

Acute and Chronic Suicide Risk

(v1 2009)

Acute risk refers to the level of current suicide risk with progression along a continuum based on escalating intent and risk. The level of risk also takes into account the extent of the individual's risk and protective factors.

ACUTE SUICIDE RISK CONTINUUM	
Minimal	No identifiable suicidal ideation.
Mild	Suicidal ideation of limited frequency, intensity, and duration. There are no identifiable plans and no intent. Few other risk factors and identifiable protective factors.
Moderate	Frequent suicidal ideation with limited intensity and duration, some specificity in terms of plans, no associated intent. Some distress/symptomatology. Good self-control, some risk factors present and identifiable protective factors.
High - Severe	Frequent, intense and enduring suicidal ideation, specific plans, no subjective intent but some objective markers of intent (e.g. choice of lethal method/s, method is available/accessible, some limited preparatory behaviour). High distress/symptomatology. Evidence of impaired self-control, multiple risk factors and few protective factors.
Extreme or imminent	Frequent, intense, and enduring ideation, specific plans, clear subjective and objective intent. Extreme distress/symptomatology. Impaired self-control, many risk factors and no protective factors.

Based on Table 2: Acute Suicide Risk Continuum, Rudd, M. (2006) pg. 44.

Chronic risk refers to the ongoing likelihood of a person making a future attempt and is based on historical information e.g. previous suicide attempts, history of depression, extent of background and current risk factors and presence of protective factors. People who have a chronic suicide risk can experience acute suicidal crises.

Reference

Rudd, M. (2006). *The assessment and management of suicidality*. Professional Resource Press, USA.