

Suicide: A Human Crisis

Vocabulary

- *Splitting* – a defense where self and others are perceived as good or bad.
- *False Self* – Winnicott's Term for a compliant persona created to please others.
- *Holding Environment* – A therapeutic space that emotionally 'contains' the patient
- *Suicidal Ideation* – Thoughts or fantasies about ending one's life
- *Object Relation* – Internalized images of others that shape self-perception.

Reflection Questions

1. Why is it important to view suicide as meaningful rather than impulsive?
2. What internal conflict might lead someone to feel suicidal?
3. How can therapists create a 'holding environment' in session?
4. How does False Self relate to suicidal despair?
5. What unconscious messages might be contained in suicidal behavior?

Case Example

David, a 22-year-old college student, has withdrawn socially, dropped out of classes, and has recently given away his prized guitar. In therapy, he says he feels 'invisible' and that he's 'never really existed.' His father left when he was six. He describes his mother as 'polite but cold.'

6. What psychodynamic themes might be operating here?
7. What interventions could a clinician consider from relational perspective?

