

Risk and protective factors to look out for youth deemed at risk for suicide

CONTEXT	Predisposing factors	Contributing factors	Precipitating factors	Protective factors
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • previous suicide attempt • depression, substance abuse, anxiety, bipolar disorder or other mental health problems • persistent and enduring suicidal thoughts • history of childhood neglect, sexual or physical abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rigid cognitive style • poor coping skills • limited distress tolerance skills • substance misuse • impulsivity • aggression • hypersensitivity/ anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss • personal failure • victim of cruelty, humiliation, violence • individual trauma • health crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good individual coping, self-soothing and problem solving skills • willingness to seek help • good physical and mental health • good experience or feelings of success • strong cultural identity and spiritual beliefs* • living in balance and harmony*
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family history of suicidal behaviour/ suicide • family history of mental disorder • early childhood loss/ separation or deprivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family discord • punitive parenting • impaired parent/caregiver-child relationships • invalidating interpersonal environment • multi-generational trauma and losses* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of significant family member • death of a family member, especially by suicide • recent conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family cohesion and warmth • positive parent/caregiver-child connection • positive role models • active parental supervision • high & realistic expectations • support and involvement of extended family & elders connection to Ancestors*
Peers and school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social isolation & alienation • history of negative school experience • lack of meaningful connection to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • negative attitudes toward help seeking • limited/conflicted peer relationships • suicidal behaviours among peers • reluctance/uncertainty about how to help among school staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpersonal loss or conflict • peer victimization • rejection • peer death by suicide • academic failure • expulsion • disciplinary crisis • school-based harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social competence • healthy peer modeling • peer friendship, acceptance & support • success at school • interpersonal connectedness/ belonging • supportive school climate • school engagement • anti-harassment policies and practices
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple suicides • community marginalization* • socioeconomic deprivation* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensational media portrayal of suicide • access to firearms or other lethal methods • uncertainty about how to help among key gatekeepers • inaccessible community resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high_ profile/celebrity death, especially by suicide • conflict with the law/incarceration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities for youth participation • availability of resources • community ownership* • control over local services* • culturally_ safe healing practices * • opportunities to connect to land and nature*

(* Considered especially relevant for First Nations, Metis and Inuit youth).