

mhGAP: Integrating mental health into primary care

Chapter 1: Introduction to self-harm/suicide | Lesson 2: Asking about self-harm and suicide

Sample questions to ask a person about self-harm/suicide

Open questions

- I can see that you are going through a very difficult period. In your situation many people feel like life is not worth it. Have you ever felt this way before?
- Is there anything in your life that is causing you pain or distress?

Direct questions

- What thoughts specifically have you been having?
- How long have you been having these thoughts?
- How intense have they been? How frequent? How long have they lasted?
- Have these thoughts increased at all recently?
- Do you have a plan for how you would die or kill yourself?
- What is it? Where would you carry this out? When would you carry it out?
- Do you have the means to carry out this plan?
- How easy is it for you to get hold of the means to carry out this plan, for example a gun, rope, or pesticide?
- Have you made any attempts already? If yes – what happened?