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Functional Somatic Symptoms in Children and Adolescents: The Stress-System Approach to Assessment and Treatment

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Online Supplement 16.1

Traffic Light Safety-Plan Tool: Description

In this supplement to Chapter 16, we provide the reader with a brief history of the traffic light system in the health setting.

The traffic light system for monitoring risk derives from the red, orange, and green colours used in traffic lights. This system has come to be used much more broadly, including air traffic control, food labelling for public health, and in relation to be chronic health conditions and acute mental health problems. Histories can be found in Ryrie and colleagues (1997), Ashir and Marlow (2009), and Taylor and colleagues (2011). In paediatrics, the traffic light system has been used to assess risk in treating medical disorders (e.g., fever) (NICE 2013).

In our own clinical setting, the first author (KK) and her team use the safety-plan tool developed by the mental health clinician Danae Laskowski. Danae and the first author work together via the TelePsychiatry program, run out of The Children's Hospital at Westmead, that reaches out to rural mental health centres throughout the state of New South Wales. The first

author and her mind-body team use Danae's safety-plan tool with patients of all ages and across a wide range of clinical presentations and diagnoses.

Online Supplement 16.2 presents examples of the safety-plan tool. As explained in that supplement, two examples of filled-out safety plans are provided, and we have also included blank safety plans, both in colour and greyscale, that readers can print out for use with their own patients. With that in mind, the supplement is formatted for printing full-size on A4 paper.

References

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