



SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION FOR MANAGERS

**PRESENTED BY YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
AND WORKLIFE PROGRAMS**

September 24, 2025

OBJECTIVES

- Review myths and facts about suicide
- Recognize warning signs and when to intervene
- Discuss how to have conversations about suicide
- Explore how to engage with a distressed or in-crisis employee and take care of yourself

SECTION 1

MYTHS VS FACTS

MYTH VS FACT

MYTH

A person who talks about suicide doesn't really intend to act on it

Talking about suicide could be a cry for help – always take the person seriously

FACT

MYTH VS FACT

MYTH

Most suicides happen suddenly, without any warning

In most cases, there are signs (verbal or behavioral indicators) leading up to a suicide

FACT

MYTH VS FACT

MYTH

Only people with mental disorders die by suicide

Suicidal behavior is indicative of someone in despair, but it does not necessarily mean they have a mental disorder

FACT

MYTH VS FACT

MYTH

A person who has attempted suicide will never attempt it again

Previous suicide attempts are a KEY risk factor for the likelihood of a future attempt

FACT

UNITED STATES STATISTICS

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death

- The second leading cause among ages 10-24

Highest suicide rates

- White males aged 45-54
 - » Comprise 69% of suicides
- Women attempt suicide more frequently

In 2023, there were over 49,000 suicide deaths

Approximately 58% of suicides are by firearms

SECTION 2

RISK FACTORS AND WARNING SIGNS

RISK FACTORS



Previous suicide attempts



Psychological, emotional, or chronic physical pain



History of mental health issues



Substance misuse (alcohol or drugs)



Change in medications



Feeling trapped – like there's no way out

WARNING SIGNS

Expressing having no reason for living or sense of purpose in life

Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, and helplessness

Withdrawal from friends, family, and society

Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge

Acting recklessly, impulsively, or engaging in risky activities

Dramatic mood changes

Giving away prized possessions or seeking long-term care for pets

HIGH RISK WARNING SIGNS

Threatening an attempt

Talking or writing about death, suicide, or wanting to die

Seeking out ways to end life, such as researching methods or acquiring firearms, available pills, or other means

Previous suicide attempt

THREE-STEP THEORY

Research shows:

1

Pain and hopelessness equal suicide ideation

2

A lack of connectedness to loved ones, a valued role, or any sense of meaning and purpose raises the risk of suicide ideation

3

Ideation can lead to suicide if there is:

- Access to lethal means
- Reduced fear of death
- Familiarity with or desensitization to violence or injury
- Decreased physical pain tolerance

SECTION 3

ENGAGING THE EMPLOYEE

ENGAGING A DISTRESSED EMPLOYEE

- **Share what you’ve observed recently and explain how it led you to check in**
 - “I’ve noticed that you seem more [confused, emotional, agitated; appear less kempt] than usual, and I am concerned about you. Is everything okay?”
 - “I wanted to check in with you because you haven’t seemed yourself lately.”
- **Actively listen without judgment**
- **Be prepared to offer resources**
 - Human Resources, the EAP, and any other internal resources
- **Follow up without being invasive**

ENGAGING AN EMPLOYEE WHO MIGHT BE AT RISK FOR SUICIDE

– Be prepared to ask about suicide directly

Choose a variation of the question below that you feel comfortable saying

- “I’m concerned about what you’ve been saying today. Have you been thinking about suicide?”

– Practice it until you sound confident

If the person senses your discomfort, they may lose trust in your ability to handle what they tell you

ENGAGING AN EMPLOYEE WHO IS AT RISK FOR SUICIDE

Take all threats seriously, no matter the source

- Be direct and let the person know what you've learned
- Show concern and provide support
- Do not minimize the threat or question their personal problems
- Protect their privacy, but don't agree to keep anything secret
- Offer to contact the EAP, HR, or someone they consider to be supportive of them in the moment
- Be prepared to call 911 or 988
- Thank them for having the courage to talk with you
- Stay with them until help arrives

SELF-CARE FOR MANAGERS



Process difficult encounters with colleagues, Human Resources, or your manager

Maintain confidentiality, except on a need-to-know basis



Engage in regular self-care practices

- Yoga, meditation, exercise
- Time away from technology
- Engaging in hobbies



Watch your stress level and act to keep it to a minimum



Consider using the EAP

SUMMARY



- Recognize warning signs
 - Early recognition and intervention can save lives
- Intervene effectively
 - Compassionate, direct conversations make a difference
- Connect employees to resources
 - Managers are key connectors to help and hope
- Maintain your well-being
 - Self-care is essential for sustained effectiveness

RESOURCES

Books

- Why People Die by Suicide
 - Thomas Joiner, 2007

Websites

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
 - Call or text 988
 - Veterans: Dial 988, then press 1
 - 988lifeline.org
- [Mental Health America](https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)

Online Articles

- [Suicide Prevention](#)
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- [Suicide Prevention: Risk Factors and Warning Signs](#)
 - The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

Apps

- [Moodfit](#)
- [My3](#)

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