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The irrationality of suicide risk assessment

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Psychiatrists in many settings routinely encounter patients who are at risk of suicide. Where the risk is apparent, assessment includes estimating the likelihood of suicide in words such as 'low, medium or high'. Clinical experience suggests that a 'high' suicide risk rating can trigger a cascade of events in which high anxiety creates a powerful urge to eliminate risk immediately. The result can be medicalization and/or hospital admission for a psychosocial crisis. The immediate emotional relief for all involved and the lost opportunity to learn relevant coping skills reinforce repetition of the cycle. Patient suicide has psychiatric consequence for doctors who themselves have a high suicide rate. All this occurs in spite of the fact that it is far from clear what 'high suicide risk' actually means, and many of those who die by suicide were not deemed to have been at high risk. There are four reasons to question the practice of assessing an individual's risk of suicide at all i.e., suicide is uncommon even in psychiatric patients; suicide risk factors have little or no predictive validity; yet statistical predictions of human behaviour are actually superior to clinical assessments; and suicide determinations are not easy even after the event. The reasons we continue to do suicide risk assessments in spite of the evidence is discussed. What should be done? Make services safe for all patients irrespective of an individual's perceived risk. Skillfully helping those presenting in emotional crisis.

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Managing stress with music therapy

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Be prepared to move to the groove of rhythmic activities, sing with your soul, and paint a picture in your mind with the support of soothing sounds in mesmerizing musical moments. This experiential workshop is specially catered for the stressed-out professionals who need a break from the hustle and bustle of a busy lifestyle and those who have anxieties of all sorts, difficulties falling asleep, and psychosomatic issues. A range of strategies including expressive movement, song discussion, mindful affirmations, and music assisted relaxation with creative mental imagery will be incorporated in this stress management session.

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