“What inspires me is the belief that healing involves more than treating individual health needs, but rather means to fight for humanity, human dignity and justice,”

Nehal Shah, M.D.
Understanding Suicide

Raquel Cisneros M.D.
38, 364
Suicide Statistics
Depression and anxiety
Warning signs:

- Talk about killing themselves, or wish they were dead
- Feeling hopeless, or having no reason to live
- Feeling trapped, desperate, needing to escape
- Feeling humiliated
- Having intense anxiety
- Becoming socially isolated or withdrawn
- Feeling like a burden to others
- Anhedonia
- Acting irritable or agitated
How to prevent suicide:

• Screen your patients
• Learn to identify risk factors and warning signs
• Limit access to means for suicide:
  – Guns, pills, etc.
• Take it seriously
  – 50-75% of those who attempt suicide will tell someone about it.
IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION
First
Do NO HARM
to yourself
Barrier to Treatment

The fear of social stigma

Unable to find a provider who they trust but who is not a colleague.

Concern about confidentiality

Fear of being blamed or accused by colleagues, facilities where they work.

Photo by: Andrew Larson M.D.
18. In the five (5) years prior to this application, have you had any physical injury or disease, or mental illness or impairment, which you are currently under treatment for or could reasonably be expected to affect your on-going ability to practice medicine safely and competently? If yes, please have your treating physician send the NM Medical Board a letter regarding your diagnosis and treatment.
The Risk of VIP Treatment

• Emotional isolation
• Overlooking symptoms
• Feelings of shame and fear go uncomforted
• Underestimates the patient’s suicide risk
• Tendency not to hospitalize the physician patient
• Physician patients know what to say
Crisis Centers/Helplines

• Agora Crisis Center
• Statewide help line and walk-in clinic
• 1716 Las Lomas NE
• Albuquerque, NM 87131
• Statewide Toll Free: 1-866-HELP-1-NM (435-7166)
• Local: 505-277-3013
• www.agoracares.org
• Suicide Prevention Lifeline
• 1-800-273-8255/ 1-800-273-TALK
• Available 24 hours a day.
Summary

- Ask
- Acknowledge
- Ascertain
- Act
References:

• American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org

• Depression and Suicide among Physicians: Robert P. Bright, MD, et. al., Vol. 10, No. 04 / April 2011

