



USPS
Employee
Assistance
Program

FY 2020

**Suicide Prevention
through
Awareness,
Sensitivity and
Knowledge**



USPS
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Program

CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM

Table of Contents

Item/Activity	Page
Handout 1 - Know the Signs	01
Handout 2 - Know the Right Words	02
Handout 3 - Know What to Do	03
Poster - Know the Signs, Right Words & What to Do	04
Handout 4 - Talk About It	05
Handout 5 - You Can Prevent Suicide	06
Handout 6 - What You Should Know	07
Handout 7 - What You Can Do For You	08
Poster - Quotes	09
Poster - Men & the Stigma	10
EAP Series of Stand Up Talks (3)	11



KNOW THE SIGNS



Suicidal signs may reveal themselves in conversation, through actions or even social media posts. If you recognize the following signs, reach out and speak up.

- Talking, discussing, fixating on death or suicide
- Giving away valuable or meaningful possessions
- Having reckless and dangerous behavior
- Increasing the use of alcohol and/or drugs
- Sleep issues, too much or too little
- Not taking basic care of self
- Having a history of suicide attempts
- Putting personal business in order
- Neglecting doctor's orders
- Increased anger & intensified mood swings
- Withdrawing, isolating and disconnecting from others

Your EAP is here for you & we can help. Contact us today.

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KNOW THE RIGHT WORDS

This is a serious conversation. It may take awhile, so initiate it when you have enough time to spend. Find a private place where you can speak with the person, without distraction.

After initiating a conversation, LISTEN.

Every conversation is different, so be prepared for what may occur. The person may not want to talk, and you can reassure them that you care and are ready to listen anytime they feel like talking. Or, the person may open up and share some very painful feelings. **Don't try to talk them out of how they are feeling.** It's okay to ask questions.

Make sure they are SAFE for now.

Talk about suicide resources such as counseling or a crisis hotline and offer to search for phone numbers. If the person has a plan to harm themselves, **it's important not to leave them alone.** Ask if you can call a family member, their counselor or emergency services while you remain with them. Continue to provide reassurance and support.

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KNOW WHAT TO DO

Offer hope.

Reassure the person that help and resources are available. Let the person know that their life is important to you and there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Take action.

Talk about steps you can take together to keep them safe. Don't agree to keep it a secret.

Get help.

There are a lot of services to assist you with preventing suicide. Get immediate care for someone with suicidal thoughts or feelings. Ensure the appropriate people are aware of the situation. Never try to take on the responsibility by yourself.

Seek additional support from family and friends, neighbors, coworkers, a coach or religious leader. You can also reach out to your EAP at anytime.

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**KNOW
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SIGNS**

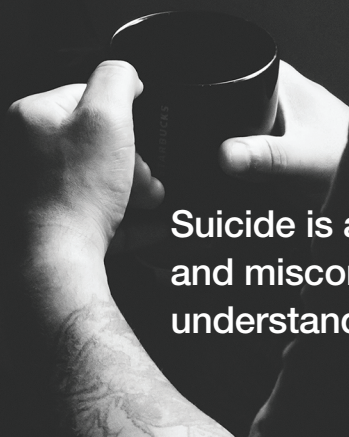
**KNOW
THE RIGHT
WORDS**

**KNOW
WHAT
TO DO**

Offer hope, take action and get help. Reach out to your EAP anytime. We are here for you around the clock.

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SUICIDE, WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT IT



Suicide is a tough subject. Stigma, shame and misconception make it challenging to understand and difficult to talk about.

Things won't change for the better unless we address what we know to be true.

Suicide is more common than we think. It affects men and women, teens and the elderly, veterans and the mentally ill. We are all vulnerable to being hurt by the impact of suicide.

We need to understand that suicide is an illness, it is complex, and it is treatable.

Suicidal thoughts are overwhelming and can make us believe life is not worth living, no one cares and nothing will get better. These thoughts are distortions and difficult to battle without support, counseling and/or medication.

If you are having thoughts of harming yourself, start by telling someone.

"I think something is wrong" is a good way to begin. It can be a friend, family member or a professional. Just begin the conversation and you will soon learn you are not alone.

If you suspect that someone you know isn't doing well, just ask. You may need to ask twice.

Often, the first response to "How are you doing?" is "Fine." If your gut is telling you otherwise, it is important to say something else. "I care about you, and I am concerned. Can we talk about it?"

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YOU CAN PREVENT SUICIDE



A person who feels suicidal may not ask for help, but that doesn't mean that help isn't wanted. If you think a family member, a friend or coworker is considering harming themselves, follow the tips below.

Reach Out. If you know someone is having a difficult time, ask them what is going on and how you can help.

Speak Up: Ask them directly: "Are you thinking about suicide?"

Be Yourself. Your voice and manner will show your concern.

Trust your Gut. If you feel like someone is struggling, they probably are.

Be Brave. No matter how uncomfortable the conversation may be, it's worth it.

Listen Intently. Allow them to express their feelings. Let them do most of the talking. Remain non-judgmental.

Be Sympathetic. Remain calm, patient and accepting.

Offer Support. Let them know you and others are there for them, they are not alone.

Ensure Safety. Remove means of harm such as weapons, medications, drugs, alcohol, even access to a car, etc.

Be Prepared. Have an action plan for accessing additional support: their EAP, a family member, close friend, etc.

Seek additional support from family and trusted friends, neighbors, coworkers, a coach or religious leader. You can also reach out to your EAP at anytime. We are here for you around the clock.

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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



If you are experiencing the following symptoms, get help now.

- Having thoughts of death or suicide
- Feeling like a burden to others
- Wanting to disconnect from others
- Looking for ways to harm yourself
- Feeling increased anxiety & agitation
- Feeling helpless or trapped in a situation
- Experiencing sleep issues, too much or too little
- Feeling uninterested in taking care of yourself
- Losing interest in things that were once important
- Feeling increased anger & intensified mood swings

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KNOW WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOU



Reach Out.

If you are having a difficult time, speak up and tell someone. Seek help from a family member, a close friend or someone from your inner circle.

Start the Conversation.

You may feel anxious or agitated, that's normal. Find a way to ask for help. No matter how negative or uncomfortable the conversation is, the fact that you are having it is a positive thing.

Be Honest & Direct.

Express your feelings and what you are going through. It is important for others to know the severity of the situation. If you are thinking of harming yourself, be honest about those thoughts. It takes courage to speak up and express your feelings. You are not alone.

Accept Support.

Give your support person the opportunity to help. You are loved and cared about, allow that person to provide some relief for your loneliness.

Don't Isolate Yourself.

You may have a desire to disconnect from others. Don't. If you don't want to reach out to someone you know, there are other options. Many resources are available to intervene, assess & treat the problem.

Know Your Resources.

Crisis lines, counselors, intervention programs and more are available to you. There are a lot of people who want to help you if you give them the opportunity. Your EAP is here for you and we want to help. Reach out at anytime, we are here to take your call and offer assistance around the clock.

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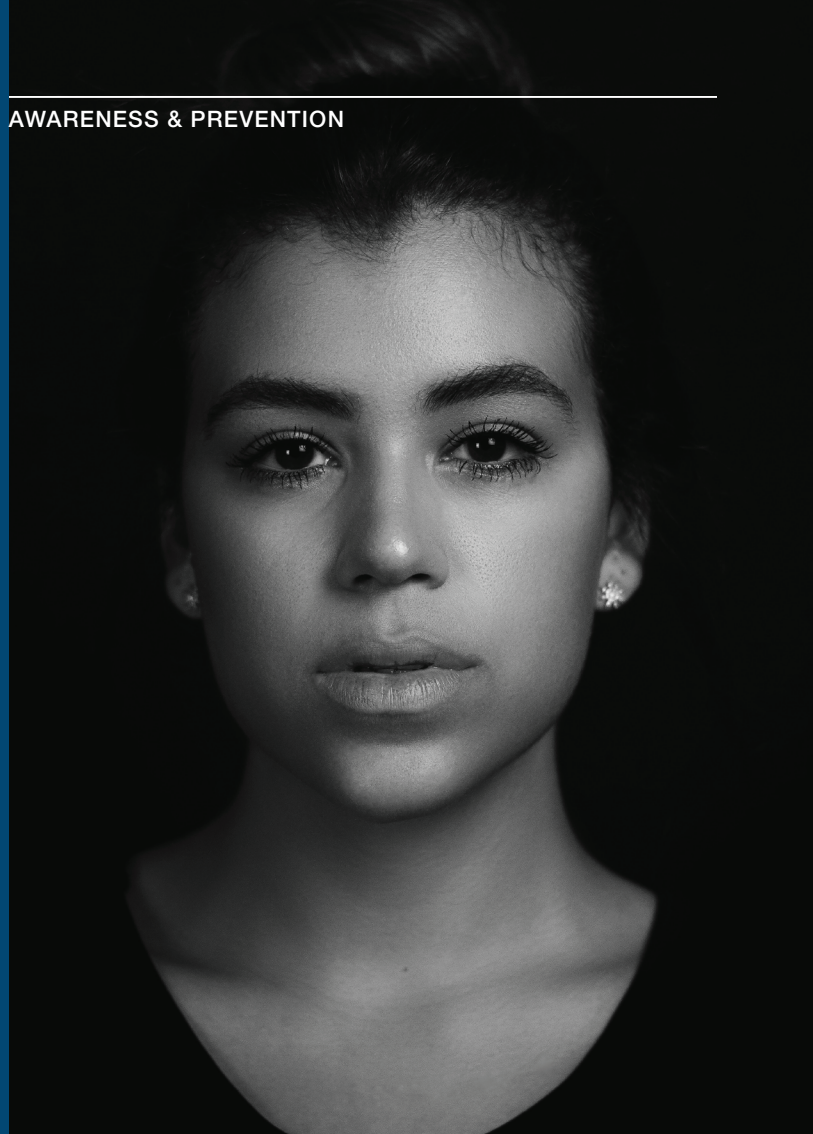


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“We must remember that, though it may feel like it, we are never so far away that we can’t reach out to someone near to us. That someone wants us to ask for help.”

- Dr. Deborah J. Atkins
EAP Administrator



“If anything, life is starting over now... I am going to be OK. I have survived a lot which has made me far from fragile.”

- Julia Amburgey
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

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**Men may feel shame
and fear with the stigma
of seeking counseling.**



Don't suffer in silence.

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Suicide Awareness & Prevention Service Talk Series

1 of 3

Facts About Suicide:

1. Suicide is the most preventable kind of death. Almost any positive intervention can save a life.
2. Suicidal ideation is an illness and a growing health epidemic. It is not a failure, a weakness or a choice.
3. 50% of all Americans are diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime. This means that anyone can be vulnerable to periods of depression, anxiety, hopelessness, and sadness. Some types of emotional illness require counseling, medication and/or hospitalization. There are many successful treatments and resources available.
4. Talking about suicide does not cause someone to harm themselves. In fact, asking someone if they are thinking about suicide opens the door for them to talk. It is usually perceived as caring, and can be a welcome relief from secrecy and feeling alone.
5. We learn the most on how to prevent suicide from those who have lived through an attempt. They are the true experts on how we can change the conversation in our country regarding suicide.

Suicide Awareness & Prevention Service Talk Series

2 of 3

Know the Signs:

1. Changes in behavior are a significant warning sign. Some examples may be:

- Having thoughts of death or suicide
- Feeling helpless or trapped in a situation
- Feeling like a burden to others
- Experiencing sleep issues, too much or too little
- Wanting to disconnect from others
- Feeling uninterested in taking care of yourself
- Looking for ways to harm yourself
- Losing interest in things that were once important
- Feeling increased anxiety & agitation
- Feeling increased anger & intensified mood swings

2. Talking about feeling hopeless. Whether it's anxiety about relationships, a recent loss or fears about the future... talking about not being able to handle what is going on can be a warning sign. Some even say things like, "I just wish I could die. I feel like I'm a burden. I just don't care about anything anymore."

3. Increased substance abuse or other self-destructive behaviors. Self-harm can begin even before a person has a conscious thought about suicide. Cutting, abuse of alcohol or drugs, acting in reckless ways... can all be signs that a person is slipping away from healthy living and coping.

Suicide Awareness & Prevention Service Talk Series

3 of 3

How to Prevent Suicide:

1. Simply show you care by asking, “Are you doing OK? You don’t seem yourself lately.” Ideally, be in a place where you can speak privately with the person.
2. Then LISTEN... Every conversation is different, so be prepared for what may occur. The person may not want to talk, and you can reassure them that you care and are ready to listen anytime they feel like talking. Or, the person may open up and share some very painful feelings. In that case, you mostly listen with acceptance.
3. If they tell you they are thinking of suicide do not agree to keep that secret. It is common, especially for teens, to tell a friend about suicidal thoughts but then demand secrecy. This is not a secret that should be kept.
4. If a person shares with you that they do have passive suicidal thoughts (they think about wanting to harm themselves but don’t have a plan) let them know there is help and that you appreciate them trusting you. Talk together about suicide resources such as counseling or a crisis hotline and offer to search for phone numbers. If the person does have a plan to harm themselves, it’s important not to leave them alone. Ask if you can call their EAP or someone close.
5. Look after yourself. If you have supported someone who is thinking of suicide, it can be emotionally draining. Talk it through with someone you trust to be sure that you don’t carry the weight of the conversation alone.