**CASE STUDY SCENARIOS – SUICIDE ASSESSMENT**

**Directions: Using the Suicide Risk Assessment Checklist, assess the student’s level of risk.**

1. **Select the Risk Assessor(s) (p.1)**
2. **State the reason for assessment (p.1)**
3. **Complete the Critical Categories Assessment Questions (pp. 1-2)**
4. **Determine the level of potential risk (p.3)**
5. **Complete the Assessment Results section (p.3)**
6. **What supports would you put in place for this student? How would you recommend to parents?**

**Elementary School: Sammy**

Sammy is a 5th grade boy who told another student, Justin, during recess that he wishes the world would just go away. Justin asked him what he meant and he said that he “hates life now and school sucks.” Justin told his teacher who reported the conversation to the school mental health professional. A suicide risk assessment was then initiated. When questioned further, Sammy appeared very sad and lethargic. He shared that his parents were fighting a lot and were probably going to “break up.” He was not doing well in school and felt that all of his friends were smarter than he was. His grades have dropped since last year and he “hates his teachers this year.” He also feels that all the kids pick on him (the teachers have not observed any bullying but at times the kids do find him difficult to be around because he rarely interacts). He has been referred to the Care and Concern team due to a decrease in grades and withdrawal; there have been no behavioral issues. When asked about suicidal intent, he denied. Yet when further probed he made statements such as: “Yeah, I have wanted to hurt myself before,” “I have looked up how to do so on the internet and shooting self is easiest way to go,” “I’ve only had this thought once before but I don’t have it now,” and “it would take a while before mom and dad even knew I hurt myself.” He denied current thoughts of wanting to hurt self, denied he had access to weapons, and felt mom and dad would be mad if they knew he had those thoughts. He reported loving his parents but did not feel they loved him back and were too busy with work to be home much. He had a grandma for which he was very close to but she died 2 months earlier and this has been hard for him. He identified supports at school (teachers and aftercare school staff) but only a few friends at school and only one in the neighborhood. He shared that he found talking to adults helped but outside of school he did not feel he had an adult to talk to since his grandma died.

**Middle School: Alicia**

Alicia got into trouble at school for cheating on a math test. She was send to the Assistant Principal’s office who implemented a Saturday detention as a consequence. During their conversation, Alicia mentioned that nobody would miss her if she was not at school the next day and her parents were going take away her iPhone for a year so her life might as well be over. The AP was concerned about these comments so brought the school mental health professional into the room to talk with Alicia. A suicide threat assessment was conducted due to the comments Alicia had made. Alicia denied any suicidal intent and seemed very worried that the AP has interpreted her comments this way. She stated that she was only angry with herself and scared of the home consequences but harming herself was not something she had ever thought seriously to do. She proceeded to talk about her friends and said, “They are all so self-centered these days that of course they wouldn’t really know I was gone.” She also stated that by losing her phone, her life would be miserable as that is the only way to keep up with what is happening. As the conversation continued, she identified close friends and adults that would still love her even though she had screwed up and she was looking forward to the class fieldtrip next week. Her grades are mostly A’s and B’s and she feels that she could do better if she tried harder. She was able to identify other ways to better prep for the test so she did not feel the pressure to cheat.

**High School: Tom**

It was revealed, based on a tip from other students, that Tom had been posting negative comments on Instagram. Comments included: “my life sucks,” “life is nothing but a series of downs,” all girls are manipulative and mean,” and “someone may have to take care of my dog soon.” He also had made mention of visiting websites that explain how to complete suicide quickly. In English class he recently wrote a composition piece on how the afterlife is better than real life. When questioned by the school mental health professional, he didn’t deny these statements but refused to elaborate on any questions being asked. When asked directly about thoughts of suicide Tom chuckled and gave vague statements such as, “Anything is possible…maybe not today, but you never know about tomorrow” or “The good Tom might deny wanting to hurt self but there are others that deserve to be hurt.” He refused to elaborate more stating that it was none of the school’s business what was going on in his head. Tom had been hospitalized last year due to potential psychotic symptoms. Parents have refused to have him assessed for special education services as they feel he is fine and it’s the school that just doesn’t understand their child. Earlier this year, Tom’s teachers had expressed some concerns regarding his displays of oppositional defiance in class. He is not involved in school activities, but loves to hunt on weekends with his father and two uncles. When asked about weapons, he responded with a sarcastic tone, “of course we have them at home, we are a hunting family.” When asked about friends and support systems, his demeanor changed and he became very quiet, refusing to engage in more dialogue.