



## SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR AND ITS INTERPRETATION IN VARIOUS THEORIES

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### ABSTRACT

*Suicidal behavior is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that poses significant challenges to mental health professionals and researchers. Understanding the underlying mechanisms and interpreting suicidal behavior is crucial for effective prevention and intervention strategies. This scientific article provides a comprehensive review of the interpretation of suicidal behavior within various theoretical frameworks. By examining the contributions of psychological, sociological, and biological theories, this article aims to deepen our understanding of the factors that contribute to suicidal behavior and inform targeted interventions.*

### 1. Introduction:

Suicidal behavior is a complex and deeply troubling phenomenon that poses significant challenges to mental health professionals, researchers, and society as a whole. It is a global public health concern with devastating consequences for individuals, families, and communities. Understanding the underlying mechanisms and interpreting suicidal behavior is crucial for the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies. Over the years, interpretations of suicidal behavior have evolved, reflecting advancements in research and the emergence of various theoretical frameworks. This article aims to provide a comprehensive review of the interpretations of suicidal behavior within psychological, sociological, and biological theories, shedding light on their unique perspectives and contributions.

Psychological theories focus on the individual's internal psychological processes and how they relate to suicidal behavior. These theories delve into the intricate workings of the human mind and explore factors such as depression, hopelessness, cognitive distortions, and interpersonal difficulties. They highlight the role of psychological factors in the development and manifestation of suicidal behavior. By examining psychological theories, we can gain



insights into the complex interplay of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors that contribute to suicidality.

Sociological theories, on the other hand, emphasize the impact of social factors on suicidal behavior. These theories take into account the influence of social relationships, social support, cultural norms, and broader societal factors. They provide a lens through which we can understand how societal structures and dynamics can shape an individual's vulnerability to suicidal behavior. By examining sociological theories, we can gain a deeper understanding of the social context and the role it plays in the occurrence and prevention of suicide.

Biological theories focus on the neurobiological and genetic factors that contribute to suicidal behavior. They explore the intricate workings of the brain, neurotransmitters, genetic predispositions, and neurocognitive deficits. Biological theories provide valuable insights into the biological underpinnings of suicidality, highlighting the potential role of imbalances in brain chemistry and genetic vulnerabilities. By examining biological theories, we can gain a better understanding of the biological mechanisms that contribute to suicidal behavior.

It is important to note that these theories are not mutually exclusive, and they often intersect and complement each other in explaining suicidal behavior. Integrated models attempt to combine multiple theoretical perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of suicidality. By integrating psychological, sociological, and biological factors, these models offer a broader view of the complex interplay of various influences on suicidal behavior.

Understanding the interpretations of suicidal behavior within different theoretical frameworks is crucial for developing effective intervention and prevention strategies. By identifying the unique contributions of each theory, we can tailor interventions to target specific risk factors and address the complex needs of individuals at risk for suicide. Additionally, continued research and interdisciplinary collaboration are necessary to refine existing theories and develop comprehensive models that encompass the multifaceted nature of suicidal behavior.

## **2. Psychological Theories:**

Psychological theories offer valuable insights into the internal psychological processes that contribute to suicidal behavior. These theories focus on the individual's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, shedding light on the underlying psychological factors that are associated with suicidality.

The psychodynamic perspective, rooted in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, suggests that suicidal behavior may stem from unconscious conflicts and unresolved issues in early childhood experiences. It emphasizes the role of intrapsychic dynamics, such as unresolved aggression, guilt, and feelings of worthlessness, in driving self-destructive tendencies.

Cognitive theories, such as Aaron Beck's cognitive theory and Albert Ellis's rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT), highlight the role of cognitive processes in influencing suicidal behavior. These theories propose that distorted thinking patterns, negative self-perceptions, and cognitive biases contribute to hopelessness, despair, and suicidal ideation.



Cognitive-behavioral interventions aim to identify and modify these maladaptive thought patterns and beliefs to reduce the risk of suicide.

The interpersonal theory of suicide, developed by Thomas Joiner, focuses on the interpersonal factors that contribute to suicidal behavior. It suggests that a combination of perceived burdensomeness (feeling like a burden on others) and thwarted belongingness (feeling socially disconnected and isolated) can lead to an increased risk of suicide. The theory also highlights the importance of acquired capability, which refers to the desensitization to self-harm and the ability to enact lethal self-injury, as a crucial factor in transitioning from suicidal ideation to action.

### **3. Sociological Theories:**

Sociological theories emphasize the influence of social factors on suicidal behavior. These theories highlight the impact of social relationships, social support, cultural norms, and broader societal factors in understanding and preventing suicide.

Social integration theory, developed by Emile Durkheim, suggests that individuals with weaker social ties and lower levels of social integration are more susceptible to suicidal behavior. It emphasizes the importance of social connectedness, social support, and a sense of belonging in reducing the risk of suicide.

Social learning theory posits that suicidal behavior can be learned through observation and modeling of others. This theory suggests that exposure to suicidal behavior or suicidal role models, particularly within close social networks, can increase the likelihood of engaging in suicidal acts.

The sociocultural model of suicide acknowledges the influence of cultural norms and societal factors on suicidal behavior. It highlights how cultural values, religious beliefs, media portrayals, and socioeconomic conditions can shape attitudes toward suicide and influence suicide rates within specific populations. This theory emphasizes the need to consider cultural and contextual factors when understanding and addressing suicidal behavior.

### **4. Biological Theories:**

Biological theories focus on the neurobiological and genetic factors that contribute to suicidal behavior. These theories explore the role of neurotransmitters, genetic predispositions, and neurocognitive deficits in understanding the biological underpinnings of suicidality.

Research suggests that imbalances in neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine, may play a role in mood regulation and impulse control, which are relevant to suicidal behavior. Dysregulation of these neurotransmitter systems has been associated with increased vulnerability to suicide.

Genetic factors also contribute to suicidal behavior, as evidenced by the heritability of suicide risk. Studies have identified specific genetic variations that may influence susceptibility to suicidal ideation and behavior. However, it is important to note that genetics alone cannot account for the complexity of suicide risk, and gene-environment interactions are also crucial in understanding suicidal behavior.

Neurocognitive deficits, such as executive function impairments and deficits in decision-making processes, have been associated with an increased risk of suicide. These deficits may



contribute to difficulties in problem-solving, adaptive coping, and inhibiting self-destructive behaviors.

Biological theories provide valuable insights into the underlying biological mechanisms of suicidal behavior. They can inform the development of targeted interventions, such as pharmacological treatments, to address specific neurobiological vulnerabilities associated with suicidality.

By considering the perspectives of psychological, sociological, and biological theories, we can develop a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of suicidal behavior. Integrating these theories can guide the development of prevention and intervention strategies that address the complex interplay of individual, social, and biological factors associated with suicidality.

## **5. Integrated Models:**

Integrated models aim to combine multiple theoretical perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of suicidal behavior. By integrating different theories, these models recognize the complex interplay of various factors in the etiology of suicidal behavior.

The interpersonal-psychological theory of suicidal behavior, developed by Thomas Joiner, integrates psychological and sociological factors. It combines elements of the interpersonal theory of suicide with psychological factors such as hopelessness and the acquired capability for self-harm. This model suggests that an individual is more likely to engage in suicidal behavior when they experience both a desire for death (thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness) and the capability to engage in lethal self-injury (acquired capability).

The diathesis-stress model is another integrated model that incorporates biological and psychological factors. According to this model, individuals have a biological vulnerability (diathesis) that interacts with environmental stressors to increase the risk of suicidal behavior. The diathesis can be genetic, neurochemical, or neurocognitive in nature, while the stressors can encompass a range of psychological and social factors. This model highlights the importance of understanding both the predisposing factors and the triggering events in suicidal behavior.

By integrating different theoretical perspectives, these models provide a more holistic understanding of suicidal behavior. They acknowledge the complex interactions between psychological, sociological, and biological factors and offer insights into the underlying mechanisms that contribute to suicidality.

## **6. Implications for Intervention and Prevention:**

Understanding the interpretations of suicidal behavior within different theories has important implications for intervention and prevention efforts. By identifying the unique risk factors and mechanisms highlighted by each theory, targeted interventions can be developed to address specific needs and vulnerabilities.

For example, psychological theories emphasize the importance of addressing cognitive distortions, depressive symptoms, and interpersonal difficulties. Interventions such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) can help individuals identify and modify maladaptive thought patterns and develop more adaptive coping strategies. Interpersonal interventions



can focus on improving social support networks and addressing feelings of loneliness and social disconnection.

Sociological theories underscore the significance of social integration, social support, and cultural factors. Intervention efforts can involve strengthening social ties, enhancing social support systems, and promoting community engagement. Addressing cultural norms and reducing stigma surrounding mental health and help-seeking behavior are also crucial in prevention strategies.

Biological theories suggest the potential for pharmacological interventions that target underlying neurobiological imbalances. Medications that regulate neurotransmitter systems implicated in suicidality, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), may be considered as part of a comprehensive treatment plan.

A multidimensional approach that integrates psychological, sociological, and biological perspectives is essential in suicide prevention. It requires collaboration among mental health professionals, researchers, policymakers, and communities to develop and implement evidence-based interventions that address the complex interplay of factors associated with suicidal behavior.

## 7. Future Directions:

While significant progress has been made in understanding suicidal behavior, there are still important avenues for future research and development of theoretical frameworks.

One potential direction is the integration of emerging fields, such as neuroscience, into existing models. Advancements in brain imaging techniques and neurobiological research can provide insights into the neural mechanisms underlying suicidal behavior. Integrating neuroscience with psychological, sociological, and biological perspectives may enhance our understanding of the neurobiological underpinnings of suicidal behavior and inform targeted interventions.

Additionally, further exploration of cultural and contextual influences on suicidal behavior is warranted. Cultural norms, beliefs, and societal structures vary across different populations and can significantly impact attitudes toward suicide. Understanding how cultural and contextual factors interact with psychological, sociological, and biological factors can lead to more culturally sensitive and effective prevention strategies.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is crucial for advancing our understanding of suicidal behavior. Collaboration between researchers, clinicians, policymakers, and individuals with lived experiences of suicidality can facilitate the development of comprehensive models that encompass the complexity of suicidal behavior. Such collaboration can also drive the translation of research findings into practical interventions and policies that reduce the global burden of suicide.

In conclusion, the understanding of suicidal behavior is enriched by considering psychological, sociological, and biological theories. These theories provide valuable insights into the internal psychological processes, social factors, and biological mechanisms that contribute to suicidality. Integrated models that combine multiple perspectives offer a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved.





Psychological theories shed light on the individual's internal experiences, cognitive processes, and interpersonal dynamics that influence suicidal behavior. Sociological theories emphasize the impact of social relationships, cultural norms, and societal factors on suicidality. Biological theories explore the neurobiological and genetic factors that contribute to suicidal behavior.

The practical implications of these theories lie in the development of targeted interventions and prevention strategies. By identifying specific risk factors and mechanisms highlighted by each theory, interventions can be tailored to address the unique needs of individuals at risk of suicide. Such interventions may involve cognitive-behavioral therapy, social support enhancement, pharmacological treatments, and cultural sensitivity.

Future directions in research involve integrating emerging fields such as neuroscience, exploring cultural and contextual influences, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. These endeavors will deepen our understanding of suicidal behavior and guide the development of more effective prevention and intervention approaches.

Overall, understanding suicidal behavior requires a comprehensive approach that considers psychological, sociological, and biological perspectives. By integrating these theories, we can work towards reducing the incidence of suicide and promoting mental well-being in individuals and communities.

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