The DVD explores certain guidelines for assessing suicide risks. Although Bede Healey (the therapist) asserts that recognising suicidal risk can be difficult, he provides the viewer with a comprehensive framework for identifying and understanding the predisposing and precipitating factors related to suicidal risk. These factors are clearly outlined, clarified and well presented. Bede also presents a continuum for assessing the degree of severity of suicide risk. We argue that these guidelines can assist counsellors, therapists or any other mental health practitioners – especially novice practitioners – in tailoring a treatment plan that is in line with the severity of the client’s risk.

In this DVD, Bede presents suicidal ideation and behaviour as a symptom of an underlying problem and not as a problem per se. He proposes that when working with suicidal clients, the therapist should, together with the client, explore the ideas about suicide in an attempt to understand what problems they are trying to solve. This approach is appealing to us because if the therapist has a clear understanding of the problem the client is trying to solve and deals with the problem effectively, suicidal ideation or behaviour may subside. We support the idea that the problems clients present with in therapy are metaphors of unmet needs.

Bede Healey includes a clinical interview to demonstrate his work. The clinical interview is clear and well augmented. During the interview he maintains a client centred stance when extracting pertinent information from the client. He operates from the client’s internal frame of reference and focuses on what the client perceives as the problem. He starts his interview with open-ended questions followed by closed-ended questions to clarify specific issues. As fellow therapists, we understand and support his choice of therapeutic approach. Bede emphasizes that therapists should not appear as though they are afraid to talk about suicide as this will prevent the client from opening up, thus preventing proper assessment.
Although the DVD is short it is appealing in that the information is well integrated and coherently presented. Moreover this presentation is a refreshing approach to assessing suicide risks. It is a well construed and practical presentation of comprehensive guidelines.

**Title:** Suicide risk assessment  
**Therapist:** Bede Healey  
**Publisher:** Menninger Series, distributed by Richard Stewart Enterprises (rse@global.co.za)

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

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