Suicide prevention in the workplace

Why workplace suicide prevention matters

Suicide is a complex and sensitive issue affecting people of all ages, backgrounds and walks of life. It can be difficult to talk about, but it's important to remember that it is a preventable tragedy and that there are ways we can all support those at risk.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US, and it is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34. Suicide rates have been increasing in recent years, and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the mental health challenges that many people are facing.

The cost of doing nothing

The cost of suicide in the workplace is significant. It can lead to lost productivity, increased absenteeism, and decreased morale. It can also damage the company's reputation and lead to legal liability.

A legal and moral duty

Employers have a legal and moral duty to provide a safe and healthy workplace for their employees. This includes taking steps to prevent suicide and to support employees who are at risk.

Prevention is possible

Suicide is a preventable tragedy. There are many things that employers can do to prevent suicide in the workplace, such as providing mental health support, training employees on how to recognize the signs of suicide, and creating a culture of support and compassion.

> Learning to recognize and respond to suicide risk is a critical skill for employers. It can save lives and create a more supportive and compassionate workplace.

Source: Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Did you know?

- 1.4 million people attempted suicide in the US in 2020.
- 45,979 people died by suicide in the US in 2020.
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34.

Source: CDC

Key workplace risk factors

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- **Job insecurity and uncertainty** Job insecurity and uncertainty can be a major stressor for employees. It can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness.
- **Lack of control** When employees feel they have little control over their work, they may feel overwhelmed and powerless. This can lead to feelings of depression and hopelessness.
- **Job stressors and unrealistic demands** Job stressors and unrealistic demands can lead to burnout and mental health problems. Employees who are overworked and stressed may be more prone to suicide.
- **Lack of support** When employees feel they have little support from their colleagues or supervisors, they may feel isolated and lonely. This can lead to feelings of depression and hopelessness.
- **Lack of recognition** When employees feel their work is not recognized or appreciated, they may feel demoralized and unmotivated. This can lead to feelings of depression and hopelessness.
- **Bullying and harassment** Bullying and harassment can be a major stressor for employees. It can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness.
- **Discrimination** Discrimination can be a major stressor for employees. It can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness.

> It is definitely a critical thing, and it's a very, very, very, very, very, very, very important issue. We, as a society, are at the point of being willing to talk about this and provide opportunities for people to get help.
>
> — Dr. Jennifer Stuber, Director of the Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center

Did you know?

- The suicide rate among veterans is more than twice the rate among civilians.
- Veterans are more likely than civilians to have a mental health condition, such as depression or PTSD.
- Veterans are more likely than civilians to have a history of trauma, such as combat or military sexual trauma.

Source: National Center for PTSD

Warning signs

Recognizing the warning signs of suicidality in the workplace

Suicide is a complex issue that can be difficult to recognize. There are many warning signs that may indicate someone is at risk for suicide, including changes in behavior, mood, and thinking. It is important to be aware of these warning signs and to take them seriously. If you think someone is at risk for suicide, you should talk to them about your concerns and encourage them to seek help.

Common warning signs include:

- **Changes in behavior** Changes in behavior can include withdrawing from friends and family, losing interest in hobbies, or engaging in risky behaviors.
- **Changes in mood** Changes in mood can include feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or anxiety.
- **Expressing self-harm or suicide** Expressing self-harm or suicide is a direct warning sign that someone is at risk for suicide.
- **Talking about death or dying** Talking about death or dying can be a sign that someone is thinking about suicide.

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Source: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Did you know?

- 90% of people who attempted suicide and survived did not go on to commit suicide.
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US.
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Source: CDC

Strategies for employers

Strategies for employers

Suicide is a complex issue that can be difficult to talk about. It is important to be aware of the warning signs and to take them seriously. If you think someone is at risk for suicide, you should talk to them about your concerns and encourage them to seek help.

The following strategies can be implemented by employers to help prevent suicide in the workplace:

- **Provide mental health support** Provide mental health support to employees, such as counseling services or access to mental health professionals.
- **Create a supportive work environment** Create a supportive work environment that promotes mental health and well-being. This can include providing flexible work schedules, offering employee assistance programs, and promoting a culture of support and compassion.
- **Provide mental health training** Provide mental health training to employees, such as how to recognize the signs of suicide and how to provide support to someone who is at risk.
- **Promote self-care** Promote self-care among employees, such as encouraging them to take breaks, exercise, and engage in hobbies.
- **Develop a crisis response plan** Develop a crisis response plan that includes steps to take in the event of a suicide attempt or death by suicide.

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Resources

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- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a free and confidential 24/7 hotline that provides support to people in crisis. Call 1-800-273-8255.
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** NAMI is a grassroots organization that provides support, education, and advocacy for people with mental illness and their families.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center is a national organization that provides training and technical assistance to suicide prevention professionals.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Workplace Suicide Prevention** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Workplace Suicide Prevention page provides information and resources for employers on how to prevent suicide in the workplace.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Toolkit** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Toolkit provides a comprehensive guide to suicide prevention for organizations and communities.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Training** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Training page provides information and resources for suicide prevention training.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Research** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Research page provides information and resources for suicide prevention research.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Policy** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Policy page provides information and resources for suicide prevention policy.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Advocacy** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Advocacy page provides information and resources for suicide prevention advocacy.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Grants** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Grants page provides information and resources for suicide prevention grants.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Conferences** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Conferences page provides information and resources for suicide prevention conferences.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Webinars** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Webinars page provides information and resources for suicide prevention webinars.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Blog** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Blog page provides information and resources for suicide prevention blog.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Newsletter** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Newsletter page provides information and resources for suicide prevention newsletter.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Social Media** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Social Media page provides information and resources for suicide prevention social media.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Mobile App** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Mobile App page provides information and resources for suicide prevention mobile app.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Podcast** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Podcast page provides information and resources for suicide prevention podcast.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Video** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Video page provides information and resources for suicide prevention video.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Infographic** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Infographic page provides information and resources for suicide prevention infographic.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Quiz** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Quiz page provides information and resources for suicide prevention quiz.
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- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Awards** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Awards page provides information and resources for suicide prevention awards.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Scholarships** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Scholarships page provides information and resources for suicide prevention scholarships.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Internships** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Internships page provides information and resources for suicide prevention internships.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Volunteer Opportunities** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Volunteer Opportunities page provides information and resources for suicide prevention volunteer opportunities.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Suicide Prevention Donations** The Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Suicide Prevention Donations page provides information and resources for suicide prevention donations.
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