

**The Health Belief Model: A Framework for Responding to the Rates of Suicidal Ideations Among Teens**

Lauren Hayducek, CTRS

**Overview**

- Many adolescent who experience anxiety, depression, substance use disorders, bullying, and engage in social media use are at increased risk for developing suicidal ideations
- Recreational therapists can assist these individuals in the therapeutic process of creating individualized safety contracts which identify coping skills and personal resources to utilize during times of mental distress

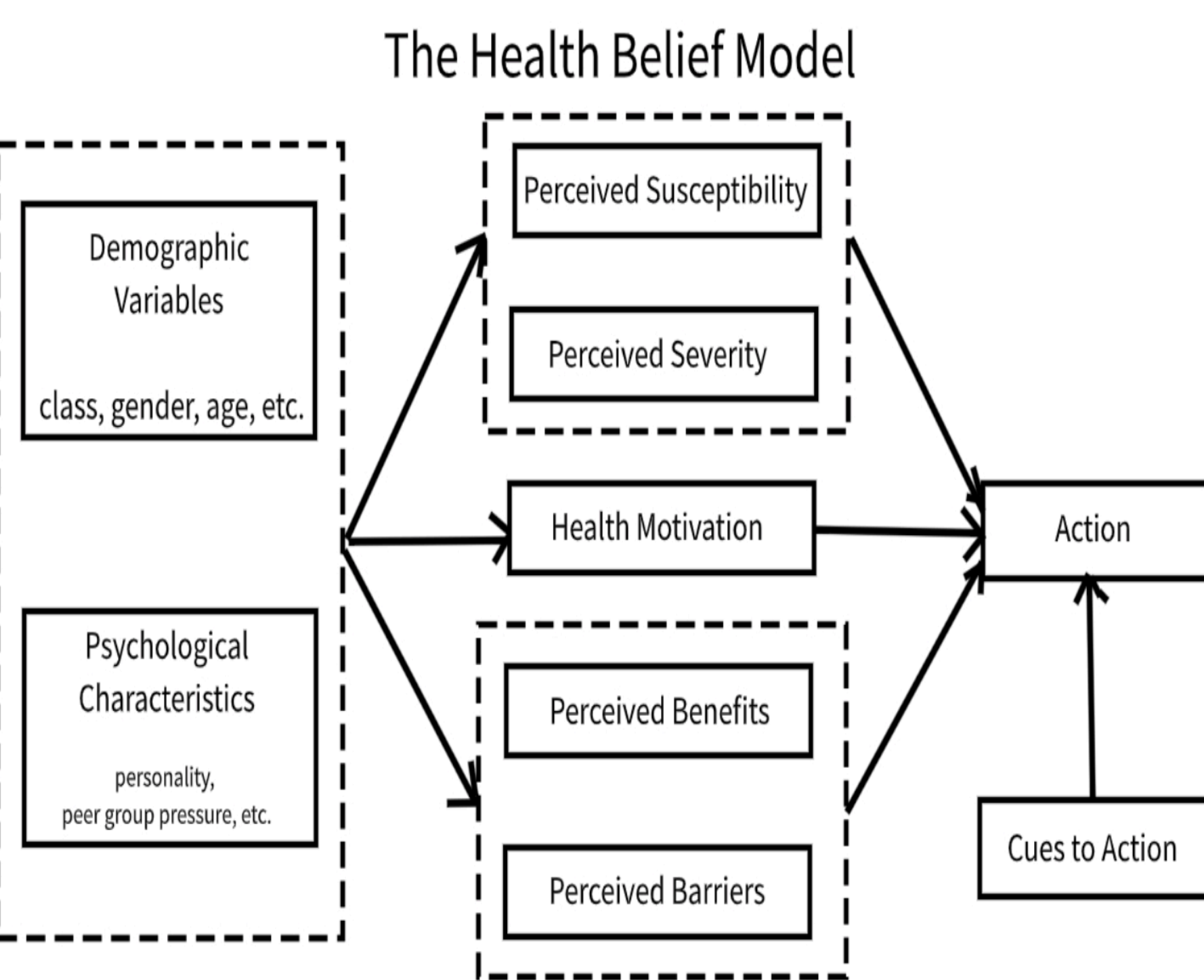
**The Health Belief Model**

- Places emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention through a person’s perspective about threats to their health and the implementation of certain health enhancing interventions

**Linking the Model to the Issue**

- As adolescents become aware of the negative effects of their mental health diagnoses, barriers and facilitators to engaging in therapeutic interventions, and development of perceived capability to cope with suicidal ideations, they are more likely to utilize safety contracts as a healthy coping skill

# Safety contracts as an RT intervention can aid adolescents with suicidal ideations in the development of coping skills to use during times of mental distress



**Implications**

- Safety planning increases confidence, feelings of support, and accountability
- RTs can help individuals determine the benefits and barriers to this type of intervention, as well as social supports, and warning signs related to mental distress
- Adolescents with mental and behavioral health diagnoses have identified safety contracts as helpful in reducing suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- RTs can help individuals determine meaningful activities by administering leisure assessments that can be used as healthy coping approaches

**Sample Safety Plan**

<b>Step 1: Warning signs (thoughts, images, mood, situation, behavior) that a crisis may be developing:</b>			
1.	_____		
2.	_____		
3.	_____		
<b>Step 2: Internal coping strategies – Things I can do to take my mind off my problems without contacting another person (relaxation technique, physical activity):</b>			
1.	_____		
2.	_____		
3.	_____		
<b>Step 3: People and social settings that provide distraction:</b>			
1. Name _____	Phone _____		
2. Name _____	Phone _____		
3. Place _____	4. Place _____		
<b>Step 4: People whom I can ask for help:</b>			
1. Name _____	Phone _____		
2. Name _____	Phone _____		
3. Name _____	Phone _____		
<b>Step 5: Professionals or agencies I can contact during a crisis:</b>			
1. Clinician Name _____	Phone _____		
Clinician Pager or Emergency Contact # _____			
2. Clinician Name _____	Phone _____		
Clinician Pager or Emergency Contact # _____			
3. Local Urgent Care Services _____			
Urgent Care Services Address _____			
Urgent Care Services Phone _____			
4. Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)			
<b>Step 6: Making the environment safe: *Call DMH ACCESS CRISIS LINE 800-854-7771</b>			
1.	_____		
2.	_____		

**References**

Dattilo, J., & McKenney, A. (2016). *Facilitation techniques in therapeutic recreation*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc.

Drapeau, C. W. (2019). Establishing a research agenda for child and adolescent safety planning. *Children’s Health Care, 48*(4), 428-443  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02739615.2019.1630281>

Jones, C. L., Jensen, J. D., Scherr, C. L., Brown, N. R., Christy, K., & Weaver, J. (2014). The health belief model as an explanatory framework in communication research: Exploring parallel, serial, and moderate mediation. *Health Communication, 30*(6), 566–576. doi: 10.1080/10410236.2013.873363

Rosenstock, I. M. (1974). Historical origins of the health belief model-Irwin M. Rosenstock, 1974. *Health Education Behavior, 2*, 328–335. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/109019817400200403>

Stanley, B., & Brown, G. K. (2012). Safety planning intervention: A brief intervention to mitigate suicide risk. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 19*(2), 256-264. doi:10.1016/j.cbpra.2011.01.001

Stumbo, N. J., & Wardlaw, B. (2011). *Facilitation of therapeutic recreation services: An evidence-based and best practice approach to techniques and processes*. State College, PA: Venture Pub.



College of Public Health  
Rehabilitation Sciences