



OBSIDIAN QUARTERLY

NATIONAL SUICIDE AWARENESS MONTH: TALKING TO YOUR THERAPIST ABOUT SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

By: Lindsay Sher, LPC

For many therapy clients, bringing up suicidal thoughts during a session can feel scary. When thinking about how the conversation can go, clients often feel shame, fear, or worried about judgment from their therapist. Many are also concerned about the possibility of hospitalization should they mention anything about suicidal thoughts.

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States with over 1.7 million adults attempting suicide and over 12.3 million adults seriously thinking about suicide (CDC). The American Psychological Association reports suicide is preventable, noting 75% of people who undergo psychotherapy show improvement.

So how do you talk to your therapist if you have suicidal thoughts and what can you expect from the conversation? While therapists vary in style and approach, most often ask a series of questions when assessing your symptoms: "Are you sleeping more or less? Changes in your appetite? Feelings of hopelessness?" And then the question: "Any thoughts of death or feeling you would be better off dead?" Many hesitate or find this last question difficult to respond to or wonder, "What am I allowed to say here?" The answer to this question: honesty. Be open and honest with any thoughts of hurting yourself or feelings of hopelessness. Your therapist is trained to receive these thoughts and can actually be more helpful to you when they have all the information. Above all, your therapist has a deep regard for the human condition and will not pass any judgment or criticism.

Therapists recognize suicidal thoughts are a common response to intense distress. After initially asking if there are any suicidal thoughts, the therapist will further assess to get a better understanding. Questions such as "How often do you have these thoughts? Do you have a specific plan? Have you prepared for suicide? Do you have access to means such as firearms or pills?" are asked. A quality therapist asks direct and specific questions and understands talking about suicide does not increase the likelihood of suicide.

The ultimate goal is to ensure your safety. While every situation is unique, hospitalization is just one possible option when a client talks about suicidal thoughts. Often, the therapist will work with you on creating a safety plan, listing protective factors such as supports, coping skills, and emergency resources. Sometimes, therapy frequency is increased or medication assessments are appropriate. If the therapist observes you in immediate danger with a specific suicide plan, the therapist does have a duty to connect you with emergency services. Remember, your therapist's goal is your safety, and there are many options in how to support you.

It is important to note, suicidal thoughts have varying degrees of intensity – from fleeting thoughts, passive feelings, to active plans - therapists are trained to assess treatment options based on your specific thoughts and needs, many of which do not include hospitalization. Admitting suicidal thoughts with your therapist opens the door to support and healing. Help is available, and you need to speak up.

For crisis help, please call 911 or use one of these resources:

24/7 Support4U Text Message Support (youth) - text SAFE to 844-670-5838

24/7 Crisis Text Line (any age) - text TALK to 741741

National Suicide and Crisis Prevention Talk Line - call 988

SUMMER HOLIDAYS:

July:

Disability Pride Month
National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month
National Ice Cream Month

July 23 - 29: Shark Week

July 3: Air Conditioning Appreciation Day

July 4: Independence Day

July 14: National Mac & Cheese Day

July 24: International Self-Care Day

August:

National Black Business Month
National Immunization Awareness Month
World Cancer Support Month

August 6 - 11: Exercise with Your Child Week





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MEET THE STAFF



Maggie Lassar, LCSW

Q: When did you know you wanted to be a social worker?

A: My love for social work began when I took a Psychology class in high school. I learned all about mental health disorders and the impacts of trauma—after that, I knew I wanted to spend my life supporting people as they navigate through tough times.

Q: What do you do for self care?

A: Take my dog to the dog park, spend time in the sunshine, sip on chai tea lattes

Q: What is your favorite coping skill?

A: Collaging. I love ripping up magazines, getting creative, and clearing my brain!

Q: What is a fun fact about you?

A: I've never been on a rollercoaster. They terrify me!

Q: What is your favorite movie and/or TV show?

A: Anything and everything true crime-related!



SUMMER HOLIDAYS:

August Cont:

August 20 - 24: World Water Week

August 25 - 31: Be Kind to Humankind Week

August 1: World Lung Cancer Day

August 6: National Friendship Day

August 8: International Cat Day

August 9: National Woman's Day

September:

Blood Cancer Awareness Month

Childhood Cancer

Awareness Month

National Recovery Month

National Suicide

Prevention Month

Hispanic Heritage Month





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COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Our team enjoyed a lovely spring day at Blue Sky Farm in Sugar Grove, IL. Blue Sky Farm offers a variety of fun farm activities, such as goat yoga and goat snuggles. The owner, Ellen, let us enjoy the day on her farm and educated us on her farm animals, such as her mini donkey Jack and the baby goats.

We enjoyed a baby goat yoga session, an afternoon snuggling baby goats, and wandering the beautiful property.



From left to right: Jenny Diamond, LCSW, Erin Lowry, Intern, Danielle Slayer, LCPC, ATR, Lindsay Sher, LPC, Lindsey Kovalik Bianchini, LCSW, LISW-CP, Jenna Froelich, LCPC, CDVP and Maggie Lassar, LCSW.

REMINDERS AND UPDATES

Out of the office reminders:

- Katey Kollereb, LCSW: July 13th - 17th
- Lindsay Sher, LPC: July 19th - 23rd
- Sara Kaeding, M.Ed., NCC, LPC: July 25th - 30th
- Lindsey Kovalik Bianchini, LCSW, LISW-CP: August 9th - 13th
- Silvia Gomez, LCSW: August 9th - August 26th
- Elizabeth Bremner, LPC: September 9th - 16th
- Danielle Slyder, LCPC, ATR: September 4th - 13th

Please speak to your therapist about your session needs during those times. Additional dates may be communicated to you by your therapist.

Office policy reminders:

- You must cancel at least 24 hours in advance or you will be charged a \$100 late cancel/no show fee.
- We cannot provide therapy services via email or text. Text and email are available for you to communicate with your therapist to schedule an appointment to discuss your concerns.
- We do not provide 24 hour services, and your therapist will get back to you within 48 business hours.

SUMMER HOLIDAYS:

September Cont:

September 2:

International Bacon Day

September 4: Labor Day

September 5:

International Day of
Charity

September 8: Stand Up to
Cancer Day

September 9: World
Suicide Prevention Day

September 11: National
Day of Service and
Remembrance

September 23: First Day
of Fall

September 29: National
Coffee Day





OBSIDIAN QUARTERLY

COPING SKILLS CORNER

Get out a blank piece of paper and let your mind wander. Journal, draw or color.



WE HAVE A SECOND LOCATION!

We now have a second location in Anna, IL. Sara Kaeding, M.Ed., NCC, LPC will be seeing clients at our cozy new office located at 1004 Enterprise Drive.

Sara accepts BCBS PPO, Blue Choice PPO and self pay.



Click on Sara's photo to learn more about her!

WE MOVED - WITH HELP!

We moved a few months ago to a larger office space down the hall. We couldn't have done it without the helping hands at Yellow Truck Moving. Veteran owned, the team at Yellow Truck was efficient and professional. Thanks again Yellow Truck!



COMING SOON...INTERN!

Obsidian Behavioral Health has a passion for helping others in the behavioral health field reach their fullest potential. Because of this passion, we are working with a local college to welcome a Master's in Social Work intern to our team this winter!

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