

## **SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE SUICIDE**

Here are some suggestions to explore suicide as an option. Use only the questions that fit you and your client best. Give the client lots of time to respond. Asking the question gives the client permission to talk about his/her thoughts and plans. Avoid asking questions like a checklist. This is a supportive conversation that seeks information to determine risk and provide help.

Remember: It is vital that your client understand that you are willing to recognize suicide as an option and that you are non-judgmental. It is also important that you make it clear to the client that you are going to ask a few very direct questions and that you need honest answers because you want to help.

- Are you feeling alone right now? I'll stay with you. Is there anyone you trust that we could contact to help you through this feeling?
- Are you thinking about suicide? Are you thinking about killing yourself? Have you thought about how to kill yourself? Describe the plan for me. Do you have the (pills, gun, knife, car) now? When do you plan on doing this?
- Have you ever tried to kill yourself before? When? How did you plan to kill yourself? What happened?
- Have you ever deliberately hurt yourself? How did you do that? When? Do you still do that?
- Do you ever feel like killing yourself?
- Do you ever feel like you want to die?
- Part of you wants to live and part of you wants to die. What is helping you to stay alive? What has happened recently that makes you want to kill yourself? How do you feel about what has recently happened?

- Do you know anyone who has committed suicide? How did s/he do it? When did that happen? Were you close to that person? How did you feel when s/he died? How do you feel about that now?
- Have you tried to kill or injure yourself? Which one? When? How?
- Have you taken any pills today? What kind(s)? How many? When? Do you have access to more? Where? How are you feeling physically? Will you give me any pills you have with you now? I'd like to help keep you safe.
- Have you been drinking today? How much? When? Do you have access to more? Where? Is this more than you usually drink? How are you feeling physically? Will you give me any alcohol you have with you now? I'd like to help keep you safe.
- Have you done any drugs today? What kind(s)? When? How much? Do you access to more? Is this more than you usually do? How are you feeling physically? Will you give me any drugs you have with you now? I'd like to help keep you safe.
- Do you have anything with you that could hurt you, like a knife or a gun or scissors? Will you give them to me? I'd like to help keep you safe.