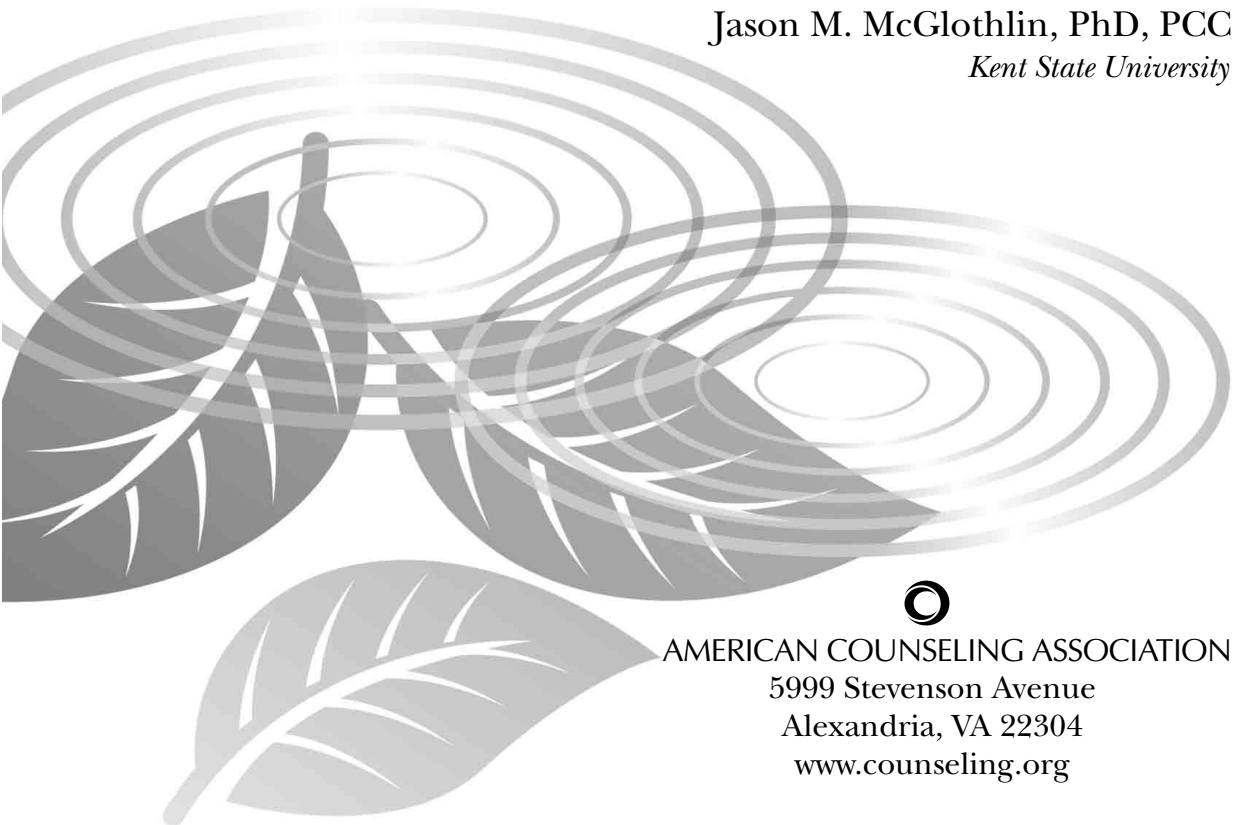


Developing Clinical Skills *in* Suicide Assessment, Prevention, and Treatment

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Developing Clinical Skills *in* Suicide Assessment, Prevention, and Treatment

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Dedication and Acknowledgments



I dedicate this book to my son, Matthew, who was born when I started writing this book. I wish that Matthew will learn from others as I learn from him each day.

I would also like to acknowledge the following individuals who have influenced this book and my work in suicidology:

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Preface



Working with suicidal clients is typically one of the most fear-provoking aspects of mental health-care. Many books present information on what suicide prevention and treatment *is*, but none describe *how* to prevent and treat suicide. Working with suicidal clients takes more than knowledge; there are specific skills needed for effective practice. Also, instructors typically do not have formal training in suicide prevention and treatment and lack a contextual framework to convey the skills needed for working with suicidal clients.

I am writing this book because I am personally and professionally invested in the assessment, prevention, and treatment of suicide. Prior to writing this book, I devoted over 15 years training volunteers and graduate students to work with suicidal clients. I worked directly with suicidal clients on suicide prevention hotlines, community counseling agencies, hospitals, and hostage negotiation settings. I have also consulted for a variety of agencies and K–12 schools on suicide prevention strategies. In my experience, effective assessment, prevention, and treatment of suicidal clients are based in the art of clinical skill development.

The writing in this book is basic and practical. It will make complex concepts easy to understand for individuals with little knowledge of the mental health profession. Actual case illustrations and discussion questions will help to contextualize concepts in a meaningful and personalized manner. This book has an expansive range of suicide prevention and treatment topics. A highlight of this book is that it will provide emerging clinicians with skills and research-based knowledge to work with suicidal clients.

This book is both elementary and advanced. It is elementary in writing, style, and scope because it is focused toward beginning mental health clinicians. However, it is advanced because it deals with a topical area (suicide) in which advanced-level clinicians work. Hence, this book could be used by clinicians in an entry-level counseling course or an internship toward the end of their undergraduate or graduate program.

This book does not require memorization; rather the knowledge and skill development will result from understanding. In addition, it blends cutting-edge research and existing knowledge in suicide prevention and treatment in a basic and practical manner.

The intent of this book is to serve both undergraduate and graduate students in community or mental health counseling, school counseling, rehabilitation counseling, marriage and family counseling, psychology, and social work. The following courses could benefit from using this book:

- Practica (undergraduate and graduate),
- Internships (undergraduate and graduate),
- Crisis counseling (undergraduate and graduate),
- Advanced skill building (undergraduate and graduate),
- Diagnosis and assessment courses (graduate), and
- Basic skill building (graduate).

Instructors could adopt this book for the following reasons:

- It is student friendly in that it provides basic and easy-to-follow skill development. It also provides information on a difficult and frequently scary topic in an approachable manner.
- It provides measurable activities and role-plays that appropriately monitor student development.
- Portions of the book focus on skill development and provide individual and group activities to increase knowledge and practice of such skills.
- Educators must train and prepare students for working with suicidal clients at an earlier stage in their education. This book provides practical knowledge and skill development for beginning students.

In addition to educational settings, there are also three secondary markets for this book. First, hotlines that deal with suicide, crisis, teen issues, and other related areas could train their staff by using this book. Second, mental health facilities (community agencies, residential facilities, and hospitals) could use this book in continuing education programming for new staff or as a refresher for senior staff. Third, clergy and those in the ministry could use this book to prepare themselves to work with suicidal individuals or people contemplating suicide.

One of the key highlights of this book is that it is presented in a developmental fashion. The first chapters (1–7) provide basic clinical skills and knowledge that contextualize suicide prevention and treatment. The next chapters (8–11) begin developing the necessary skills and knowledge for working with differing populations of suicidal clients. Chapters 12–16 focus on the skills and knowledge needed for practice and client follow-up (e.g., supervision, documentation, taking care of the clinician, etc.). Lastly, Chapter 17 provides stories of reflection and growth from clinicians who have worked with suicidal clients that in turn can provide the reader with inspiration for working with this population. Therefore, the book helps develop clinical skills at a gradual pace. In addition, each chapter is geared to learning in a developmental manner. Each chapter has the following format:

- *Overview:* A brief introduction to the chapter that presents a context and understanding for the information being presented.
- *Chapter Content:* The actual content or information being learned is discussed.
- *Activities:* Several activities will be presented in each chapter. These activities will help the instructor monitor skill development and understanding of the chapter content. In many cases a series of questions will be presented for either class discussion or individual contemplation that help in skill development and case conceptualization.
- *Chapter Highlights:* A series of bulleted points that are the key elements for students to remember about the chapter. If the student does not read the chapter (even though he or she should), these are the things to remember.

Beyond the information, skill development, and practical techniques you gain from this book, above all, I hope you learn to love life and love the lives of others! I hope you gain lessons from your clients, as I have, about the meaning and struggles of life. I always tell my students that being a counselor is the best profession in the world because you not only help people but also get to know and learn from them.

About the Author

Jason M. McGlothlin is currently a tenured associate professor in the Counseling and Human Development Services (CHDS) program at Kent State University (KSU). He teaches in the Community Counseling and School Counseling master's degree programs and the CHDS doctoral program. He also serves as the program coordinator of the two CHDS master's degree programs.

His primary areas of teaching at the graduate level include basic and advanced assessment/appraisal techniques, assessment of psychopathology, and diagnosis of mental and emotional disorders. Dr. McGlothlin's published works in the area of suicide focus on suicide assessment, the supervision of counselors who work with suicidal clients, and treating families that experience suicide. He has presented at the national, state, and local levels on suicide assessment and treatment over 40 times and has consulted with numerous school districts and mental health agencies on the implementation of suicide prevention practices.

Prior to joining the KSU faculty in 2001, he worked in community mental health and private practice settings primarily treating clients with severe mental and emotional disorders. Dr. McGlothlin has also worked extensively with suicidal clients at the Franklin County Suicide Prevention Services in Columbus, Ohio, and has formal training and work experience as a hostage negotiator.

Dr. McGlothlin is currently a licensed Professional Clinical Counselor with a supervisory endorsement in Ohio. He earned his PhD in counselor education from The Ohio University (Athens, Ohio); his MEd in community agency counseling from the University of Dayton (Dayton, Ohio); and his BA in psychology from Otterbein College (Westerville, Ohio).

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John S. (Steve) Rainey, PhD, earned his doctorate in counseling from Texas A&M University–Commerce in 2001. Following 6 years as a school counselor in the Dallas, Texas area, he was an assistant professor (Ad Interim) at Texas A&M University–Commerce. He is now an assistant professor in the Counseling and Human Development Services program at Kent State University.