

## Suicide Prevention Programs

### Review 9

McMain, S. (2007). Effectiveness of psychosocial treatments on suicidality in personality disorders. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 52 (1), 103s–114s. PubMed abstract available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17824356>.

<b>Objectives</b>	Evaluate the effectiveness of psychosocial treatments in reducing suicidal behaviors in patients with borderline personality disorders. Assess whether there is evidence demonstrating the superiority of certain psychosocial treatments over others.
<b>Studies Included</b>	Thirty U.S. and international studies published between 1991 and 2006
<b>Participants in the Studies</b>	Adults with borderline personality disorder, some substance-abusing, chronically suicidal, recent parasuicide episode and personality disturbance, personality disorder diagnosis, personality disturbance plus recent self-harm
<b>Settings</b>	Settings reported included inpatient and outpatient.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Suicidal, parasuicidal behaviors, self-injurious behavior
<b>Limitations of the Studies</b>	Small sample sizes and low base rate of completed suicides accounted for the lack of studies focusing on completed suicides. Most of the studies involved samples of patients with borderline personality disorder; therefore, recommendations about how to treat other psychopathologies of personality are not possible.

### Results

The evidence suggests that psychosocial treatments can be effective. Of the studies reviewed, the majority yielded positive findings. Four long-term treatment models—dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT), mentalization-based day treatment, schema-focused therapy (SFT), and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)—have been shown to lower the rates of parasuicidal behaviors in patients with borderline personality disorder. The efficacy of DBT in particular has been established across several well-controlled trials. SFT recipients showed superiority on all outcome measures. Patients who received CBT had significant decreases in levels of depression, suicidal ideation, hopelessness, and borderline symptoms. Of those who reported suicide attempts prior to the study, 34 percent reported a recurrence within 6 months of study termination. Research provides mixed results with regard to the effectiveness of brief skills-based interventions for patients with Axis II disorders. There are insufficient data to determine whether any psychosocial intervention can reduce the incidence of completed suicides in individuals with personality disturbance.