

ASSESS FOR SAFETY AND SUICIDE RISK

If you need help call Illinois DocAssist (866) 986-2778

IS SUICIDAL IDEATION PRESENT? Ask these 4 questions from ASQ:

1. In the past few weeks, have you wished you were dead?
2. In the past few weeks, have you felt that you or your family would be better off if you were dead?
3. In the past week, have you been having thoughts about killing yourself?
4. Have you ever tried to kill yourself?

If answers “No” to all 4 questions,
No need to further assess suicide risk.

If answers “Yes” to any question, **ASSESS FOR SUICIDE RISK:**
Ask: Are you having thoughts about killing yourself right now?

If **No** Further assess - suicidal **thoughts**—how often, last time, what helps **Intent:** Lately have you felt you wanted to act on your thoughts?
Plan: details of plan, **Attempts:** prior attempts, **Risks:** substance use, no social support. For help call Illinois DocAssist at (866) 986-2778

If Yes,
REFER FOR MENTAL HEALTH INTAKE.

If history is reassuring,
ENSURE SAFETY and F/U within a week.

If concerns/red flags: Recent attempt, serious intent, detailed plan
REFER FOR MENTAL HEALTH INTAKE.

ENSURE SAFETY

Discuss coping strategies
Secure/remove lethal means
Ensure adequate adult supervision and support
Emergency communication plan if feel unsafe
24/7 Crisis Text Line: Text “HOME” to 741-741
988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

MENTAL HEALTH INTAKE

There is no shame in sending a patient to intake even if they don't get admitted.
Illinois DocAssist (866) 986-2778

Prepared by WU PAARC for the Mental Health QI Project (2019) updated 02.12.2024

Sources:

*Horowitz LM, Bridge JA, Teach SJ, Ballard E, Klima J, Rosenstein DL, Wharff EA, Ginnis K, Cannon E, Joshi P, Pao M. Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ): A Brief Instrument for the Pediatric Emergency Department. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2012;166(12):1170-1176.

[NIH asQ Suicide Risk Screening Tool](#)

Dr. Katie Plax, Division Chief of Adolescent Medicine, Washington University School of Medicine. Watch Dr. Plax demonstrate assessing for safety and suicide risk by accessing <https://wupaarc.wustl.edu/Resources> and clicking on videos “Addressing Suicidality” and “Addressing Suicidality and Referral”.