Client has attempted Suicide

Assess: Find out their Means and Details of the Attempt
What is the level of lethality and injury? Is the client intoxicated?
What is the duty of care to you, the client, and the agency?

Stabilise any Injuries: Provide First Aid (according to your qualification)
Follow Program policy about first aid responses to suicide. Make sure you use the appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves). If blood is involved, be blood aware and treat the scene as one involving a blood-borne virus. Assess the surrounding area and prevent further risk of harm.

Physical Emergency: Medical Response Required
Urgent Priority: Phone 000 to get the ambulance. The client is taken to a local hospital.
Medium Priority: Phone the client’s GP and ask for an emergency appointment.

Psychiatric Emergency: Mental Health Response Required
Urgent Priority: Phone MH Services Helpline Triage: 1800 332 388 to get urgent assessment
Medium Priority: Phone MH Services Helpline: 1800 332 388; ask for MH referral options

Assess and Respond: Intermediate Safety Planning
If the client is not admitted to an inpatient medical or psychiatric facility, assess the client’s safety and risk for the next 72 hours. Negotiate with the client a Suicide Safety therapeutic contract and contingency planning for risk of harm. Remove any means for future attempts. Provide the client with contacts for Suicide Crisis Helplines. Refer the client, where appropriate, to crisis counselling support.

Document and Debrief: Critical Incident Reporting
If this has not occurred already, ensure that management are informed in detail of the client’s attempted suicide and subsequent practitioner responses. Complete a critical incident report form, and document everything in the client’s case notes/file. Arrange debriefing for yourself and others affected by the client’s suicidality, practice self care. Discuss the incident with your clinical supervisor.

Throughcare Follow-up: Ongoing Contact with Client
If the client continues in the service, negotiate safety planning measures with the client. Once information sharing protocols are in place, maintain a partnership approach with the client’s treating medical and/or psychological practitioners. Support the client to develop enhanced coping skills.
Suicide Prevention Emergency Contacts & Potential Referral Options

Emergency Services: Phone 000
Ambulance, Police, or Fire Brigade

Mental Health Services Helpline
Phone 1800 332 388 (24 hrs statewide)
Triage, Referral, Information & Advice

Department of Emergency Medicine, Royal Hobart Hospital
Phone (03) 6222 8423

Department of Emergency Medicine, Launceston General Hospital
Phone (03) 6348 7924

Department of Emergency Medicine, North West Regional Hospital Burnie
Phone (03) 6430 6633

Department of Psychological Medicine Royal Hobart Hospital
Phone (03) 6222 8805

Spencer Clinic Psychiatric Unit, Burnie
Phone (03) 6430 6575

Parkside Community Mental Health
Phone (03) 6434 6434 (Burnie)

Hobart Women's Health Centre
Phone (03) 6231 3212

Women's Health Information Service Launceston
Phone (03) 6334 8335

Lifeline Telephone Counselling
Phone 13 11 14 (24 hrs statewide)

Mensline Australia Suicide Call-Back & Counselling Service
Phone 1300 789 978 (24 hrs statewide)

Beyond Blue Depression & Anxiety Information & Referral Helpline
Phone 1300 224 636 (24 hrs statewide)

Samaritans Lifelink (Suicide Prevention for people in Country & Rural Tasmania)
Phone 1300 364 566

Poisons Information Line
Phone 13 11 26 (24 hrs statewide)

Parakaleo Suicide Helpline
Phone 1300 132 098 (24 hrs statewide)

Salvo Hope Line (Suicide Bereavement)
Phone 1300 467 354 (24hrs statewide)

Tas. Council of AIDS and Hepatitis Related Diseases (TasCAHRD)
Phone 1800 005 900

Phoenix Centre (Refugees, Migrants)
Trauma and Crisis Counselling
Phone (03) 6221 0999 (Hobart)

Drug & Alcohol Clinical Advisory Service
Phone 1800 630 093 (24 hrs statewide)

Family Violence Counselling & Support
Phone 1800 633 937

References: This document was designed around an adapted model from the following resources:

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Disclaimer: This information is provided on the basis that readers will be responsible for making their own assessments of the mental health emergency in question. It is not a substitute for appropriate professional training or qualifications.