

HOMICIDE RISK

Since it is impossible to predict with 100% accuracy dangerousness ahead of time, violation of a client's confidentiality must be undertaken with great care and in consultation with others.

The art of counseling involves learning to discern what a client is really saying.

- When someone says, "I wish I (or someone else) was dead" are they talking suicide or homicide or just expressing frustration with their current stress levels or relationship difficulties?

How do we distinguish between the client who vents in scary ways and those who may carry out their threatening words?

THE BEST PREDICTOR OF FUTURE VIOLENCE IS A HISTORY OR PATTERN OF PAST VIOLENCE.

1. Good documentation is essential in every case, but with dangerous and threatening clients, it's critical.
2. Make sure you have a treatment plan and you update and date it regularly.
3. In your case notes record specifically what a client said, your assessment of the threat, what you did, and why you decided to do it.

THE VIOLENT-ANGRY-IMPULSIVE PERSON WILL...

- Shows a history of violent and assaultive behavior—assault, hitting and injuring others, destroying or damaging property, and injury to self for such action;
- Reveals impulsive anger or rage that is explosively triggered by various people or events—the person quickly gets out-of-control and becomes destructive to things or people and relationships;
- Shows a tendency to hurt others and vengefully react when angry—using cutting, harmful words, hiding or destroying things special to the person who is the focus of one's anger;
- Projects blame onto others—is critical and condemning of others, while being unable to receive and reactive against any criticism from others;
- Justifies anger and harmful expression, unable to forgive, tending to hold grudges and resentments over a long period of time;
- Suppresses anger—deny anger in the face of obvious evidence—flushed face, clenched teeth and muscles, harsh and loud tone of voice, threatening posture;
- Represses anger—deny anger problems (contrary to history) without obvious anger signals—passive-aggressive, aloof, sarcasm-cynicism, conflict-avoidant; and
- Shows associated physical complaints and symptoms—gastric-intestinal distress, ulcers, spastic colon, headache, hypertension, and cardiac irregularities.