



ASQ Toolkit Summary

Ask **Suicide-Screening** Questions

The ASQ toolkit is organized by the medical setting in which it will be used: **emergency department, inpatient medical/surgical unit, and outpatient primary care and specialty clinics**. All toolkit materials are available on the NIMH website at www.nimh.nih.gov/asq. Questions about the materials or how to implement suicide risk screening can be directed to Lisa Horowitz, PhD, MPH at horowitzl@mail.nih.gov or Debbie Snyder, MSW at DeborahSnyder@mail.nih.gov.

Emergency Department (ED/ER):

- ASQ Information Sheet*
- ASQ Tool*
- Brief Suicide Safety Assessment Guide
- Nursing Script
- Parent/Guardian Flyer
- Patient Resource List*
- Educational Videos*

Inpatient Medical/Surgical Unit:

- ASQ Information Sheet*
- ASQ Tool*
- Brief Suicide Safety Assessment Guide
- Nursing Script
- Parent/Guardian Flyer
- Patient Resource List*
- Educational Videos*

Outpatient Primary Care/Specialty Clinics:

- ASQ Information Sheet*
- ASQ Tool*
- Brief Suicide Safety Assessment Guide
- Nursing Script
- Parent/Guardian Flyer
- Patient Resource List*
- Educational Videos*

***Note: The following materials remain the same across all medical settings. These materials can be used in other settings with youth (e.g. school nursing office, juvenile detention centers).**

- ASQ Information Sheet
- ASQ Tool
- ASQ in other languages
- Patient Resource List
- Educational Videos



Suicide Risk Screening Tool

Ask Suicide-Screening Questions

Ask the patient:

1. In the past few weeks, have you wished you were dead? Yes No
2. In the past few weeks, have you felt that you or your family would be better off if you were dead? Yes No
3. In the past week, have you been having thoughts about killing yourself? Yes No
4. Have you ever tried to kill yourself? Yes No

If yes, how? _____

When? _____

If the patient answers **Yes** to any of the above, ask the following acuity question:

5. Are you having thoughts of killing yourself right now? Yes No

If yes, please describe: _____

Next steps:

- If patient answers “No” to all questions 1 through 4, screening is complete (not necessary to ask question #5). No intervention is necessary (*Note: Clinical judgment can always override a negative screen).
- If patient answers “Yes” to any of questions 1 through 4, or refuses to answer, they are considered a **positive screen**. Ask question #5 to assess acuity:
 - “Yes” to question #5 = **acute positive screen** (imminent risk identified)
 - Patient requires a **STAT safety/full mental health evaluation**.
 - **Patient cannot leave until evaluated for safety.**
 - Keep patient in sight. Remove all dangerous objects from room. Alert physician or clinician responsible for patient’s care.
 - “No” to question #5 = **non-acute positive screen** (potential risk identified)
 - Patient requires a **brief suicide safety assessment to determine if a full mental health evaluation is needed**. **Patient cannot leave until evaluated for safety.**
 - Alert physician or clinician responsible for patient’s care.

Provide resources to all patients

- 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) En Español: 1-888-628-9454
- 24/7 Crisis Text Line: Text “HOME” to 741-741





Script for nursing staff

Ask *Suicide-Screening* Questions

Say to parent/guardian:

"National safety guidelines recommend that we screen all kids for suicide risk. We ask these questions in private, so I am going to ask you to step out of the room for a few minutes. If we have any concerns about your child's safety, we will let you know."

Once parent steps out, say to patient:

"Now I'm going to ask you a few more questions."

Administer the ASQ and any other questions you want to ask in private (e.g. domestic violence).

If patient screens positive, say to patient:

"I'm so glad you spoke up about this. I'm going to talk to your parent and your medical team. Someone who is trained to talk with kids about suicide is going to come speak with you."

If patient screens positive, say to parent/guardian:

"We have some concerns about your child's safety that we would like to further evaluate. It's really important that he/she spoke up about this. I'm going to talk to your medical team, and someone who is trained to talk with kids about suicide is going to come speak with you and your child."

**Parent/guardian flyer**Ask **Suicide-Screening** Questions

Your child's health and safety is our #1 priority. New national safety guidelines recommend that we screen children and adolescents for suicide risk.

During today's visit, we will ask you to step out of the room for a few minutes so a nurse can ask your child some additional questions about suicide risk and other safety issues in private.

If we have any concerns about your child's safety, we will let you know.

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for youth. Please note that **asking kids questions about suicide is safe**, and is very important for suicide prevention. Research has shown that asking kids about thoughts of suicide is not harmful and **does not put thoughts or ideas into their heads**.

Please feel free to ask your child's doctor if you have any questions about our patient safety efforts.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Spanish/Español: 1-888-628-9454

Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741-741

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

www.sprc.org

National Institute of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

www.samhsa.gov