



SUICIDE & CONFIDENTIALITY:

THE CASE OF NADIA KAJOUJI

REX ROMAN, PH. D.

JEMH CONFERENCE ON ETHICS

IN MENTAL HEALTH

MAY 14, 2010

Part I

Nadia's Story


Nadia Kajouji

- 18 years old
- First year student at Carleton University
- Public Affairs/Policy
- Lives in residence
- Home in Brampton
- Intelligent



March 2008

Medical Care | Health and Counselling Services 10/09/09 8:27 PM



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Medical Care



Our team of medical professionals including family physicians and registered nurses provides outpatient medical services and serve as primary care providers at Health and Counselling Services (HCS). **Appointments** can be made for general health concerns, and walk in services are available for those in need of more immediate medical assistance. HCS provides specialized services to meet the needs of the Carleton University student population, faculty and staff in addition to basic medical and walk in services. These services include:


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Contact Us

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Counselling Services



At Carleton University's Health and Counselling Services (HCS), we understand that while the university experience can be exciting, it can also be stressful. Time demands and deadlines for term papers and exams are all a part of being a university student. However, there may also be issues in your life pertaining to family, friends, roommates, and romantic relationships. A therapeutic relationship can provide insight and guidance concerning such issues for some students.

Confidential personal counselling services are available for current Carleton University students. Our primary responsibility is to alleviate distress and promote healthy functioning by providing short-term counselling services. These services include individual, group, and problem solving sessions; consultation and referral services; and public presentations for campus organizations.

Some examples of the issues students may discuss with a counsellor include: [coping with stress](#), [homesickness](#), decreasing sadness, handling a crisis, improving communication, learning to be assertive, study skills, increasing self-esteem, understanding one's sexuality, decision-making, and [dealing with alcohol and/or drug concerns](#).

Contact Us

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Hours: See Hours & Appointments

[Contact Page](#)

Should you tell the Parents?





March 9, 2008 - Nadia Missing

- Media sensation: Sexual Predator?
- Interview with parents
- \$50,000 reward
- Intensive search
- University does not reveal information

April 2008 – Body Found



Student's death highlights struggles in 1st year of university

Last Updated: Tuesday, April 22, 2008 | 3:51 PM ET [Comments 21](#) [Recommend 68](#)
[CBC News](#)

The death of a Carleton University student from Brampton, Ont., highlights the struggles faced by many students in their first year of university, said her father, fellow students and social service providers.

Nadia Kajouji, 18, was identified by her father, Mohamad Kajouji, as the body pulled from the shore of the Rideau River on Sunday morning.

He told CBC News on Monday that his daughter's identification was found on the body, which had a distinctive tattoo, based on descriptions from police.

An autopsy was to be conducted Tuesday.

The first-year Carleton student was last seen in her dormitory room on March 9. Her family only learned after her disappearance that recently, she had been drinking, taking anti-depressants and receiving counselling. She had also spoken to a friend on the internet about taking her own life.



Nadia Kajouji's family only learned after her disappearance of her troubles. (Ottawa Police)

Mohamad Kajouji recalled that he hadn't known about those troubles when he spoke to his daughter just a few weeks before her disappearance.

"We talked and we joked, and everything seem[ed] normal," he said.

He warned other parents to speak to their university-age children often.

"Make sure you check on them every second, third to fourth day."

Nadia's parents have complained that the university never told them their daughter was receiving



Mohamad Kajouji said he

medication and counselling services for depression.

The university's vice-president for student support services, Suzanne Blanchard, responded Tuesday that the university was bound by confidentiality laws.

"The only time when we can do that ...legally is when it becomes a crisis situation," said Blanchard. She added that the university has reviewed all the things it did for Nadia Kajouji. "And we really feel that we've done everything that we could in Nadia's situation."

talked to his daughter a few weeks before her disappearance and everything seemed fine. (CBC)



Dr. Ann Cavoukian

Practice Tool for Exercising Discretion:

**Emergency Disclosure of Personal Information
by Universities, Colleges
and other Educational Institutions**

October 2008



**David Loukidelis
Commissioner**



**Information and Privacy
Commissioner of Ontario**

**Ann Cavoukian, Ph.D.
Commissioner**

Former nurse probed in student's suicide

February 26, 2009

ROBYN DOOLITTLE
STAFF REPORTER

A former nurse from Minnesota is under investigation for encouraging Brampton teenager Nadia Kajouji to commit suicide, the girl's family said yesterday.

Ottawa police have been in discussions with the Minnesota Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force since mid-January.



SUPPLIED PHOTO
Nadia Kajouji, who was a student at Carleton University, disappeared in Ottawa March 9, 2008.

The individual being investigated, who is "very active" on the Internet, had already been examined by the organization. Sources familiar with the investigation indicated the man might have had similar online conversations with other vulnerable youth.

February 27, 2009

Nurse may be linked to multiple suicides, tracker says


By ERIN ANDERSEN
From Saturday's Globe and Mail

A British woman who has been tracking the Internet footsteps of a Minnesota man for allegedly encouraging or advising young people to commit suicide through online chats and social-networking sites believes he may have played a role in a number of hanging deaths and attempted suicides in several countries over the last three years.

Celia Blay, an amateur historian living near Birmingham, said she has been in contact with Minnesota police, who this week took the unusual step of releasing the name of William Francis Melchert-Dinkel. The 46-year-old nurse and father is being investigated in relation to the suicide of 18-year-old Nadia Kajouji, a Carleton University student who was found drowned in Rideau River near the Ottawa school in April last year.

Shortly before her death, Ms. Kajouji conversed online with someone posing as a young woman - now alleged to be Mr. Melchert-Dinkel - who suggested that Ms. Kajouji hang herself and urged her to capture her final moments with a webcam, as part of a joint suicide pact.

In an eerily similar case, a British mother has come forward to say that Mr. Melchert-Dinkel allegedly attempted to make the same pact over the Internet with her 32-year-old son, Mark Drybrough, who hung himself in his Coventry home in 2005. After he died, the family discovered two months of online chats with someone going by the aliases Falcongiri and Li Dao. Elaine Drybrough said she has been co-operating with police in Minnesota since last year, after she failed to convince local authorities to pursue the case.

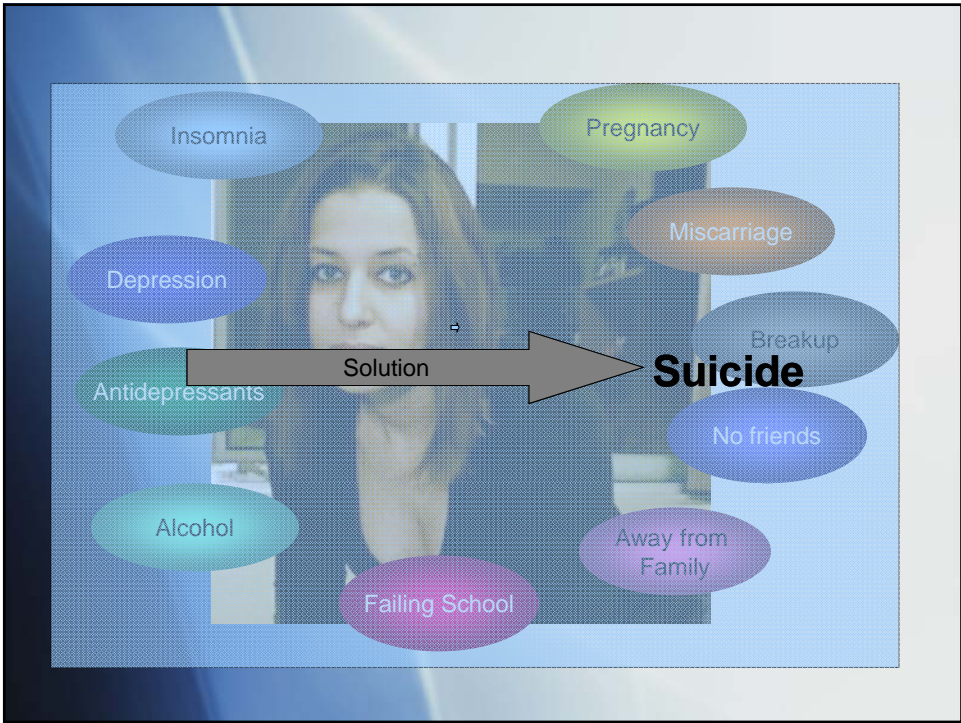


QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.



Part II

What Went Wrong

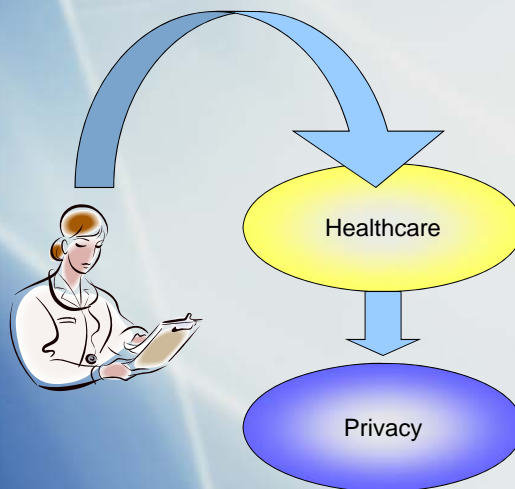


Kirby: Out of the Shadows

by France Daigle, Suicide Prevention Program, New Brunswick Ministry of Health, who stated that:

...the first thing people say is, "I cannot tell you anything because of confidentiality." However, when you have someone that is at risk for suicide, and as much as I do respect confidentiality, because we have a code of ethics, what is more important? You have to let the family and other people know.

Duty to Care

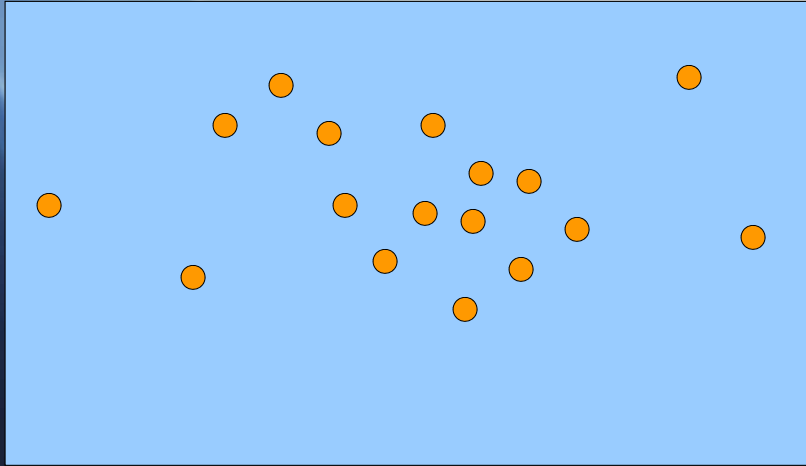




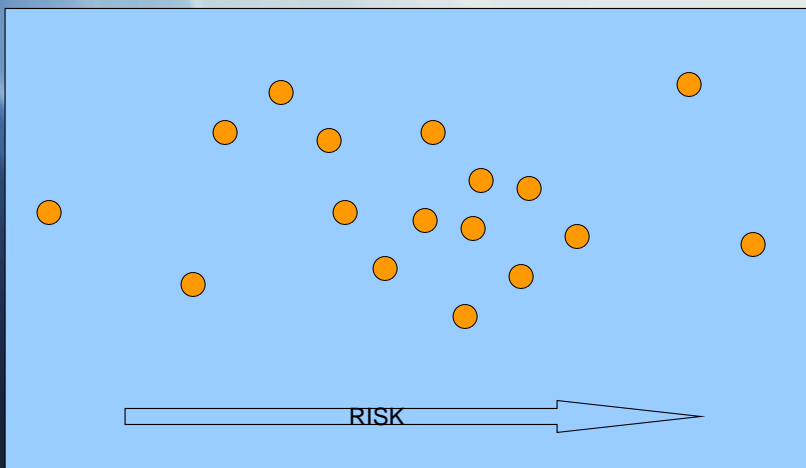
Practitioner's Statement

I did not see any significant therapeutic value in telling anyone, therefore I respected the client's privacy.

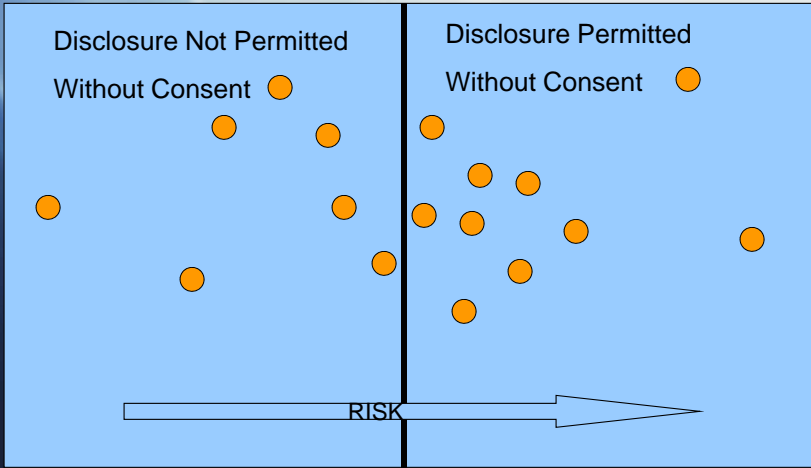
An Array of Clients



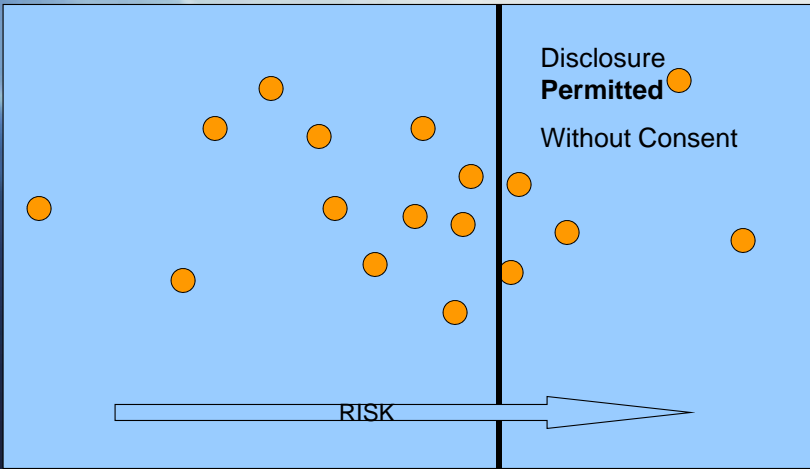
Clients with Different Risk

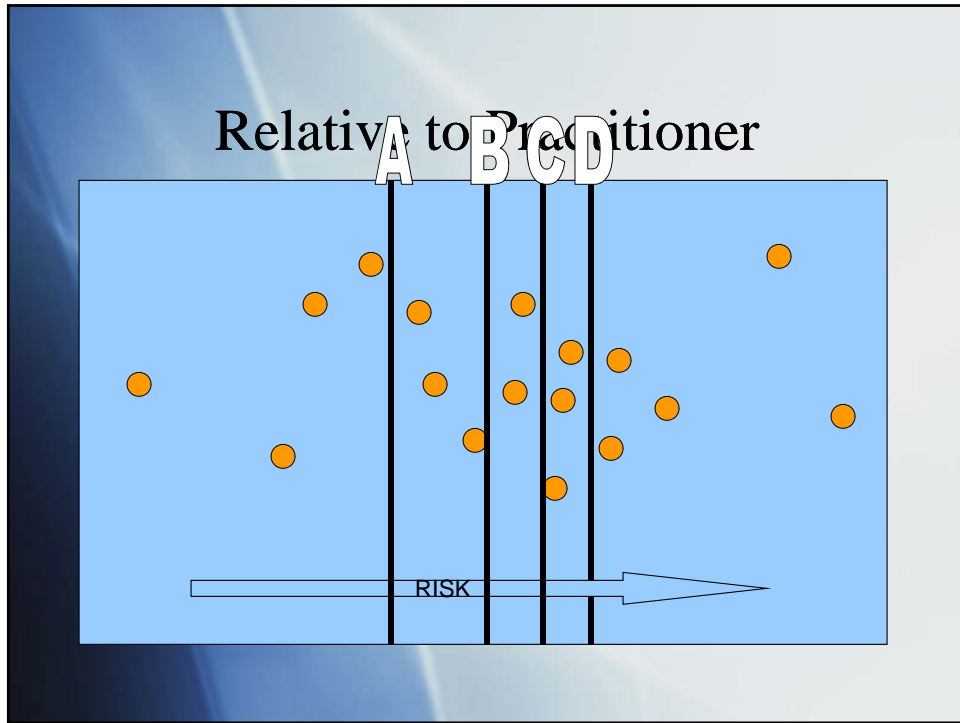


The Law



No Legal Duty





The Mental Health Act

- Permission
- No Duty

Malpractice

- Imprecise
- No clear direction
- Punitive rather than prescriptive

Discretion

- Legalistic*
- Culture
- Lack of Knowledge

**Legalism, Countertransference, and Clinical Moral Perception, Renmeester & George, The American Journal of Bioethics, 9(10):20-28,2009*

Option One

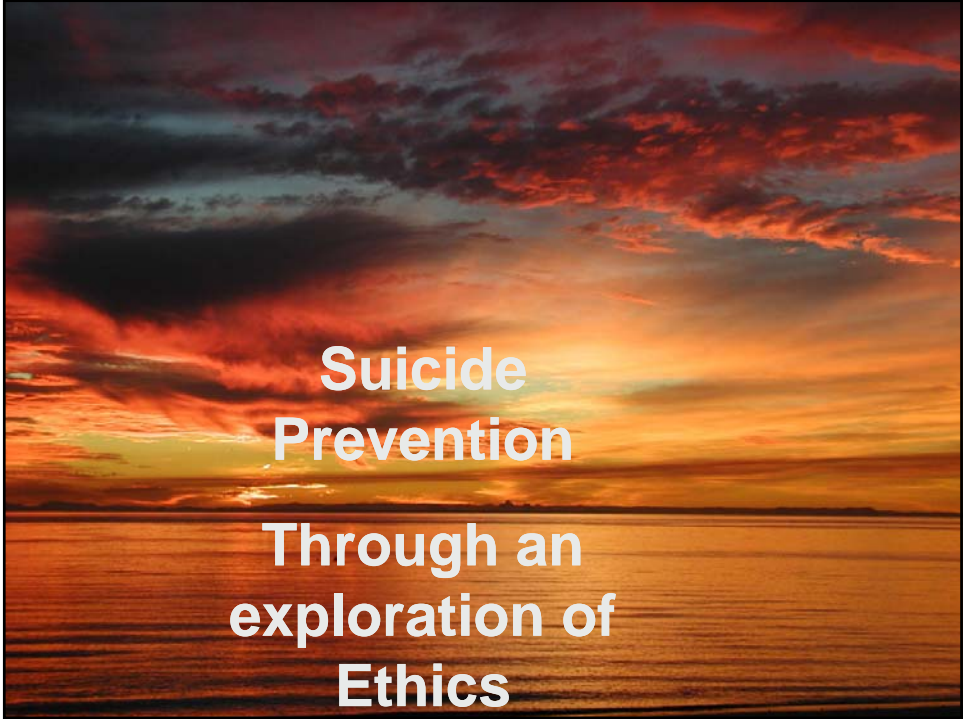
- Change the Privacy Law
- For example, Section 72 CFSA

Option Two

- Change the Culture
- Education
- Policy
- Interprofessional
- Inclusion of peers in consults
- Inclusion of family & friends in therapy

Role of the Bioethicist

- Education
- Policy
- Advocacy for Suicide Prevention
- Mental Health & Ethics Consults



**Suicide
Prevention
Through an
exploration of
Ethics**