

PREVENTING SUICIDE AT WORK:

information for
employers, managers
and employees



Work that is interesting and fulfilling is good for mental health, but a negative working environment or work-related stressors can lead to physical and mental health problems. It is important for employers and others in positions of responsibility in the workplace to put in place measures to promote the good mental health of their employees, and to have a plan for supporting employees and colleagues with mental health conditions or who may be at risk of suicide.

Signs to look out for

- Expression of thoughts or feelings about wanting to end their life, or talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live;
- expression of feelings of isolation, loneliness, hopelessness or loss of self-esteem, or dwelling on problems;
- withdrawal from colleagues, decrease in work performance or difficulty completing tasks;
- changes in behaviour, such as restlessness, irritability, impulsivity, recklessness or aggression;
- speaking about arranging end-of-life personal affairs such as making a will, or concrete plans for suicide;
- abuse of alcohol or other substances;
- depressed mood or mentioning of previous suicidal behaviour; and/or
- bullying or harassment.

Particular attention should be paid to people who are losing their job.

What you can do if you are worried about a colleague

- Express empathy and concern, encourage them to talk, and listen without judgment.
- Ask if there is anyone they would like to call or have called.
- Encourage them to reach out to health or counselling services inside the organization, if available, or otherwise outside the organization, and offer to call or go there together.
- If your colleague has attempted to or indicates that they are about to intentionally harm themselves, remove access to means and do not leave them alone. Seek immediate support from staff health services, if available, or health services outside of the organization.

What you can do as an employer or a manager

- Provide information sessions for your staff on mental health and suicide prevention. Ensure all staff know what resources are available for support, both within the organization and in the local community.
- Foster a work environment in which colleagues feel comfortable talking about problems that have an impact on their ability to do their job effectively and supporting each other during difficult times.
- Become familiar with relevant legislation.
- Identify and reduce work-related stressors which can negatively impact mental health.
- Design and implement a plan for how to sensitively manage and communicate the suicide or suicide attempt of an employee in a way that minimizes further distress. Measures should include the availability of trained health workers and support services for staff.

**More
information**



*Preventing suicide:
a resource at work*



<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/preventing-suicide-a-resource-series>