. Betty, his wife of 47 years died a year ago after a long fight with cancer. A devoted caregiver, Harold gave up his previous activities to care for his wife.

In the past six months, he has seen you, his PCP, a number of times for a variety of physical complaints. In the past three weeks, he has made and broken two appointments which is totally out of character.

During today's appointment, when you ask, "What brings you here today?", Harold says, "Same old thing. I just don't feel myself." When you say, "What do you think would make you feel better?", Harold replies, "Probably just a shot in the head from my trusty old .22"

PCP

Harold