

## **A CLINICAL APPROACH TO SUICIDE PREVENTION IN BIPOLAR DISORDER: A CASE-BASED DISCUSSION GUIDED BY THE LITERATURE**

**Chair: Ayal Schaffer, Canada**

**9:00-9:30** Introduction to course and brief overview of suicide in bipolar disorder. **Ayal Schaffer, Canada**

**9:30-10:15: Understanding specific risk factors for suicide attempts and suicide deaths in people with bipolar disorder. Erkki T. Isometsä, Finland**

**10:15-10:30: Q&A**

**10:30-10:40: Break**

**10:40-11:25:** Psychotherapeutic approaches to decreasing suicide risk in patients with bipolar disorder. **Anna Van Meter, USA**

**11:25-12:00:** Utilizing pharmacological and other strategies for suicide prevention in people with bipolar disorder. **Ayal Schaffer, Canada**

**12:00-12:15: Final Q&A. All presenters**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**BACKGROUND:** Suicide is the second leading cause of death in people with bipolar disorder. Patients who suffer with this illness are at 15 times greater likelihood of dying by suicide than their age and sex matched controls. While suicide prevention is embedded within all types of mental health care, emerging data suggests that suicide prevention for patients with major mental illness may be most effective when it is partially guided by diagnosis. The ISBD Task Force on Suicide recently published a series of papers outlining the data we have on overall risk and risk factors for suicide attempts and suicide deaths, and summarizing the literature on management approaches for suicide risk reduction. This however is only the starting point, as clinicians need to translate the evidence base into practical, real-world interventions that help their patients stay safe in the short-term and long-term. This requires an understanding of which patients are at highest risk, when during illness course are they most vulnerable, and what psychotherapeutic, pharmacological and other strategies can be employed by clinicians in the field.

**AIMS:** This course will present an evidence-based, clinically-focused approach to understanding suicide risk and prevention in people with bipolar disorder. The course will be led by three experts who have not only contributed to the literature in this field, but whose clinical work will provide the springboard for an authentic case-based discussion. The emphasis will be on practical strategies in three main areas: 1) assigning an appropriate level of short-term and long-term risk; 2) using psychotherapeutic understanding and techniques to guide clinical care; and 3) an approach to rational pharmacological and ancillary interventions. Each presentation will utilize a clinical case to ground

the discussion, and will invite attendees to share their own clinical experiences. Interactive electronic technologies will also be used to invite attendee participation.

**INTENDED AUDIENCE:** The intended audience for this half-day course is clinicians who are engaged in the care of patients with bipolar disorder across the spectrum of clinical settings, as well as clinical researchers, administrators and policy makers involved in this area.

**FORMAT:** The format will include several presentations that cover each of the main areas. Specific case-examples will be used, with attendee participation encouraged via interactive, electronic technologies, invitation to share their clinical experiences, and Q&A sessions. Course material will also be disseminated to registered attendees prior to the meeting, in order to facilitate a focus on interactivity and discussion. However, pre-readings of slides are not mandatory, as these will be briefly presented during the course.

Faculty:

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