

Scenario #2

Rena:

Rena is a 34 yr old Native American woman with a history of sexual abuse by an uncle. The sexual abuse began when Rena was 8 yrs old and continued through her teenage years. She has been sober for 8 years and has a sponsor, but Rena rarely contacts her. Rena is married to a tribal member, and they have three children, ages 15, 12, and 8.

A significant issue in Rena's recovery has been managing trauma symptoms, including obsessive thoughts. Since the age of 15, she has had thoughts of suicide as an escape from her emotional pain. On 2 occasions as a teenager she made suicide attempts by cutting her wrists. Neither attempt was medically serious. She has been involved with counseling on and off for years. She hasn't seen her current counselor for the past 3 months.

When Rena was abusing alcohol, she would occasionally be overcome with painful feelings of shame, sadness, and fear and would begin having obsessive suicidal thoughts. Yesterday the thoughts came back—no suicidal plan—just a feeling of relief that she would feel from being dead.