

# Clinical Toolkit

## Clinical Tip: Assessing Risk in Borderline Personality Disorder

### Indicators of increased suicide risk in a young person with borderline personality disorder compared with previous level of risk include:

- changes in usual pattern or type of self-harm
- significant change in mental state (e.g. sustained and severe depressed mood, worsening of a major depressive episode, severe and prolonged dissociation, emergence of psychotic states)
- worsening in substance use disorder
- presentation to health services in a highly regressed, uncommunicative state
- recent discharge following admission to a psychiatric facility (within the past few weeks)
- recent discharge from psychiatric treatment
- recent adverse life events (e.g. breakdown or loss of an important relationship, legal problems, employment problems or financial problems, school problems, friendships, family conflict, parent separation, etc.)

### Other factors associated with increased risk of suicide in borderline personality disorder include:

- comorbid mental illness
- antisocial or impulsive personality traits or a comorbid antisocial personality disorder
- history of childhood sexual abuse, especially incest and prolonged abuse
- number and lethality of previous suicide attempts
- experiences of loss in childhood