



Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 2007

I26 Psychological Reconstruction of Suicide in the Young

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand how the implementation of a model protocol for the evaluation and psychological reconstruction of completed suicides in children and adolescents will assist getting evidence-based prevention interventions into practice.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by providing information about potential risk factors for suicide in children, adolescents, and young adults.

Almost all cultures intuitively recognize suicide in the young as a threat to social cohesiveness. Society has an emotional investment in its children and a sense of responsibility to ensure their well being. When youth suicides occur, there is an overwhelming desire to determine what caused the event and how it could have been prevented. Suicide is a function of a number of factors: socioeconomic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal stress, cultural mores, social forces, and physical and mental health (Cavanagh, J.T., Carson, A.J., et al., *Psychological Autopsy Studies of Suicide*, 2003).

The specific aims of the project are to: 1) work collaboratively with health professionals, the medical examiner's office, law enforcement, and other professional agencies involved in the investigation of suicide cases, and to identify the causes of suicide; 2) determine the degree to which substance abuse was a factor in relationship to other possible causative factors; 3) identify most effective bereavement assistance practices for survivors; 4) select effective suicide intervention/prevention training model for mental health professionals, physicians, nurses, clergy, school counselors, teachers and others who work with children to increase sensitivity and receptivity to suicidal messages and concerning behavior; 5) clarify the role of friends, family, peers, classmates, and others in early recognition and prevention of suicidal behavior; 6) increase widespread understanding of suicide interventions by working with community prevention coalitions to impart research findings at the grassroots level.

In summary, the findings derived from the project will be shared with professionals in public health, education, law, medicine, criminal justice, psychology, and other behavioral sciences in an effort to provide a more complete understanding of factors that contribute to youth suicide.

Suicide, Youth, Psychological Reconstruction