



## Suicide Awareness: A Guide for Managers

When a colleague dies by suicide or makes an attempt on their life, it can have a devastating effect on the workplace. Your team may struggle to come to terms with the loss or wonder if they could have intervened.

There are several factors that may help you recognize when a team member could be at risk for suicidal behavior. These include:

- A recent loss, particularly if it involved suicide
- A financial setback or job loss
- A change in behavior, habits, appearance, or work performance
- Depression, which may manifest at work through chronic fatigue, talk of hopelessness, attendance problems, missing deadlines, or a lack of concentration
- An absence of social support or recent change resulting in increased isolation
- Multiple simultaneous problems, such as losing a parent or loved one while also coping with a health crisis
- A history of depression or previous suicide attempts, or a family history that includes suicide, violence, or abuse
- Alcohol or drug abuse

Having one or more risk factors does not mean that a person is contemplating suicide. However, if you observe several of these behaviors, especially in a short period of time, take action. It's important to:

- **Pay attention.** Suicidal comments or references, such as “What’s the point,” “It’s no use,” or “I’d be better off dead” should be taken seriously.
- **Trust your instincts.** If you are worried about someone’s behavior, or if another team member expresses concern, seek assistance.
- **Contact LifeMatters.** The LifeMatters Management Consultation Service can assess the situation and recommend appropriate steps. Your HR and Medical departments can also provide assistance and resources.
- **Avoid becoming entangled in a personal situation.** After addressing any immediate risks and making a referral to LifeMatters, shift your focus to workplace performance. Helping the person stay on track at work will assist them with maintaining financial stability and helpful employer benefits. They may also find comfort in having a regular routine.
- **Protect privacy.** Share information on a need-to-know basis.

Helping someone who is having suicidal thoughts could bring up past losses or unearth difficult memories. LifeMatters can help you cope with your personal reaction to the situation. Call 24/7/365.

### 1-800-634-6433

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