Using Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy to prevent suicide in youth

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Suicide in Adolescents

- Third leading cause of death for adolescents
- Girls attempt more, but more boys complete
- Depressive disorders play a big role
Suicide in Adolescents cont.

- 7-11% reported a suicide attempt

- 60% of adolescents report having suicidal thoughts at least once

- 1,600 die every year

- Ethnicity differences
Suicide in Adolescents cont.

- Homosexual and bisexual adolescent boys are 7 times more likely to report attempts.

- Homosexual adolescent girls are twice as likely to commit suicide.
Why do Teenagers Attempt Suicide?

- Reasons and motives vary from teenager to teenager
- Drugs and alcohol play a role
- Underdeveloped frontal cortex
Warning Signs

- Written/verbal statements about death
- Giving away possessions
- Sudden changes in mood or behavior
- Signs of depression
What is Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)?

- “A short-term, evidence-based psychotherapy for treating a variety of psychiatric conditions” (Ghahramanlou-Holloway, Neely, & Tucker, 2014).

- Created by Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck in the 1960s

- Aids in helping people achieve their goals and make changes

- Focuses on rumination
The Cognitive Triangle

THOUGHTS

FEELINGS ↔ BEHAVIOR
Cognitive Restructuring

A  
Activating Event or Adversity

B  
Beliefs about Event or Adversity

C  
The emotional Consequences

D  
Disputations to challenge irrational beliefs

E  
Effective new beliefs replace the irrational ones
CBT and Suicide

- Most widely researched psychotherapy
- Common to have distressing thoughts and behaviors
- Debate about how to address the issue

I'm depressed, sad, hurt, confused, lonely, unloved, judged, misunderstood, insignificant, broken, dying inside. Fine.
Methods

- Internet-Based
- Fluoxetine and relapse-prevention
- Cognitive- Behavioral Therapy for Suicide Prevention (CBT-SP)
Internet-based CBT

- Not much research
- Cost and treatment effective
- More accessible to many people
- Easily distributed to large populations
- Shown to have potential for youth
- Study by Robinson and colleagues
Results

- 21 students completed the program
- Depressive symptoms and feelings of hopelessness decreased
- Thoughts of suicide also decreased
Fluoxetine and Relapse Prevention

- Fluoxetine: A selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor antidepressant
- Reduces relapse of depressive symptoms, but 34-40% still do
- Study by Kennard and colleagues
- Results
CBT-SP

- Used to reduce risk and relapse prevention for suicidal youth with depression
- Takes place in 12 sessions
- Study by Stanley and colleagues
- Results
Spirito and Colleagues

- Looked at many studies

Conclusions:
- Majority of these studies reduced suicidal ideation
- In group or individual
Places to seek help

- Text “Connect” to 741741
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273- TALK (1-800-273-8255)
- Call the National 24/7 suicide hotline at 1-800-SUICIDE (1-8784-2433)