



IBEAM

Ideal Body Environment And Mind



Video Five: Preventing Suicide

Main Points

1. In the United States, the suicide rate is the highest in the construction industry and is four times higher than the national average.
2. Every person in the construction industry has a role to play in preventing suicide.
3. Recognizing the warning signs of suicide can equip us with the knowledge to help someone who may be considering suicide.
4. There are steps you can take if you recognize the warning signs in someone you know.

➤ Prevalence of suicide in the U.S.

In the United States:

- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death.
- The construction industry has the highest suicide rate over any other industry.
- The suicide rate in the construction industry is four times higher than the national average.

➤ 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.



Warning signs of suicide:



Verbal signs

- Wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain



Behavioral Signs

- Behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little/much
- Withdrawing or isolation
- Looking for a way to kill oneself (ex. buying a gun)
- Increase use of alcohol or drugs



Mood Changes

- Showing rage (or talking about seeking revenge)
- Displaying extreme mood swings
- Acting anxious or agitated

➤ 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?"

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 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- 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.”

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 you are worried you may be experiencing a mental health crisis or having thoughts of suicide, call the National Lifeline at +1 800-273-8255 OR text “Hello” to the Crisis Text Line at 741-741 for free, confidential 24/7 support.

➤ **Find more information about mental health at**
willistowerswatson.com/underthehardhat



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 ready and prepared to help

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About SAVE

SAVE is the nation's leading nonprofit agency working to prevent suicide through public awareness and education, reduce stigma, and serve as a resource to those touched by suicide. For more than 30 years SAVE has been at the forefront of suicide prevention and is the world's leader in developing safe messaging standards, practices and awareness campaigns on suicide prevention. We developed an evidence-based program for suicide prevention, numerous best practice tools and a peer support program to help those in crisis. SAVE also conducts professional training, education, technical assistance and provides consultation to businesses, organizations, communities and governments on all aspects of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention (grief after suicide).

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