

# ENGAGE

## Our Patients on Zero Suicide



### 10 Tips

Every patient encounter is an opportunity to foster the support and connectivity that engagement produces. Engagement is not a one-time event. We should seek to **CONTINUOUSLY** engage and re-engage our patients.

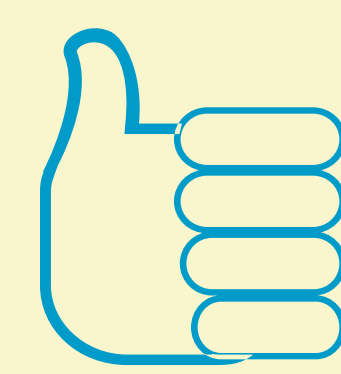


1

#### Establish Rapport

resist the pressure to rush. Oftentimes, patients can tell if you are in a rush and they will not want to open up in that situation; thus, you may end up missing key information.

- "Hello! How are you?"
- "I am listening."

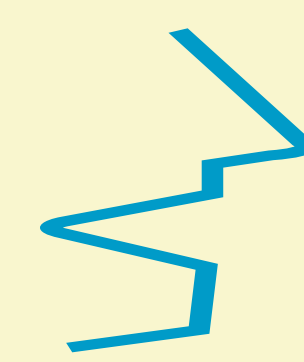


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#### Provide Choices

this can engender hope in the patient that they can impact their circumstance.

- "Are you comfortable talking to me here?"
- "What would you like to talk about/focus on first?"

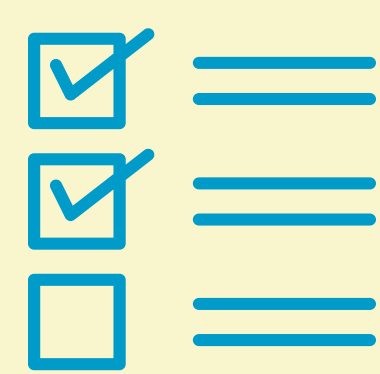


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#### Inquire

about strengths and protective factors: this will help to see a full picture of the individual's risk and ability to build resiliency.

- "What activities, people, or things have helped you feel more stable in the past?"



3

#### Conversational Tone

ask about stressors, triggers and any recent new emotions and beliefs without it seeming like a mechanical checklist.

- "What's bothering you the most right now?"
- "What gets you thinking negative thoughts?"
- "Have you felt these ways before?"

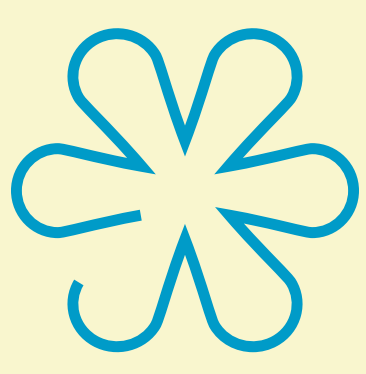


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#### Ask About Suicidality

early, openly, and directly.

- "Have you ever wished you would not wake up?"
- "Have you had any thoughts about ending your life?"
- "Does it ever get so bad that you think about ending your life?"



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#### Safe Space

create an environment where it is safe to talk about suicidal thoughts by direct discussion of the topic for patients.

- "You can share openly here."
- "Other people in similar circumstances have had similar thoughts."
- "Talking about these feelings often helps alleviate the pain."



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#### Pay Attention

closely observe non-verbal behaviors with a calm presence being aware of the patient, yourself and the environment.

- "I hear you."
- "This helps me understand what you are thinking."
- "It sounds like that was difficult."
- "I hear the concern in your voice."

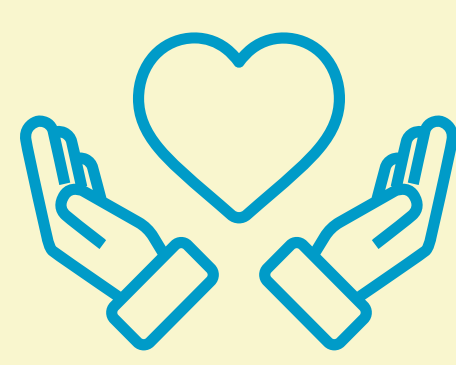


10

#### Be Clear

make the patient's and our goals very clear.

- "I just want you to know that our first goal for you is keeping safe. I am going to need your help with that."
- "I understand you are in pain and I want to work with you to lessen the pain in a safe way."
- "How can I help you set and work towards those goals while you are here?"



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#### Connect

develop positive interactions with the patient: be humble, curious and respectful, believing in people's resilience, while meeting people where they are at. Validate the individual's experience.

- "Wow, I can sure understand why you are feeling this way..."
- "Sounds like you have been through a lot of really hard times..."
- "You must be a really strong person to have survived these experiences."



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#### Identify

use empathy to encourage openness about defeat, hopelessness, powerlessness, entrapment, frustration.

- "Sometimes it can be hard to even think through some ways to make things better."
- "Are you feeling hopeless?"
- "Does it feel like more than you can take right now?"