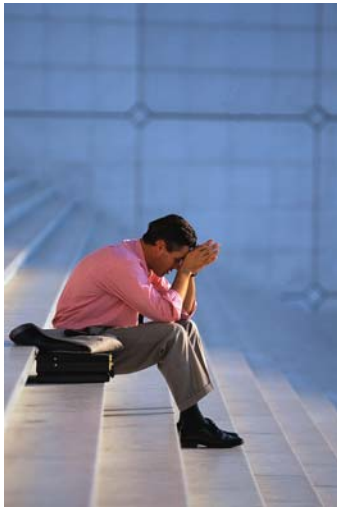




Preventing Suicide in the Workplace

Over 30,000 people die each year by suicide and it is estimated that over 500,000 attempt suicide. Most suicides are related to depression, other mood disorders or substance and alcohol abuse. Yet many people don't seek help because they're afraid that if their employers find out it will go in their personnel record or hurt their career. The American Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination in employment because of mental impairment but somehow that fact is lost when one is facing an emotional or mental crisis. Therefore often times it is up to one's fellow co-workers to help that person who is struggling. If you suspect a co-worker or friend is contemplating suicide, there are ways you can help that person and hopefully prevent them from acting on it.



Learn the Warning Signs and Risk Factors associated with suicide. Warning signs are statements people make or things they do to let you know they are thinking of ending their life. Risk factors are things that happened in one's life or family history that may put them at an increased risk for suicide. The majority of people—between 60—75% - let people know of their intent to die before killing themselves. *TAKE IT SERIOUSLY* whenever someone talks about killing themselves. Being nice and a concerned friend and/or co-worker could save a life.

Ask the question. If you are comfortable with the person, schedule sometime alone with them and ask them directly, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?" Most suicidal people when asked that question report feeling an immense sense of relief when "finally asked." If you can't ask it, or don't

feel close enough to the person, find someone who can. If the answer is yes, contact your EAP office immediately or call 1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-SUICIDE; both are suicide prevention hotlines and can help you help that person.

Trust your instincts. Tell a secret if necessary, in order to save a life. If they told you this in confidence, remember you are obligated to seek help for them. If the answer is no initially but your gut says yes, be persistent until you are satisfied with the answer.

Seek Professional Help.

Be actively involved in encouraging the person to see a physician or mental health professional immediately. Don't leave them alone until they get help either. Since suicidal people often don't believe they can be helped, you may have to do more.

Remember, help is available and there is always hope. Suicide is preventable; the majority of people don't really want to die, they just want to end their pain.

Question.

Take all threats seriously.

Persuade.

Listen and offer hope.

Refer.

Get help immediately &

stay with the person

If you need help NOW, call

1-800-273-TALK

Contrary to popular belief, talking about suicide does not increase the risk, but rather, decreases it.

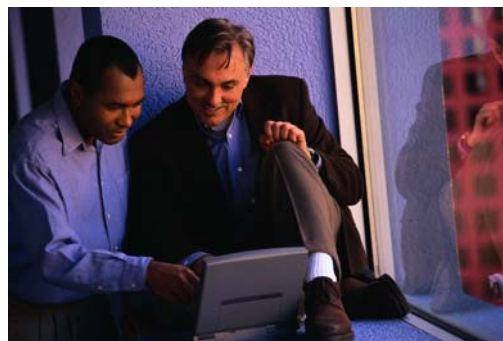
Treatment, therapy, counseling – whatever you call it – works.

Warning Signs of Suicide

- ◆ Talking about suicide
- ◆ Statements such as, "Soon you won't have to worry about me," "I just want to go to sleep and never wake up," "I just want out."
- ◆ Sense of worthlessness, hopelessness, or helplessness
- ◆ Suddenly happier and calmer, especially after weeks of depression
- ◆ Giving away prized possessions
- ◆ Getting affairs in order, making arrangements
- ◆ Visiting or calling people one cares about
- ◆ Preoccupation with death
- ◆ Loss of interest in things one cares about

Risk Factors for Suicide

- * Diagnosis of Depression
- * Previous suicide attempt
- * Family history of suicide
- * Loss of job, home, money
- * Death or terminal illness of a loved one
- * Divorce or loss of major, significant relationship
- * Loss of health, either real or imagined
- * Someone close to the person has completed suicide
- * Recent disappointment or rejection
- * Being expelled from school/fired from job
- * Sudden loss of freedom/fear of punishment
- * Victim of assault or bullying



Important Websites:

- Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare
www.dpw.state.pa.us/Resources/documents/pdf/publications/SuicideResourceDirectory.pdf
- American Association of Suicidology
www.suicidology.org
- Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council
www.feelingblue.org
- National Hopeline Network
www.hopeline.org
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- Suicide Prevention Action Network USA
www.spanusa.org