

# Knowing your own frame of reference



TROUSSE  
horizons

## Exercise 1: Looking at suicide from multiple perspectives



It's interesting to consider how one's culture as well as social, legal, and scientific factors can influence how suicide is understood and addressed.

### In your opinion, would it be considered a suicide if...

- 1 A person dies by intentionally provoking someone who is armed.
- 2 A person consumes a large quantity of alcohol, resulting in death.
- 3 A person with a history of drug use dies by overdose.
- 4 A person uses medical aid in dying.

Answers to these questions depend on someone's circumstances, knowledge, personal traits, and ethical stance.

**There are no right or wrong answers.**

# Looking at suicide from multiple perspectives

Sometimes, the word “suicide” simply does not exist in a language.

The notion of “forced suicide,” recently introduced in Europe, provides a legal framework for circumstances of intimate partner violence and psychological harassment that trap an individual in a situation and limit their options to the point of “forcing” them to take their own life.

Some scholars consider intentionally provoking armed individuals a form of suicide. The term “suicide by cop” is used to describe this behaviour.

Intent is difficult to determine in the case of death by overdose. The presence of a suicide note or a history of depression can help provide clarification.

Certain methods for ending a life (like medical aid in dying) are legal in several countries as a result of sustained social and professional efforts supported by ethical arguments.

The taboo around suicide can lead to widespread denial. For example, families may hide the true cause of death to allow the deceased to be buried. This may create the impression that suicide “does not exist” in a community.

Some researchers consider excessive consumption of or dependence on alcohol—known as alcoholism—a form of “slow suicide.”

According to ethnopsychiatrist Georges Devereux, the Mojave people consider a problematic fetal position at birth a suicide attempt.

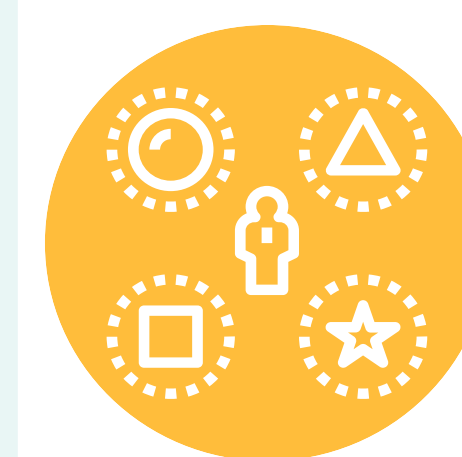
Perceptions of suicide are changing, and this is reflected in language. For example, the expression “commit suicide” is now discouraged to avoid associations with crime or sin.

## Important reminders

Conceptions of suicide vary within a given culture and even within a single individual.



They may vary according to individual factors such as gender and age.



An individual does not necessarily have a particular conception of suicide because they belong to a certain ethnocultural group.