

Assessing a Child or Adolescent in ER

The on-call Emergency Psychiatry team is responsible for child or adolescent (under 18 years old) patients who present to the ER.

a) **Suicide Risk assessment of Children and Adolescents**

Assessment of Suicide risk is based on best practice guidelines for C&A and differs for ideation and attempts. Stats Canada 2007 data cites the prevalence of suicide 11/100,000 for 14-19 year olds. There is no record of any completed suicides in <12 years of age.

For attempts, consider both intent (purpose and context of the attempt: to relieve distress, get help or to die) and lethality (method chosen: cutting is low lethality, whereas calculated toxic overdose/hanging/jumping is high lethality). The following are **Risk factors for completed suicides**:

- males >14 years of age Caucasian and First nations
- living alone
- high intent, high lethality behaviours
- alcohol and other substance use/abuse
- family histories of suicides
- have made a prior suicide attempt
- existing psychiatric disorder
- History of impulsive aggressive behaviors
- Disciplinary or romantic crisis
- Mental State:
 - Depressed, manic, hypomanic, severely anxious, or have a mixture of these states
 - Substance abuse alone or in association with a mood disorder
 - Irritable, agitated, threatening violence to others, delusional, or hallucinating

Females presenting with low intent, low lethality behaviors such as cutting are more suitable for the CAMHUCC. If, however, you deem them at risk for completion, feel free to admit them.

b) Child & Adolescent Mental Health Urgent Consult Clinic (CAMHUCC)

Urgent consult appointments are often available within 1-2 working days. Appointments are for **adolescents 12 to 17 who present high risk for self-harm or harm to others**. The protocol for making referral to the CAMHUCC is:

1. Write the patient's name, details, and contact info in the CAMHUCC binder in Section A of KGH ER. **The appointment must be within the next 48 hours.**
2. **CALL** the CAMHUCC at **613-544-3400 ext. 2518**, and leave a message indicating that an appointment has been booked; please include the patient's name, date and time of the appointment. Alternatively, staff can also leave a message with the CAMHUCC Team Leader at **ext. 2081**. If a time slot was not available, ask for the patient to be discussed with the psychiatrist handling urgent consults.
3. **FAX** the referral to **613-544-4643**. Referrals should include any assessments completed, as well as any social work notes, or general documentation so that the clinic can minimize the questions asked to the patient and will allow CAMHUCC staff the opportunity to prepare for the assessment.
4. Inform the **parent/legal guardian (CAS) they must attend** appointment.
5. Make sure that the patient knows that their appointment will be at Hotel Dieu Hospital - Brock 5 - Suite 543 and ask them to **arrive 15 minutes in advance** so that they can be registered and have consent forms signed.

If no spot is available with 48 hours after presenting, or if the child is under the age of 12 please phone CAMHUCC (ext. 2518) with the information and fax the assessment to 613-544-4643 (as above). Tell the guardian that a child psychiatrist will review the information and that they will be contacted by Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

The urgent clinic is **NOT** necessary for under 12 year olds who present with out- of-control behavior (including threats of self-harm in the context of being disciplined), These patients frequently have pre-existing diagnosis of disruptive behavior disorders (ADHD, ODD, CD, LD) and are involved with other Child and Adolescent outpatient clinics, Pathways, CAS, or other Community Mental health Agencies and school counselors. Ask parents to contact the primary agency involved. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health provides outreach clinics to Children's Mental Health Agencies in Belleville, Brockville, Smiths Falls and Kingston).