

# CLINICAL TRIAGE GUIDELINES USING THE C-SSRS

Answers on the C-SSRS provide the information needed in order to classify someone's suicidal ideation and behavior, and when combined with clinical judgment, can help determine levels of risk and aid in making clinical decisions about care.

**Severity of Ideation Subscale** - consists of 5 questions that reflect five types of ideation of increasing severity:

- A positive answer to Question 4 or 5 indicating presence of ideation with at least some intent to die in the past one month indicates a severe risk and clear need for further evaluation and clinical management (e.g., triggers immediate referral to mental health services and patient safety precautions).

**4 – Active Suicidal Ideation with Some Intent to Act, Without Specific Plan** (e.g., I would hang myself [method] and I can't guarantee that I won't do it [intent]).

**5 – Active Suicidal Ideation with Specific Plan and Intent** (e.g., tomorrow at 1:00pm when I know no one will be home [plan], I am going to [intent] take a handful of Tylenol that I have in my medicine cabinet).

**Suicidal Behavior Subscale** - includes questions about 4 suicidal behaviors and non-suicidal self-injurious behavior.

- Presence of ANY suicidal behavior (suicide attempt, interrupted attempt, aborted attempt and preparatory behavior) in the past 3 months indicates a severe risk and clear need for further evaluation and clinical management (e.g., triggers immediate referral to mental health services and patient safety precautions).

**\*Note:** *Endorsement of other questions on the scale could also indicate a need for further evaluation or clinical management depending on population or context, however a positive answer to Question 4 or 5 in the past month or any behavior in the past 3 months indicate the most severely emergent clinical situation.*

**Additional sections on the Full C-SSRS and not on the Screener version that can augment clinical judgment.**

**Intensity of Ideation Subscale** - includes 5 questions about the Frequency, Duration, Controllability, Deterrents, and Reasons for Ideation for the most severe level of ideation endorsed on the Severity subscale (i.e., highest endorsed from 1 to 5).

- The total score ranges from 2 to 25, with a higher number indicating more intense ideation and greater risk.

**Suicidal Behavior Lethality** inquires about the level of actual medical damage or potential for it

- Greater lethality or potential lethality of the behavior (endorsed on the Behavior subscale) indicates increased risk.

