

# **Keeping Your Patients Safe:**

A Guide to Primary Care Management of Mental Health and Addictions-related Risks and Functional Impairments

The schematic below outlines the steps PCPs can take to reduce risk pending

# Introduction

Patients with mental disorders are often at high risk to themselves and others.<sup>1,2</sup> The purpose of this tool is to support primary care providers (family physicians and primary care nurse practitioners) in reducing harm in adult patients (18+) who exhibit signs, symptoms, or behaviours suggestive of a mental health condition. Considerations and resources are included in the tool to aid in decision making.

The objectives of this tool are to assist primary care providers (PCPs) to:

- Identify serious risks as a result of a patient's symptoms and behaviours
- Assess and intervene when a patient is at high probability of harming themself or others
- Reduce risk and manage immediate symptoms while diagnostic clarification is taking place

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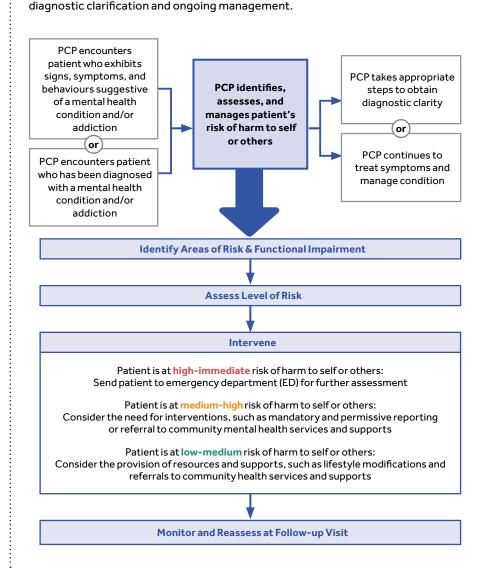
Section B: Assessing Level of Risk and Identifying the Appropriate Intervention: A two-part framework that considers means, opportunity, warning signs, as well as protective factors to assess probability and severity of risk

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# Section A: Exploring Symptoms and Functional Impairments to Identify Risk

Investigate the impact of a patient's symptoms and behaviours on their daily functioning (e.g. unsafe driving) to consider potential risks (e.g. harm to self or others).<sup>3,4,5</sup> With the patient's consent, include family and/or other caregivers as part of this discussion.

# **ASK:** "How is your day-to-day life affected as a result of your [insert patient's symptom/behaviour]?"

Consider the following domains in your assessment:<sup>2</sup>

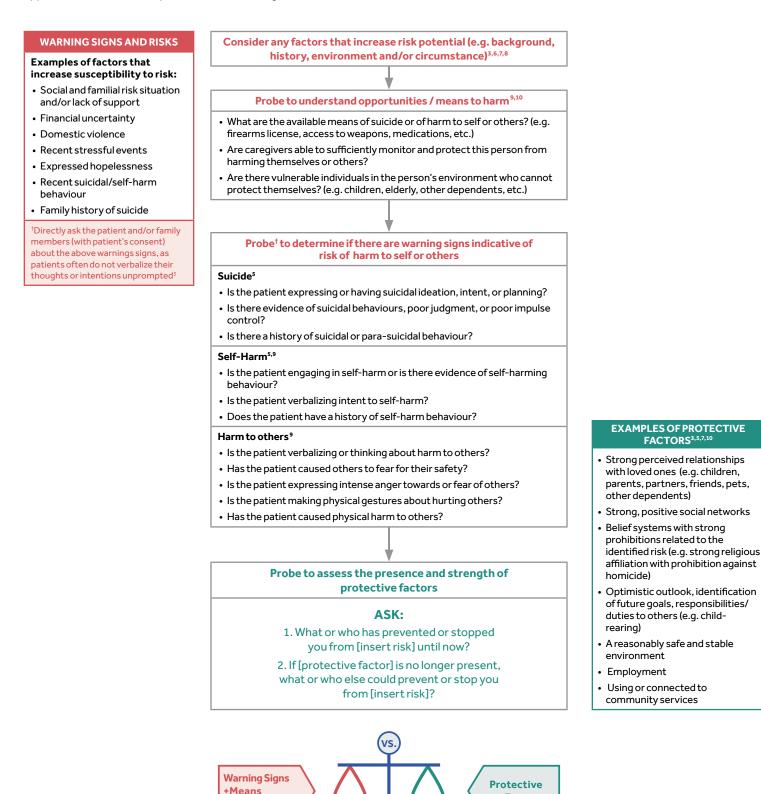
- **Personal Care:** activities of daily living (e.g. cooking, cleaning, bathing, selecting appropriate attire, financial management, housekeeping, transportation, shopping, medication compliance)
- Dependents: caring for children, impaired adults, elderly adults, pets
- Licenses: driver's license, pilot's license, medical license, firearms license, law license, machine operator's license
- Relationships: spouse or significant other, children, parents, colleagues, friends, community, medical team, substitute decision maker
- Work/Education: appropriate attendance, ability to perform role-defined tasks, safety, completion of assignments

- The following resources may be helpful to investigate the impact of a patient's symptoms and behaviours
- <u>Assessing Functional Impairments:</u><sup>[1]</sup>
  - This resource consists of two components:<sup>2</sup>
     A list of signs, symptoms, and behaviours commonly associated with risk and functional impairment that if observed in the patient, triggers further exploration/investigation
    - A patient discussion aid to help PCPs investigate the impact on several functional domains.
- <u>Sheehan Disability Scale:</u><sup>[1]</sup>
- A rapid, validated 10-point scale that assesses functional impairment in 3 key domains: work/school, social and family life.

The following section consists of two components: (I) weighing the risk and protective factors to identify and assess a patient's level of risk and (II) identifying the appropriate intervention.

# PART I: WEIGH THE FACTORS

Use discussions<sup>†</sup> with the patient to identify factors that increase susceptibility to risk. Based on your assessment of warning signs, means and opportunities, determine if protective factors mitigate the immediate risk of harm to self or others.



Opportunity

Factors

# PART II: IDENTIFY THE INTERVENTION

Based on your exploration of the risk and/or protective factors, assess the probability\* and severity of adverse outcomes to identify the appropriate intervention using the matrix below. Determine the level of risk using scale below. Patients may cross risk levels – use clinical judgment to guide your assessment. See Section C for details on initiating appropriate interventions according to the level of risk.

		Severity of Adverse Outcomes		
		Non-Life-Threatening Functional Impairments (e.g. poor work/school attendance, poor financial management)	<b>Critical Functional Impairments</b> (e.g. serious injuries or health concerns, inability to perform responsibilities that impact the personal safety or health of others)	Life-Threatening Impairments (e.g. loss of life or limb)
		•	Increasing Severity	
	Incidental occurrence (e.g. concerns arise indirectly from signs, symptoms or behaviours; differential diagnoses but no clear link to risk)	<ul> <li>Implement direct interventions (e.g. medications, psychologically- based interventions, or lifestyle modifications)</li> <li>Monitor over time (e.g., book follow-up within next month)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Implement direct interventions         <ul> <li>(e.g. medications, psychologically-based interventions, or lifestyle modifications)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Refer to community supports (e.g. support groups, crisis lines, and other health services)</li> <li>Close monitoring         <ul> <li>(e.g. book a follow-up visit within two weeks)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Implement direct interventions         <ul> <li>(e.g. medications, psychologically- based interventions, or lifestyle modifications)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Consider mandatory and permissible reporting</li> <li>Short-term monitoring         <ul> <li>(e.g. book a follow-up visit within two weeks)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Likelihood of Occurrence	Intermediate occurrence (e.g. recurrent behaviour exhibited likely to lead to events of concern; verbalizing intent to act)	<ul> <li>Refer to community supports (e.g. support groups, crisis lines, and other health services)</li> <li>Implement direct interventions (e.g. medications, psychologically-based interventions, or lifestyle modifications)</li> <li>Short-term monitoring (e.g. book a follow-up visit within two weeks)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Conduct mandatory and permissible reporting</li> <li>Refer to community supports (e.g. support groups, crisis lines, and other health services)</li> <li>Implement direct interventions (e.g. medications, psychologically- based interventions, or lifestyle modifications)</li> <li>Short-term monitoring (e.g. book a follow-up visit within two weeks)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Contact crisis support services (where available) or ED consult (as appropriate)</li> <li>Conduct mandatory and permissible reporting</li> <li>Implement direct interventions (e.g. medications, psychologically- based interventions, or lifestyle modifications)</li> <li>Close monitoring (e.g. book a follow-up visit within one week)</li> </ul>
	Imminent occurrence (e.g. a related event has occurred; consistent behaviour exhibited; preparations for events of concern are underway; likely to lead to events of concern; command delusion or hallucination has been identified or suspected)	<ul> <li>Refer to community supports (e.g. support groups, crisis lines, and other health services)</li> <li>Implement direct interventions (e.g. medications, psychologically-based interventions, or lifestyle modifications)</li> <li>Short-term monitoring (e.g. book a follow-up visit within two weeks)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Contact crisis support services (where available) or ED consult (as appropriate)</li> <li>Conduct mandatory and permissible reporting</li> <li>Implement direct interventions (e.g. medications, psychologically- based interventions, or lifestyle modifications)</li> <li>Close monitoring (e.g. book a follow-up visit within one week)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Obtain ED consult</li> <li>Conduct mandatory and permissible reporting</li> <li>Close monitoring (e.g. book a follow-up visit within one week)</li> </ul>

#### Level of Risk



\*The predictive 'risk for harm', as based on key signs and symptoms has yet to be validated: probe and use clinical judgment to guide your assessment. In situations of ambiguity or uncertainty, it is better to overestimate than underestimate the magnitude of risk.

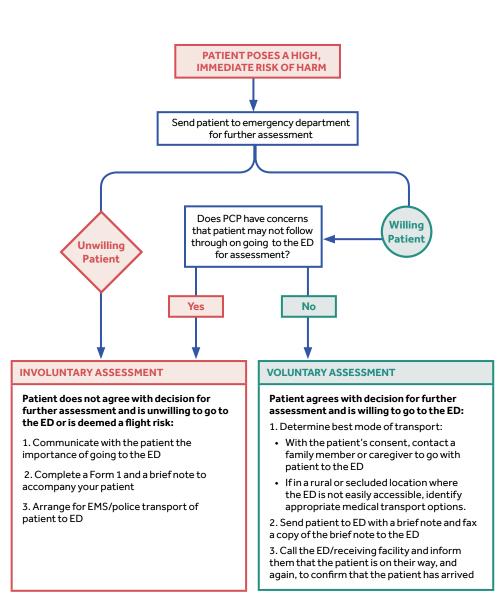
## HIGH-IMMEDIATE RISK

### **Obtain ED Consult**

A patient is at high-immediate risk of harm when life-threatening impairments (e.g. loss of life or limb) are imminent as a result of their actions/behaviours. These patients should be referred to the ED or local crisis support services for further assessment, where available and appropriate.

The intent of the following section is to assist PCPs in making key decisions, once it has been determined that a patient needs to be sent to the ED for further assessment. The aim is to reduce risks associated with transfers from community settings to hospital ED and to ensure that the level of risk is understood by the receiving ED.

If there are concerns that a patient may be a danger to you or your staff, do not prevent this patient from leaving your office. Allow patient to leave, immediately complete Form 1, and contact your local police to provide them with the completed Form 1.



**NOTE:** Discharge planning plays a role in suicide prevention by ensuring ongoing support and care for the patient after an ED visit. PCPs can either be a part of the development of a discharge plan with the hospital, or can be included in the discharge plan as a point of contact for the patient to follow up with.

Complete a Form 1 if PCP has any concern that a patient will not go to the ED voluntarily.



#### Tips for Completing a Brief Note to Accompany Your Patient to the ED

- Include the length of time that you have known the patient and examples of why this behaviour is atypical for your patient
- Explicitly state the adverse outcome of concern and your reasons for an emergent assessment
- Include PCP's contact information, and consider faxing note directly to the ED



Tips for Communicating with Your Patient

- "As a health care provider, I am committed to ensuring that your health and safety are a priority."
- "I am very concerned about your safety and I believe that you need to go to the emergency department immediately."
- "I appreciate that you may not agree with my decision and that it may cause you temporary discomfort; however, I truly believe that it will prevent you from longterm suffering and keep you safe."
- "Here is what I am going to do..."



#### Tips for Completing Form 1

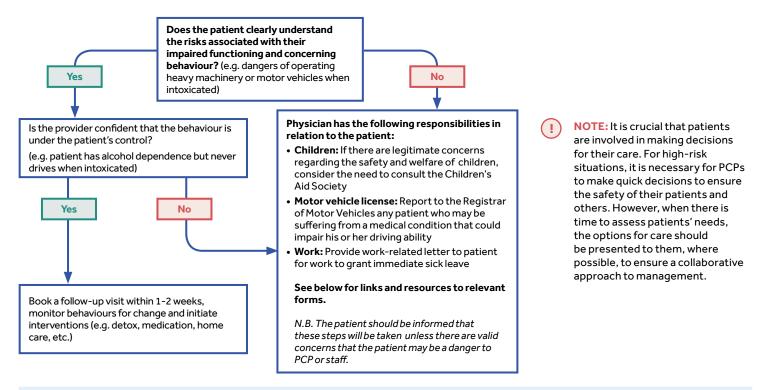
- Form 1 is used by a physician to legally bind a patient to undergo a psychiatric assessment, under the Mental Health Act (OHIP Billing code: K623 - \$95)
- Neither the risk nor the mental health diagnosis need be certain; possibility is sufficient
- Physician can complete a Form 1 based on the information provided by others, as long as the patient has been examined in the past 7 days
- Complete either Box A or Box B, not both
- To increase the likelihood that the patient is admitted for assessment, be sure to stress risk and safety concerns

Please refer to examples of completed forms and additional documents for clarity: thewellhealth.ca/mentalhealthrisk<sup>[iii]</sup>

## - MEDIUM TO HIGH-RISK -

# Mandatory and Permissive Reporting

Patients' functioning in their daily lives may be affected by their symptoms and behaviours. The following section is intended to support providers to better understand functional impairments and assess whether intervention is needed.



The following resources\*\* may be helpful to providers with referrals to community mental health supports and services and patient management:

#### Mandatory and Permissive Reporting for Physicians:

 <u>CPSO Policy Statement #6-12 Mandatory and Permissive</u> <u>Reporting Ivi</u>

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) have documented all instances of mandatory reporting (e.g. child abuse or neglect; impaired driving ability; safety related to pilots or air traffic controllers, railway workers and maritime workers; and occupational health and safety) and permissive reporting (e.g. disclosure to prevent harm) requirements.

#### Identifying Potential Workplace Hazard

- Contact the Ministry of Labour:<sup>[v]</sup>
   1-877-202-0008, option #3.
   Information will be forwarded to the investigation unit.
   It is important that the physician knows the employer and employment location of the patient to file a concern.
- If a health provider is concerned that a patient could pose a potential hazard to themselves or to others in the workplace, the health provider is advised to contact the Ontario Ministry of Labour to file a concern. This can be done anonymously.

## Safety of Dependents & Family Members

- <u>Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect: It's Your Duty[vi]</u>
   Provides an overview of the professional responsibilities of health providers regarding the prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- <u>Contact your local children's aid society</u><sup>[vii]</sup> Healthcare providers are legally obligated to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Children's Aid Society.
- <u>The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly</u><sup>[viii]</sup> provides useful guidance on dealing with suspected or confirmed elder abuse or neglect.
- <u>The Ministry of the Attorney General Rivi</u> provides an extensive list of options and resources for individuals who are being abused by their partners.
- Reporting to the Ministry of Transportation
  - Ministry of Transportion: Medical Condition Report<sup>[k]</sup>
     Physicians must report to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles any patient aged 16 years or older who may be suffering from a medical condition that could impair their driving ability according to the Highway Traffic Act (s. 203 and 204.)
  - <u>The Canadian Medical Association</u><sup>[xi]</sup> offers a guide to determine medical fitness to operate motor vehicles.

\*\*Providers must comply with the requirements, policies, and guidelines set out by their respective regulatory college regarding the completion of permissible reports and medical documents. Please see the following resources for more information:

The Canadian Medical Protection Agency's <u>Medical-legal handbook for Physicians in Canada</u><sup>[xii]</sup>
 <u>CMPA/CNPS Joint Statement On Liability Protection For Nurse Practitioners And Physicians In Collaborative Practice</u><sup>[xiii]</sup>

# MEDIUM TO HIGH-RISK

#### **Referral to Community Mental Health Supports and Services**

PCPs can refer patients to several community-based mental health and addictions support organizations within Ontario, including supportive counselling, withdrawal management, crisis intervention, residential addictions treatment, early psychosis intervention, and vocational/ employment programs.

**ASK:** When family/caregivers are known by the PCP to be included within a patient's circle of care, PCPs can ask if these individuals require additional support caring for the patient with mental health and addictions.

NOTE: PCPs should ask patients about potential time and transportation barriers for the service to which they are being referred to. Additionally, when determining options for patients it is important to ask them about preferred language of service and take into consideration culturally appropriate care options.

The following resources may be helpful to providers in accessing community mental health supports and services:

#### ConnexOntario<sup>[xiv]</sup>

For a complete list of types of mental health and addictions services, visit <u>ConnexOntario</u> for a directory, operating hours and descriptions of local mental health, addictions, and problem gambling services.

#### ConnexOntario has helplines open 24/7:

- **L** Mental health 1-800-531-2600
- **Addictions** 1-800-565-8603

Includes resources, such as 'Family Initiatives' that 'pertain to family groups participating in the planning and evaluation of care delivery, as well as the provision of services, such as self-help, peer support, education, advocacy, etc. These services can be helpful for family members supporting an individual with mental health and addictions concerns.

- <u>OCFP's Collaborative Mental Health Network [xv] (CMHN)</u> The Collaborative Mental Health Network provides mentoring support and education to enhance the capacity of family physicians to provide comprehensive and quality care to patients with complex conditions involving mental illness or addictions.
- Ontario Peer Development Initiative<sup>[xvi]</sup>
   Consumer/survivor initiatives and peer support organizations may
   be helpful for the recovery of patients.
- ECHO Ontario Mental Health<sup>[xvii]</sup>
   ECHO Ontario Mental Health at CAMH and University of Toronto aims to help primary care providers build capacity in the treatment of mental health and addictions.

LOW-RISK

#### Interventions for Lower Risk Patients

Immediate interventions can be provided pending diagnosis, such as symptom-specific pharmacotherapy, psychological intervention and environmental management. Discuss various options to develop a personalized plan that incorporates a patient's goals and values (i.e., preferred language of service and culturally appropriate care options). This section outlines considerations for symptom and risk management pending diagnosis.

# Lifestyle Modifications<sup>5,11,12</sup>

- Work to develop management plan with patient
- Encourage a patient to actively participate in their own management planning
- Discuss protective factors and supports in patient's life and identify which protective factors can be fostered
- Encourage positive lifestyle changes, such as exercise, positive leisure time, and social engagement
- · Offer advice on sleep hygiene and healthy eating as needed
- Discuss removal of risk-related items from the home (e.g. firearms, alcohol, unnecessary medications and poisons)
- If a patient is at risk for suicidal behaviour, work with them to develop a crisis and safety plan
  - Safety plan should include contact phone numbers for family/friends (emergency contacts), therapist contact information, and coping and problem solving skills that the person can perform independently
  - The <u>Wellness Recovery Action Plan</u><sup>[xxiii]</sup>(WRAP) provides supports and resources to assist a patient develop a crisis plan

### Psychotherapy<sup>13</sup>

• Providers and their patient can initiate effective psychotherapy. Some online cognitive behavioural therapy treatments have been shown to be as, or more effective, than individual therapy with a live therapist.

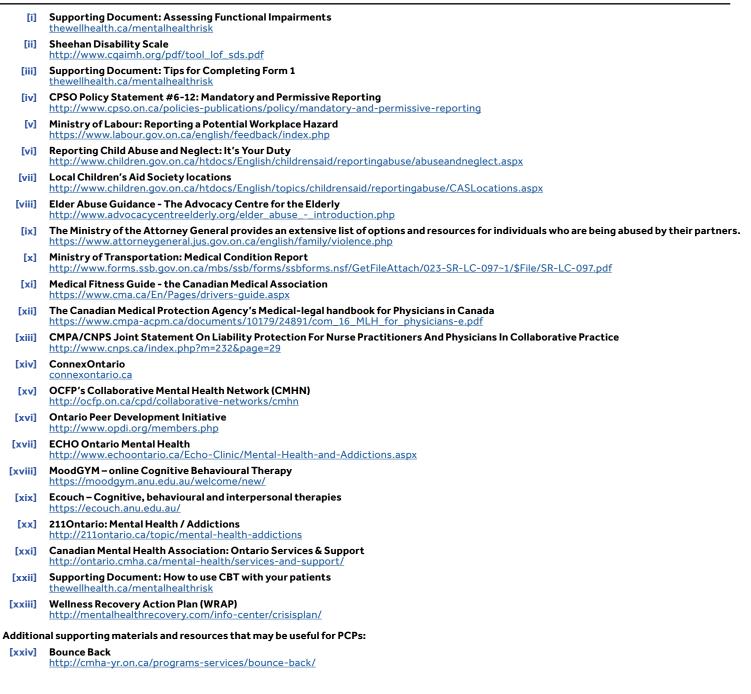
### Mood & Anxiety Disorders:

- MoodGYM<sup>[xviii]</sup> Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Ecouch [xix] Cognitive, behavioural and interpersonal therapies
- <u>211Ontario: Mental Health / Addictions</u><sup>[xx]</sup> An online database of programs and resources in local communities
- <u>Canadian Mental Health Association: Ontario Services &</u>
   <u>Support[xxi]</u> A listing of programs delivered by community
   agencies, hospitals or health clinics
- See tips on How to use CBT with your Patients [xxii]

#### Consider the following:

- Monitor and assess the patient's progress of care goals, clinical outcomes, satisfaction and unmet needs
- Liaise and manage care transitions or changes in care status to facilitate continuity of care (e.g. warm handoffs as patient transitions in and out of hospital and/or specialist care)
- Identify appropriate point of contact for the patient with respect to any care coordination issues
- Participate in multi-disciplinary case conferences to develop a care plan based on the patient's care goals. Additionally, with the patient's consent, maintain regular communication with hospital or community mental health and addictions services to foster an ongoing shared care relationship.

# Section E: Supporting Materials\*



\*These supporting materials are hosted by external organizations, and as such the accuracy and accessibility of their links are not guaranteed. CEP will make every effort to keep these links up to date.



Schedule a follow-up appointment to monitor patient, reassess risk, and track the effectiveness of intervention.

- [xxv] Silveira J, Rockman P. Mental disorders, risks, and disability: Primary care needs a novel approach. Canadian Family Physician. 2016;62(12):958-960. Available from <a href="http://www.cfp.ca/content/62/12/958.full">http://www.cfp.ca/content/62/12/958.full</a>
- [xxvi] Silveira J, Rockman P, Fulford C, Hunter J. Approach to risk identification in undifferentiated mental disorders. Canadian Family Physician. 2016;62(12):972-978. Available from http://www.cfp.ca/content/62/12/972.full
- [xxvii]
   Form 1 Application by Physician for Psychiatric Assessment http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/GetFileAttach/014-6427-41~1/\$File/6427-41\_.pdf

   [xxviii]
   How to complete the Form 1 accurately
- http://ocfp.on.ca/docs/collaborative-mental-health-care-network/how-to-complete-a-form-1-.doc
- [xxix] Form 2 Order for Examination under Section 16 http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/GetFileAttach/014-6428-41~1/\$File/6428-41\_.pdf
   [xxx] Mental Health Act Forms

http://ocfp.on.ca/cpd/collaborative-networks/cmhcn/medico-legal-issues

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### References

- [1] Silveira J, Rockman P. Mental disorders, risks, and disability: Primary care needs a novel approach. Canadian Family Physician. 2016;62(12):958-960.
- [2] Silveira J, Rockman P, Fulford C, Hunter J. Approach to risk identification in undifferentiated mental disorders. Canadian Family Physician. 2016;62(12):972-978.
- [3] Perlman CM, Neufeld E, Martin L, Goy M, Hirdes JP. Suicide Risk Assessment Inventory: A Resource Guide for Canadian Health Care Organizations. 2011. Toronto, ON: Ontario Hospital Association and Canadian Patient Safety Institute.
- [4] Allan CL, Behrman S, Ebmeier KP. Primary care management of patients who self-harm. Practitioner. 2012;256(1751):19-22, 2-3.
- [5] National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Self-harm: longer-term management. London (UK): National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). 2011. (Clinical guideline:133).
- [6] U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Screening for suicide risk in adolescents, adults, and older adults in primary care: U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommendation statement. Ann Intern Med. 2014;160(10):719-26.
- [7] Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. Child Abuse and Neglect: Risk and Protective Factors. [Internet]. 2016. Available from: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/riskprotectivefactors.html
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- [9] DiGregorio RV, Green-Hernandez C, Holzemer SP. Primary Care, Second Edition: An Interprofessional Perspective. 2015. Springer Publishing Company, LLC.
- [10] Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. Sexual Violence: Risk and Protective Factors [Internet]. 2016. Available from: <u>http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html</u>
- [11] Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. The CAMH Suicide Prevention and Assessment Handbook. [Internet]. 2011. Available from: <a href="https://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/health\_information/a\_z\_mental\_health\_and\_addiction\_information/suicide/Documents/sp\_handbook\_final\_feb\_2011.pdf">https://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/health\_information/a\_z\_mental\_health\_and\_addiction\_information/suicide/Documents/sp\_handbook\_final\_feb\_2011.pdf</a>
- [12] Durbin S, Ker K, Rawal S, Chan J, Ho A, Au Billie, Lofchy J. Psychiatry–Toronto Notes. 2009.
- [13] Andrews G, Cuijpers P, Craske MG, McEvoy P, Titov N. Computer therapy for the anxiety and depressive disorders is effective, acceptable and practical health care: a metaanalysis. PloS ONE. 2010;5:e13196.

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#### Developed by:

In collaboration with:





Ontario College of Family Physicians

