

# Suicide Risk Assessment: The SBQ-R Test

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Here's a grim and saddening fact: today, an American is more likely to die from suicide than from a motor vehicle accident.<sup>1</sup>

So just as you take precautions to stay safe on the roads (you buy cars with airbags, you buckle up, etc.) you should also take precautions to protect yourself, *and those you love*, from an even greater risk of death: **You make mental health a priority, you get help when it's needed and you never ignore the warning signs of self harm or suicide.**

As a starting point, ask yourself: *are you or a loved one deemed 'at risk' of suicide?*

Probably not something you'd know offhand; fortunately, you can find out by answering the following 4 questions as truthfully as you can.

## 4-Questions: The SBQ-R Suicide Risk Assessment<sup>2</sup>

The SBQ-R is an abbreviated name for *The Suicidal Behaviors Questionnaire – Revised*. It is a clinically valid and reliable test that is used to quickly identify people who are at increased risk to commit suicide.<sup>3</sup>

### Instructions

Answer each question as honestly as you can. Circle one answer only for each question.

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### Question 1. *Have you ever thought about or attempted to kill yourself?*

(circle one only)

- 1 = Never
- 2 = It was just a brief passing thought
- 3a = I have had a plan at least once to kill myself but did not try to do it

- 3b = I have had a plan at least once to kill myself and really wanted to die
- 4a = I have attempted to kill myself, but did not want to die
- 4b = I have attempted to kill myself, and really hoped to die

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**Question 2. How often have you thought about killing yourself in the past year?**

(circle one only)

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Rarely (1 time)
- 3 = Sometimes (2 times)
- 4 = Often (3-4 times)
- 5 = Very Often (5 or more times)

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**Question 3. Have you ever told someone that you were going to commit suicide, or that you might do it?**

(circle one only)

- 1 = No
- 2a = Yes, at one time, but did not really want to die
- 2b = Yes, at one time, and really wanted to die
- 3a = Yes, more than once, but did not want to do it
- 3b = Yes, more than once, and really wanted to do it

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**Question 4. How likely is it that you will attempt suicide someday?**

(circle one only)

- 0 = Never
- 1 = No chance at all
- 2 = Rather unlikely
- 3 = Unlikely
- 4 = Likely
- 5 = Rather likely
- 6 = Very likely

## Scoring

You circled one answer for each question. Each answer you circled has a number beside it, such as 1, or 2, or 2a or 2b etc. To add up your total score, simply add up the 4 numbers beside your answers.

**For example:**

(Question 1 = 3a) + (Question 2 = 2) + (Question 3 = 2b) + (Question 4 = 3)

**Total score** 3+2+2+3 = 10

## Are you at risk? - Interpreting Scores

- **For adults in the general population:** People with a score of **7 or greater** are considered at risk of suicide
- **For adults in a psychiatric inpatient program:** People with a score of **8 or greater** are considered at risk of suicide

#### References

1. Suicide among Adults Aged 35–64 Years — United States, 1999–2010
2. SAMHSA: The Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) - Overview
3. The Suicidal Behaviors Questionnaire--Revised (SBQ-R): Validation with Clinical and Nonclinical Samples

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