

The month of September is **Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month**. By starting the conversation, providing support, and directing help to those who need it, you can help prevent suicides and save lives.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, **call 911**.

Suicide Risk Factors

*Risk factors are characteristics that make it **more likely** someone will consider, attempt, or die by suicide. They can't cause or predict a suicide attempt, but they're important to be aware of.*

- Mental disorders, particularly mood disorders, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, and certain personality disorders
- Alcohol and other substance use disorders
- Hopelessness
- Impulsive and/or aggressive tendencies
- History of trauma or abuse
- Major physical illnesses
- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- Family history of suicide
- Job or financial loss
- Loss of relationship(s)
- Easy access to lethal means
- Local clusters of suicide
- Lack of social support and sense of isolation
- Stigma associated with asking for help
- Lack of healthcare, especially mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Cultural and religious beliefs, such as the belief that suicide is a noble resolution of a personal dilemma
- Exposure to others who have died by suicide (in real life or via the media and Internet)

Suicide Warning Signs

*Some warning signs may help you determine if a loved one is at risk for suicide, especially **if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.***

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Extreme mood swings



Information adapted from suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Responding to People at Risk for Suicide

Be prepared by knowing who to contact in your workplace if a co-worker is in distress or suicidal. Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and HR Department are the appropriate first points of contact. If you are experiencing a crisis, call 911.

Take action if you encounter someone at **immediate suicide risk.**

If a co-worker is...

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

Take these steps immediately:

1. **Call 911** if the danger for self-harm seems imminent.
2. **Stay with the person** (or make sure the person is in a private, secure place with another caring person) until you can get further help.
3. **Contact the EAP or HR Department** and they will help you decide what to do. Provide any background information that may be helpful.
4. **Continue to stay in contact with the person** and pay attention to how he or she is doing.

Reach out to someone who **may be at risk for suicide.**

To help co-workers who may be at risk for suicide, you can take the steps below, depending on what feels most comfortable to you:

- Talk with your Employee Assistance Program or HR Department about your concerns.
- Reach out to the person:
 - Ask how he or she is doing.
 - Listen without judging.
 - Mention changes you have noticed in your co-worker's behavior and say that you are concerned about his or her emotional well-being.
 - Suggest he or she talk with a mental health professional from the Employee Assistance Program or the HR Department. Offer to help arrange an appointment and go with the person.
- Continue to stay in contact with the person and pay attention to how he or she is doing.

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