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Suicide risk assessment: Clinical aphorisms

Paul F Granello

The Ohio State University, USA

Suicide risk assessment involves a complex set of skills that requires knowledge, training and experience. Mental health professionals who conduct such assessments need concrete, practical information on suicide assessment in order to conduct culturally and developmentally appropriate suicide risk assessments. In general, the determination of suicide risk is based on a comprehensive assessment of individual risk factors and warning signs as well as a careful appraisal of protective factors that can work to mitigate the risk. Much of the research emphasizes the content of suicide risk assessment and instead of the principles that guide the process of assessment. The presenter's own research, clinical experience and comprehensive reviews of the literature reveal a dozen overarching principles that guide the implementation of suicide assessment, regardless of setting, population or specific type or method of assessment used. These clinical aphorisms guide the work of individuals who engage in suicide assessment, becoming a part of the expert thinking that directs the process. Taken together, they can form a foundation for the process of suicide risk assessment. Ultimately, a comprehensive and thorough suicide risk assessment is the cornerstone of appropriate and effective interventions with suicidal individuals.

Biography

Paul F Granello is an Associate Professor of Counselor Education at The Ohio State University, a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor and one of the Co-Founders of the State of Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation. He has authored or co-authored five books (three on suicide) and published over 30 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. He has received \$2.5 million in grant funding for suicide prevention and presented more than 200 times at national and international conferences.

granello.2@osu.edu

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