



**IB E A M**

**WORKFORCE**

## EDUCATIONAL VIDEO SERIES

### Preventing Suicide



#### ➔ What are the warning signs?

Although it may not always be obvious, individuals who are experiencing suicidal ideation usually exhibit one or more of the warning signs of suicide. The ability to identify the warning signs prepares you to take action and could help save a life.

Some warning signs are more urgent than others. Get help immediately by calling 911 or another crisis service in your area if you see or hear any of the following:

- Someone threatening to hurt or kill themselves or talking of wanting to die.
- Someone looking for ways to kill themselves by seeking access to weapons or other lethal items (this can be online searches or physically looking for something in the moment of despair).
- Someone talking or writing about death, dying or suicide.

#### ➔ What to do if I recognize the warning signs?

If you identify someone who is exhibiting the warning signs of suicide, it's your obligation to take action. There is a four-step process you can follow to help the person who may be struggling.

##### **Step 1: ASK if the person is thinking about suicide.**

Be direct. Use specific words like "suicide," "kill yourself," "take your life." Phrases to help initiate the conversation include:

- "You haven't seemed like yourself lately. Is there anything going on?"
- "I know you and something is going on. Let's talk about it."
- "You seemed extra stressed lately. What's going on? I want to help."
- "I'm worried about you. Are you ok?"

##### **Some questions that address suicide directly that should be considered include:**

- "Have you had thoughts of suicide?"
- "Do you ever feel so bad that you think about suicide?"
- "Do you have a plan to kill yourself or take your life?"
- "Have you thought about when you would do it (today, tomorrow, next week)?"
- "Have you thought about what method you would use?"



#### Video five Preventing Suicide

##### **Main points**

1. Every person in the construction industry has a role to play in preventing suicide.
2. Recognizing the warning signs of suicide can equip us with the knowledge to help someone who may be considering suicide.
3. There are steps you can take if you recognize the warning signs in someone you know.

## Step 2: LISTEN without judgement.

Let the person talk without interruption and make them feel heard. Actively listen for statements that include:

- Specific reasons to live
- Hope for the future/treatment
- Therapy compliance and alliance
- Specific reasons against death (religion, values)
- Ambivalence
- Connections to faith (community)
- Support systems
- Future orientation (school, jobs, children)

### Consciously avoid:

- Minimizing their problems or shaming a person into changing their mind.
- Sharing your opinion. Trying to convince a person suffering with a mental illness that it's not that bad, or that they have everything to live for may increase their feelings of guilt and hopelessness.
- Arguing or challenging the person, preaching or prophesying, or making promises (like keeping their suicide plan a secret).

## Step 3: RESPOND with kindness and compassion.

Always take the person in crisis seriously and remain calm. There are several recommended actions to take when responding:

- Acknowledge that the person is in pain and that their pain is REAL.
- Convey concern.
- Stay with the person.
- Remove sharp objects or lethal means.
- Go with the person to the Emergency Room, treatment facility or mental health clinic.
- Call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
- Call 911 in the event of a medical emergency including if someone has caused bodily harm to themselves or is threatening to hurt themselves or others.

### Phrases that are recommended, helpful and appropriate to use when responding include:

- "You are not alone. I'm here for you."
- "I may not understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help."
- "We will get through this together."



## Warning signs of suicide

### Thoughts

- Thinking life is not worth living, thinking about harming yourself or having suicidal thoughts
- Thinking others are better off without you
- Thinking you are a failure
- Believing that no one understands you

### Physical experiences

- Trouble coping with health changes
- Unbearable chronic pain

### Feelings

- Hopelessness, desperation or a sense of being trapped
- Abandonment or betrayal

- Lack of purpose
- Sudden mood changes
- Shame for who you are
- Unbearable emotional pain

### Behavioral

- Giving away prized possessions
- Doing reckless things that put you in danger
- Putting affairs in order
- Increased drug, alcohol use, or other ways to numb the pain
- Withdrawing and spending most of your time alone
- Not caring for personal hygiene or health needs

### Verbal

- "I just want out"
- "I won't be around much longer"
- "I am a burden to other people"

- "I want to go to sleep and never wake up again"
- "I don't care what happens to me"

### Situational

- Conflict with or rejection from family, support system, or community
- Exposure to trauma, such as abuse or bullying
- Financial stress
- Chronic or terminal illness
- Death or suicide of a loved one
- Discrimination or being treated unfairly because of who you are
- Not having others who understand you
- Failure to meet expectations
- Trouble adjusting to a new culture

#### Step 4: FOLLOW UP with the person and support their transition from crisis to recovery.

- You can help a person overcome challenges after a suicidal crisis:
- Try to follow up within the first 24-48 hours after a crisis.
- Understand that people often experience increased loneliness or despair.
- Understand that they may not have been given appropriate referrals for continuation of care or have access to professional care.
- Understand that they may not want to continue care (you can help encourage them to make their follow-up appointments.)
- If you can, visit with them. Meet at their home or where it's comfortable for them.
- Call them on the telephone if possible as it is more personal than a text or email.
- Augment conversations with a short text or email to check-in.



#### If they say they are not suicidal

- Reassure the person that you are not there to judge them or do anything that makes them uncomfortable.
- Restate that you only want to understand their thoughts and feelings so together you can make the best choice for their health.
- Re-emphasize to them that if they ever have suicidal thoughts that you are there to listen and prepared to help.

**If you are worried you may be experiencing a mental health crisis or having thoughts of suicide, call, text or chat 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.**

#### Contact

**Jen Owens**

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#### About SAVE

SAVE is a national nonprofit dedicated to ending the tragedy of suicide through education, training, advocacy, and support for suicide loss survivors. We fulfill our mission by:

- Educating and empowering people to identify suicide warning signs and refer those at risk to the support they need;
- Providing empathetic assistance and valuable resources to help suicide loss survivors navigate the devastating loss of a loved one;
- Advocating at state and national levels to amplify voices of those impacted by suicide and create meaningful change.

By offering free educational resources, teaching life-saving skills, supporting suicide loss survivors, and advocating for change, we believe we can make a significant impact and save lives.

#### About WTW

WTW (NASDAQ: WTW) is in the business of people, risk and capital. With roots dating to 1828, our company has more than 45,000 colleagues serving more than 140 countries and markets. Our values – client focus, teamwork, integrity, respect and excellence – underlie all that we do, including how we behave and interact with each other. They are part of our WTW DNA. [wtwco.com](http://wtwco.com)



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