

## Appendix 1

# Factors to Consider in Risk Assessment

### Areas for Assessment/Suicide Risk Factors

This summary is meant as a prompt for areas to consider only, not as a checklist.

#### ***Genetic and Familial Factors***

- Family history of suicidal behaviours and mental health issues

#### ***Social and Demographic Factors***

- Male (female if CYF and Māori)
- Over 16
- Low SES
- Limited educational achievement / learning disabilities
- Low income
- Poverty and associated factors
- Culture

#### ***Childhood Adversity***

- History of sexual, physical, emotional abuse
- Parental psychopathology
- Parental separation or divorce
- Parental or family discord
- Impaired parent-child relationship
- Experience of welfare or institutional care

#### ***Personality Traits and Cognitive Styles***

Examples of traits associated with suicidality

- Low self esteem
- High neuroticism
- High hopelessness
- High impulsivity
- High risk taking
- Aggression

***Mental Health***

- Mood disorders
- Substance use disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Antisocial behaviours (e.g. conduct disorders)
- Previous suicide attempts

***Exposure to Stress and Adversity***

- Interpersonal losses and conflicts (including anniversaries, changes in social worker and placements)
- Death or loss of friends
- Legal, forensic and disciplinary crises (including history of offending)
- Sexual orientation
- Severe physical illness / disability

***Current Stressors***

- Difficulties at school – social or academic
- Conflict or abuse in home environment
- Isolation / alienation from friends
- Lack of supportive peer relationships
- Romantic relationship ended

***History of Attempts***

- Lethality
- Frequency
- Immediacy of plan
- Means
- Chance of interruption

***Coping Behaviours and Positive Resources***

- Help and support available from family and friends, teachers, other important supports in the young person's life
- Coping behaviours – ability to communicate and address problems
- Life-style – the stability of the young person's lifestyle and relationships
- Self-harm, alcohol and drug use, non-compliance with medications or other interventions
- Risk taking behaviour, poor impulse-control

Adverse exposure to the above areas combines cumulatively to increase the risks of suicidal behaviours. The above factors have different weightings with psychiatric morbidity being a particularly strong predictor.