

C-SSRS Initiative

Suicide is a leading cause of death; 20% of high school youth in Indiana seriously consider suicide each year. In Allen County, we've seen a 30-50% increase in suicide deaths. Anyone can be at risk – regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, type of career. Our clients, colleagues, family members, neighbors could be thinking about suicide.

Suicide is preventable IF we know what to look for and know what to do. However, in order to prevent it we must first appropriately identify it – the C-SSRS can help us do that!

Why screen for suicide risk? Approximately 25-50% of people who die by suicide are seen by primary care/ER in past 12 months for non-psychiatric reasons. Had screening occurred, suffering and deaths may have been avoided. Healthcare providers are not the only ones who can screen for suicide risk. People thinking of suicide have interactions with pastors, barbers, baristas, service providers etc. who could also ask about suicide.

Our Initiative

Stop Suicide Northeast Indiana Coalition is working with its partners to establish a **common language around suicide** across northeastern Indiana. One way to have a common language is for all agencies, service providers, educators, churches, etc. to use the same standardized suicide screening tool. Having a common tool can:

- Remove individual interpretation
- Provide proper identification and accurate level of risk leading to sound decisions about care
- Ensure a smoother transition between organizations/systems because they're on the same page

The Tool

Coalition partners are offering **free training** on how to use the brief **Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale**. Why the C-SSRS screener?

- It asks about ideation, intent, and past behavior leading to better prediction of suicide risk which can save lives
- 6 questions (or less)
- Helps determine low, medium, and high risk and what steps to take at each level
- Easy to use
- Developed by National Institute of Mental Health
- It's the most evidence-supported tool
- Free & available in multiple languages
- Anyone can use it

Using the C-SSRS helps determine appropriate response, matching their risk level with the appropriate care. Ideally pastors, barbers, baristas, service providers, parents, educators – everyone would use this so they could help those at risk get appropriate care.

Interested in learning more? Go to <http://www.stopsuicidenow.org/columbia-suicide-severity-rating-scale-screener-c-ssrs/>