



The Internal Case Conference

A reflective exercise to explore your internal dialogue around suicide risk

Objective

To help clinicians explore how their internal dialogue—particularly fear—shapes their approach to suicide risk, and to reflect on what an internal “consultation” with their wiser, grounded self might reveal.

Instructions

Imagine this: You’re in a private case conference—not with a supervisor, but with three parts of yourself:

- Present Self – the one who faced the client today
- Fearful Self – the part that reacts to risk, liability, and uncertainty
- Wise Self – the part that remembers your training, values, and grounding

Write out a conversation among the three, starting with:

"Today I sat across from someone who told me they didn’t want to be here anymore..."

 **Present Self:**

 **Fearful Self:**

 **Wise Self:**

Optional Prompts to Guide Reflection

- What did your Present Self feel or do in that moment?
- What did your Fearful Self want to say—or avoid saying?
- How did your Wise Self reframe the situation or ground you?
- What do you tend to avoid when unsure about suicide risk?
- What does your fear usually say—and what does it not say?
- What would help you feel more anchored next time?

Closing Thought

“When we’re scared, it’s hard to connect. But connection is the antidote to despair—for our clients, and often, for us too. Fear will always show up in this work. The task isn’t to eliminate it—but to recognize it, invite it into dialogue, and choose courage anyway.”