Observer Checklist

Mark each skill demonstrated:

☐ Built rapport
☐ Demonstrated empathy
☐ Asked directly about suicide
☐ Assessed frequency of thoughts
☐ Assessed plan
☐ Assessed means/access
☐ Assessed intent
☐ Assessed previous attempts
☐ Explored protective factors
☐ Discussed safety planning
☐ Maintained a calm, nonjudgmental tone

Strengths Observed

Opportunities for Growth

Debrief Questions

1. What warning signs were present before suicide was discussed?
2. How did the counselor transition into asking about suicide?
3. What responses communicated empathy effectively?
4. What additional assessment questions might have been useful?
5. Based on the information provided, what level of risk would you consider and why?

This scenario is particularly useful because many counselors are comfortable recognizing sadness but less comfortable recognizing suicide risk when it presents as stress, anger, shame, or burnout.