

## Youth Suicide

McWhiter Chapter 10

### Scope of problem

- 3rd leading cause of death among adolescents and leading cause of death for gay and lesbian youth
- estimated that 11% of young people have attempted suicide
- 33% of troubled adolescents have attempted suicide
- Over past 30 years 300% increase in number of suicides
- females attempt suicide 3x the rate of males
- males complete suicide 3x the rate of females

### Causes & Characteristics of Youth Suicide

#### ■ Interpersonal

### Causes & Characteristics of Youth Suicide

#### ■ Family

- Stressful events i.e. divorce, separation, death
- violence, sexual or physical abuse --3-6 times more likely to attempt suicide
- Interaction patterns characterized by anger, emotional ambivalence, and rejection are associated with self destructive behavior in young people
- Family member who commits suicide--up to 75% of children who were under age 11 when suicide of family member occurred attempted suicide during adolescence
  - 38% of adolescents who attempt suicide had close relative who committed suicide

## Causes & Characteristics of Youth Suicide

- Poor communication skills
- Under or overachievement
- Catastrophic worldview
- Cluster suicides

## Causes & Characteristics of Youth Suicide

- Hopelessness depression
- Impulsivity & risktaking
- Loneliness
- self-image
- Thinking patterns

## Motivations for suicide

- Self punishment related to shame/guilt
- Absolution for past behaviors
- Being lonely and isolated

## Identification and assessment

- Lethality
  - Plan
  - Access to lethal method
  - history of previous attempts

## Identification and assessment

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- Recent loss
- Depression and hopelessness
- Current stressors
- Recent loss of important relationship or life goal
- Family member who has attempted or completed

## Inventories

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- Child Depression Scale
- Scale of Suicide Ideation
- Beck Depression Inventory