Suicide prevention

Suicide warning signs
What to look out for

Suicide is a serious subject that can feel uncomfortable to discuss and it can be difficult to know how to help. It is important to be open to talking about it and create a culture of openness on the subject across your organisation. Everyone should feel comfortable to take action if they suspect someone has suicidal thoughts or feelings, or to ask for support if they need help themselves.

The first step is to be aware of the potential triggers and behaviour that indicate someone may be suicidal.

Potential triggers:
- Recent terminal health diagnosis for themselves or a loved one
- Chronic pain
- Bereavement
- Separation / divorce
- Substance misuse / addictive behaviour
- Domestic violence and abuse
- Changes in employment / redundancy
- Debt

Behaviour to look out for:
- Self-harm or threats of suicide
- Isolation and / or withdrawing from friends and family
- Struggling to cope with daily life
- Use of alcohol and / or drugs as a coping mechanism
- Feelings of worthlessness and / or nothing to live for
- Mood of depression / anger
- Unusual and / or significant fluctuations in weight
- Lacking energy or appearing unusually tired

For more support on suicide prevention, visit:
healthassuredeap.com
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What to do to help

When someone is feeling suicidal, they may feel too ashamed or embarrassed to ask for help. It is critical to remain calm, appear non-judgemental and invite the conversation. Be open to asking “How are you really? Have you been thinking about suicide?”. This won’t make the situation worse. Rather, it will help make it clear that they have people who care about them and that they deserve help.

In a discussion, it’s helpful to establish answers to:

- Does anyone else know how they’re feeling?
- Where is their support coming from? Family, partner, friends etc.
- Have they seen their GP to discuss their emotional health?
- Are they prescribed any medication to help their mood? If so, are they taking it?
- Has anything changed recently which has caused new stress?
- Have they ever felt like this before? If so, what helped them?

If an employee has expressed a specific plan for suicide, they need immediate intervention. Do not leave them alone—ensure someone stays with them until help has been found.

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Useful contacts

Samaritans
116 123 (UK & ROI)
samaritans.org

PAPYRUS
0800 068 41 41
papyrus-uk.org

Health Assured EAP
0800 028 1947
healthassuredeap.com

Encouraging a culture of openness within your working environment is an important first step in helping suicide prevention.

What you can do:

- Ask the employee what they need from you to feel supported
- Develop a safety plan—structure and routine can be comforting when someone is overwhelmed
- Set small, achievable goals—a sense of achievement can significantly improve someone’s mood
- Encourage contact with loved ones and time for their hobbies / interests
- Offer flexibility—temporarily reducing working hours and responsibilities if needed
- Appoint a wellbeing champion to promote support options / services
- Provide training on mental health, stress management and the importance of self-care

Signposting an employee to the below sources of support can help them engage with recovery. It is important to follow their progress and ensure they are receiving all the support they need.