Assessment Scales

Many scales have been developed to predict the risk of suicide.

Two effective scales that can be used in clinical practice:

"SLAP" Scale:	**Beck Hopelessness Scale:**
Interview protocol Employed when clients express suicidal ideation Designed to assess the lethality of suicide plan	Paper and pencil scale Both adult and child versions May be read to client 20/17 items - true/false

"SLAP" SCALE

"S" = Specificity of Plan

How detailed is the client's plan?

Have they thought of a place or time or deadline for the act?

Have they made special arrangements to make the plan work?

Specific plans are more lethal than vague and ambiguous ones!

SLAP - Specificity of Plan

Which plan below is *most* specific and therefore most risky?

A. "I'm gonna hurt myself so my lover will appreciate me more!"

B. "I'm gonna drive my father's new BMW into a freeway wall on my parent's anniversary next week!"

C. "I'm gonna get a large prescription of pills and take them when no one is around!"

SLAP - Specificity of Plan

Which plan below is *most* specific and therefore most risky?

A. "I'm gonna hurt myself so my lover will appreciate me more!" **(no method, time, or place specified)**

B. "I'm gonna drive my father's new BMW into a freeway wall on my parent's anniversary next week!" **(method and time specified - deadline)**

C. "I'm gonna get a large prescription of pills and take them when no one is around!" **(what kind of drug, how will this person get it, and when will it be taken?)**



"SLAP" SCALE



"L" = Lethality of Means

How precipitous is the method of self harm? Once started can method be reversed? Guns, jumping from great heights, and jumping in front of moving vehicles are highly lethal. Cutting and overdoses are less lethal because clients can change their mind.

Precipitous methods in a plan are more serious and more lethal!

SLAP - Lethality of Means

Which of the means below is *least* likely to be harmful?"

A. "I'm gonna get my husband's loaded revolver and blow my brains out!"

B. "I'm gonna jump off a nearby freeway overpass during rush hour!"

C. "I'm gonna take a whole bottle of antibiotics left over from my last urinary track infection!"

SLAP - Lethality of Means

"Which of the means below is *least* likely to be harmful?"

A. "I'm gonna get my husband's loaded revolver and blow my brains out!" (very precipitous and lethal)

B. "I'm gonna jump off a nearby freeway overpass during rush hour!" (highly lethal)

C. "I'm gonna take a whole bottle of antibiotics left over from my last urinary track infection!" (antibiotics are not particularly lethal except to bacteria in one's digestive system)

"SLAP" SCALE

"A" = Availability of Means

How accessible is weapon or means of self harm? Does the client have a gun, knife, pills, etc. in his or her possession? Do they have to steal, borrow, or purchase them? How easily can means of self harm be obtained?

Means of self harm in client's possession are most risky!

SLAP - Availability of Means

"Which of the means below is *most* accessible?"

A. "I have a large carving knife stashed in the back of my bottom drawer!"

B. "I'm gonna get my psychiatrist to write me a large prescription for barbiturates!"

C. "I'm gonna go out on the street and find a drug dealer who will sell me a large dose of heroin!"

SLAP - Availability of Means

"Which of the means below is *most* accessible?"

A. "I have a large carving knife stashed in the back of my bottom drawer!" (readily nearby)

B. "I'm gonna get my psychiatrist to write me a large prescription for barbiturates!" (both B & C rely on cooperation of others to obtain method)

C. "I'm gonna go out on the street and find a drug dealer who will sell me a large dose of heroin!"

"SLAP" SCALE

"P" = Proximity to Others

How isolated is client? Are there any significant others around who might be potential rescuers and interfere or foil the client's plan? Can others be encouraged to actively diffuse the client's plan - e.g. hide guns or confiscate pills?

Clients with few significant relationships are at high risk

SLAP - Proximity to Others

"Which plan below is ***most*** likely to be foiled by others?"

A. "I'm gonna go into the girls' lavatory at school and take an overdose of pills!"

B. "I'm gonna wait till my parents have left for work and then go into the basement and slash my wrists!"

C. "I'm gonna go to my boyfriend's house during his birthday party and hang myself in his backyard!"

SLAP - Proximity to Others

"Which plan below is *most* likely to be foiled by others?"

A. "I'm gonna go into the girls' lavatory at school and take an overdose of pills!" (possible answer - lavatories are public places)

B. "I'm gonna wait till my parents have left for work and then go into the basement and slash my wrists!"

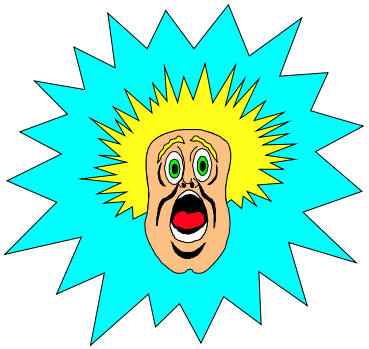
C. "I'm gonna go to my boyfriend's house during his birthday party and hang myself in his backyard!" (quite a spectacle for her boyfriend and other party goers)



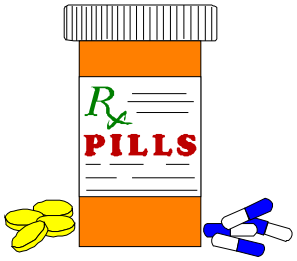
"SLAP" SCALE

SLAP Scale is not predictive when

PSYCHOSIS and SUBSTANCE ABUSE



are present in the client.



Alcohol, drugs, and severe mental illness so distort judgements that the risk of committing suicide increases dramatically.

Assessment Scales

BECK HOPELESSNESS SCALE - ADULTS

1. I look forward to the future with hope and enthusiasm. T F
2. I might as well give up because I cannot make things better for myself. T F
3. When things are going badly, I am helped by knowing they cannot stay that way forever. T F
4. I cannot imagine what my life would be like in 10 years. T F
5. I have enough time to accomplish the things I most want to do. T F
6. In the future, I expect to succeed in what concerns me most. T F
7. My future seems dark to me. T F
8. I expect to get more of the good things in life than the average person. T F

11. All I can see ahead is unpleasantness rather then pleasantness. T F
12. I don't expect to get what I really want. T F
13. When I look ahead to the future, I expect I will be happier than I am now. T F

18. The future seems vague and uncertain to me. T F
19. I can look forward to more good times than bad times. T F
20. There is no use in really trying to get something I want because I probably won't get it. T F

Assessment Scales

BECK HOPELESSNESS SCALE - CHILD

1. I want to grow up because I think things will be better. T F
2. I might as well give up because I cannot make things better for myself. T F
3. When things are going badly, I know that they won't be bad all of the time. T F
4. I cannot imagine what my life would be like in 10 years. T F
5. I have enough time to finish the things I really want to do. T F
6. Someday I will be good at doing the things I really care about. T F
7. I will get more good things in life than most other kids. T F
8. I don't have good luck, and there's no reason to think I will when I grow up. T F
9. All I can see ahead of me are bad things, not good things. T F

10. I don't think I will get what I really want. T F
11. When I grow up, I think I will be happier that I am now. T F
12. Things just won't work out the way I want them to. T F
13. I never get what I want, so it's dumb to want anything. T F

16. I will have more good times than bad times. T F
17. There is no use in really trying to get something I want because I probably won't get it. T F

Beck Scales:

- Copies of scales can be obtained from:
- Web Address - www.PsychCorp.com
- Phone Number - 1-800-211-8378
- Snail Mail Address :
  - The Psychological Corporation
  - Order Service Center
  - P.O.Box 839954
  - San Antonio, Texas 78283-8378

SUMMARY

- SLAP - Interview protocol employed when client expresses suicidal ideation
- SLAP - designed to determine how dangerous or lethal the suicide plan is
- Hopelessness scale - Paper and pencil test that can be read to clients
- Hopelessness scale has both adult (20 items) and child (17 item) versions

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