Preventing Patient Suicide: Clinical Assessment and Management
by Robert I. Simon, M.D.
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Preventing Patient Suicide is the latest contribution to the field of suicidology from noted psychiatrist Robert I. Simon. As a past president of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law and recipient of numerous national awards for his work in forensic psychiatry, Simon relies on his extensive clinical experience and forensic background to produce a concise (200 page), yet resourceful book that will greatly benefit clinicians, clinicians-in-training, and clinical supervisors. Simon adeptly incorporates psychiatry specific issues such as pharmacological treatments with clarity that can benefit those from other disciplines such as psychology and social work. There is specific encouragement for providers and psychiatrists to utilize information from the entire treatment team, particularly on inpatient units, obtain collateral information, and consult with colleagues to ensure that the old maxim of “never worry alone” is truly applied.

This clinically-directed resource addresses many of the most pressing concerns and issues facing front-line providers who are interacting with suicidal or potentially suicidal patients. Whether the reader is employed at a major medical center working with inpatient populations or seeing patients as a private practitioner in the community, there is ample material and numerous case examples that demonstrate the concepts and material in real-world settings. Significant portions of the text address risk assessment and treatment interventions directed at enhancing suicide protective factors which are important core competencies for any mental health provider. However, it is the inclusion of chapters addressing some of the more common myths that continue to permeate the mental health field, such as the concepts of imminent risk and passive suicidal ideation, which are germane and not commonly addressed in other clinical resources that make Preventing Patient Suicide an essential tool for clinicians. An entire chapter devoted to gun safety and how to facilitate means restriction is another gem incorporated into this volume.

While the majority of the chapters are adaptations of Simon’s recent publications and presentations, the synthesis of these topics makes for an easily readable, clear, and empirically sound clinical resource that would benefit any mental health provider who is providing treatment to those at risk for suicide.