
PHENOMENOLOGY OF SUICIDE RISK: UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS WITH UNIQUE MOTIVES FOR THE SUICIDAL ACT

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This presentation was developed with the aim of shedding light on the phenomenology of suicide, that is, to focus on suicide as a phenomenon affecting a unique individual with unique motives for the suicidal act. Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first-person point of view. To explore this topic, the author looks back at the past centuries to understand why suicide was thought to be confined to psychiatric illness and to document the bias in studies supporting this notion. In contrast, here it is argued that suicide should not be considered to be a symptom. Rather suicide is a separate dimension motivated by reasons which overlap the psychiatric dimension. One major step forward in the conceptualization of suicide as a psychological disorder was provided by suicidology. Such discipline described how the development of a state of the mind, that is, perturbation as a result of prolonged frustration of vital psychological needs, can undermine individual's life when the subject realizes that suicide is the best option to solve unbearable psychological pain. This essay also searches for new clues in the phenomenology of suicide and proposes an integration of biological and psychological perspectives in order to describe and help suicidal individuals comprehensively.