

The Role of Forgiveness in Suicide Prevention and Recovery



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Now is the Time
UW-Whitewater

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Can we talk?

ANGER

Bullying
Shame

Dad


Isolated

Depression

Unforgiveness

Brother:

Alcoholism




Suicide Risk Factors

- Age
- Gender
- Race and Ethnicity
- Demographics
(Sexuality)
- Health Factors
- Personality Factors
- Sociological Factors
- Social Factors
- History of
Sexual/Physical Abuse
- Psychological Disorders




The Inter- Personal Theory

- Perceived Burdensomeness
- Thwarted Belonging



What are the results of unforgiveness?


- **Physically**—stress, high blood pressure, ulcers, addictions
- **Mentally**—distracted, triggered
- **Emotionally**—depression, anger, bitterness
- **Relationally**—broken, distant, distrust
- **Spiritually**—broken, less than life



What are the
results of
unforgiveness?

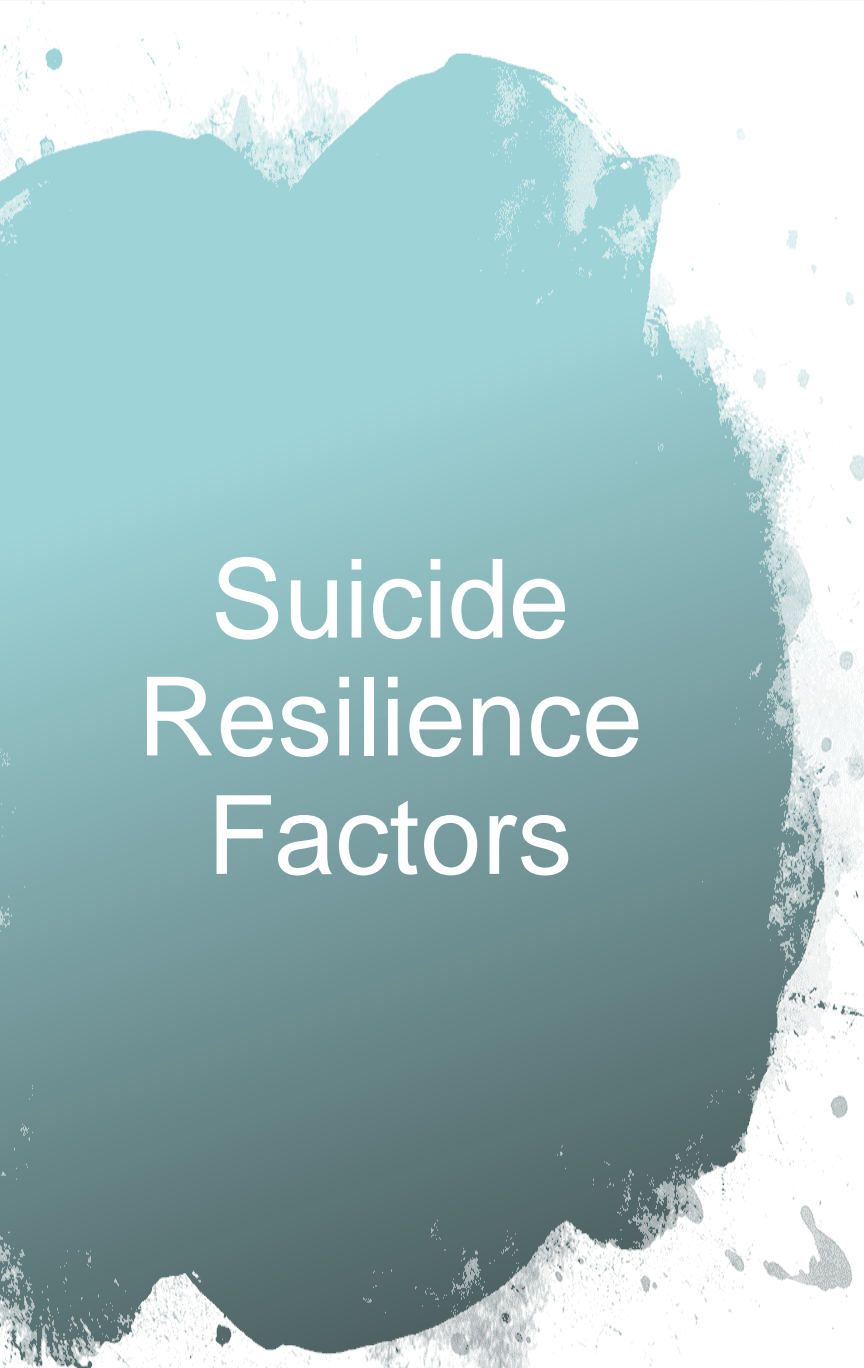
- **RESENTMENTS!!**
and all its baggage

- **Self-
Condemnation
Shame**



How do
we deal
with it?

- Defense Shields
- Isolation
- Anger
- Avoidance
- Addictions
- Secrets
- Depression



Suicide Resilience Factors

- Hope
- Forgiveness



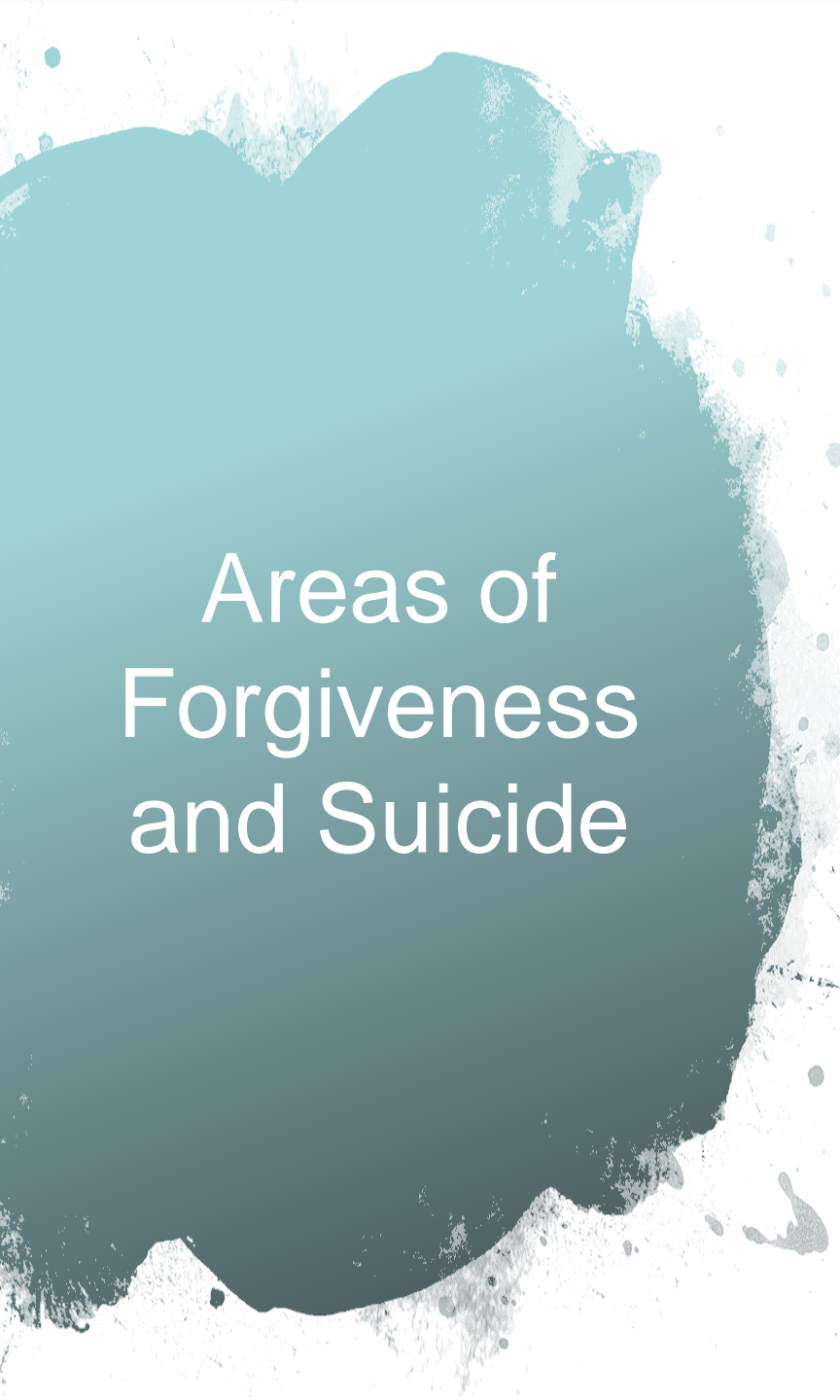
Role of Forgiveness

- Deal with being hurt by others
- Deal with hurting oneself



Areas of Forgiveness

- Forgiving those who harmed us (Monsters)
- Forgive ourselves for hating ourselves, hurting ourselves



Areas of Forgiveness and Suicide

- **Prevention**
 - Individual
 - Public Health
- **Postvention**
 - Self
 - Others



What
forgiveness
is

“When we forgive,
we willingly and
deliberately offer
goodness to those
who have been
unfair to us.”

Dr. Robert Enright,
UW-Madison



What
forgiveness
is

Reducing/Replacing:
resentments, anger,
behaviors, thoughts
with positive
thoughts, feeling and
behaviors toward the
offender (other or
self)



How do I
forgive?

- Acknowledge
the pain and
the junk




How do I
forgive?

- Decide my way isn't working



How do I
forgive?

- Consider forgiveness
- Choose to forgive
- Decide to work at forgiving




Work of forgiving

- Rehumanize
 - Your Spiritual Foundation
 - Common Humanity
 - Uniqueness




Reflection

- How have I grown?
- How can I use what I have learned?



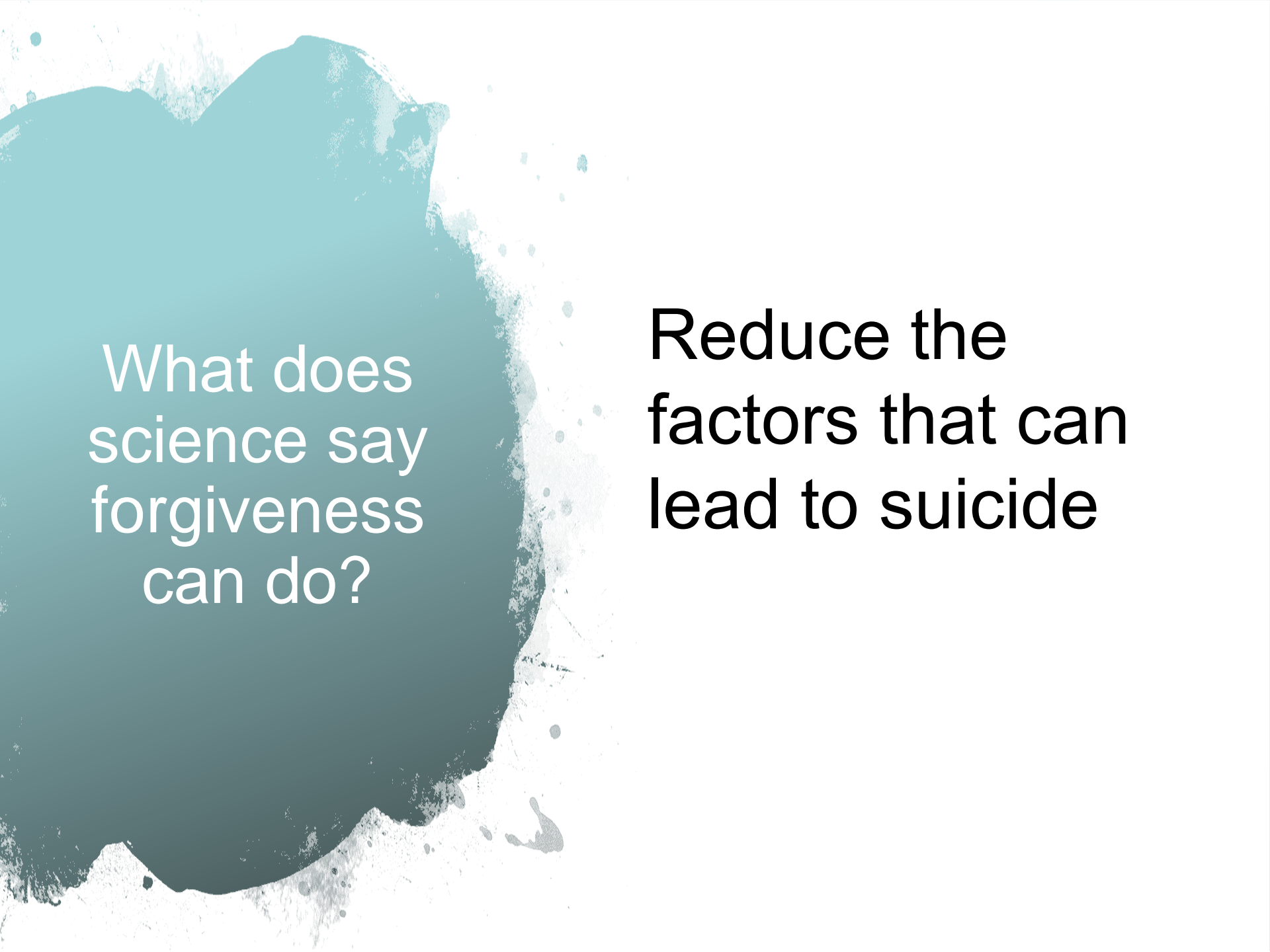
What does
science say
forgiveness
can do?

- Reduce psychological depression
- Reduce anxiety
- Reduce unhealthy anger
- Decrease posttraumatic stress symptoms




What does
science say
forgiveness
can do?

- Increase quality of life
- Increase focus (not distracted by the thoughts and negative feelings)
- Increase cooperation and reduce bullying (deal with underlying issue)
- Increase self-esteem



What does
science say
forgiveness
can do?

Reduce the
factors that can
lead to suicide



What does
science say
forgiveness
can do?

- Perceived
Burdensomeness
- Thwarted
Belonging



Forgiving yourself

- How do you talk about yourself to yourself?
- You can and should honor yourself even as you are imperfect
- Offering yourself a sense that you have inherent worth



Forgiving yourself

- You are more than your actions
- Admit you did wrong and need to correct wrong done to other people
 - Seek forgiveness




Where to apply forgiveness?

- Universal prevention—
teach all children/adults
how to forgive
- Intervention—lack of
ability and willingness to
forgive in those at risk
(Self and Others)
- Postvention—Self;
Survivors: Self and
Person who killed
themselves



Living as
if . . .

- First---shut up!
- Recognize we are leaky people
- Choose the positive over the negative
- Look for love, mercy and forgiveness
- Practice love, mercy and forgiveness



**There is more
to your story**

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Contact
information

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Thank you.

Go and do
amazing
things!