

Suicide Awareness and Prevention in the Workplace:

Creating a Work Culture in Which Help-Seeking Behaviors are Encouraged

Presented by the LANL Employee Assistance Program and the Ombuds Office

Statistics on Suicide

- Every 14.2 minutes someone in the United States dies by suicide.
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S.
- An estimated 11 *attempted* suicides occur per 1 suicide death.
- Nearly 1,000,000 people make a suicide attempt every year.
- Men are nearly 4 times more likely to die by suicide than women.
- Women attempt suicide 3 times as often as men.
- Suicide rates are highest for people between the ages of 45 and 59.
- New Mexico has the 4th highest rate of suicide in the U.S. *(Source: CDC, 2012)*

Myths About Suicide

- People who commit suicide are 'crazy'.
- People who are deeply depressed don't have the energy to commit suicide.
- People who commit suicide don't have a happy demeanor.
- Good circumstances prevent suicide.
- Suicide only strikes people of a certain gender, race, socioeconomic standing, age, etc.
- People who talk about suicide won't commit suicide.
- Asking about suicide will put the idea into his/her head.

Risk Factors

- Relationship difficulties
- Loss of health/ other loss
- Financial Problems
- Poor coping skills
- Disciplinary actions
- Under investigation
- Poor job performance
- Legal problems
- History of mental illness
- Past suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide
- Abuse, Trauma history
- Domestic Violence history
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Recent death of loved one

Red Flags

Giving away items
Drop in performance
Social Withdrawal
Farewells
Loss of sense of humor
Weeping easily
Continual sadness
Sudden happy mood
Increased alcohol/drug use
Increased irritability
Changes in eating/ weight
Change in sleeping habits
Poor hygiene
Talking about death or dying

Statements Related to Increased Risk

"Everyone is better off without me."

"I don't think I can take this anymore."

"There is nothing to look forward to. It's hopeless."

"You won't have to worry about me anymore."

"I wish I was dead."

"I just can't go on any longer."

"I'd rather kill myself than..."

"I won't need this anymore."

If someone displays a dramatic behavior or personality change it is important for supervisors and co-workers to encourage the individual to seek help.

What To Do: Provide A.I.D.

Ask- “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”



Involve- Become involved. Let the person know how to get help. Talk to a manager about it, etc.



Do- Seek Assistance. Refer to or get immediate help from an EAP counselor or another professional.

What NOT To Do

Ignore the warning signs

Warn against seeking help

Assume minor troubles are unimportant

Give advice (that is the clinician’s job)

Assume someone is immune from self-harm

Challenge the person (using guilt, religion, etc.)

Provide false reassurance (“it’ll be fine”)

Key Ideas

- Don’t ignore the warning signs.
- Encourage each other to seek professional help.
- Make it OK to seek help and talk about it – stress and mental health as well as suicide.
- Consult with and refer to the EAP.
- Remember, suicide is no one’s fault.
- Have a post-intervention plan after a suicide attempt, a suicide, the death of an employee, or the death of an employee’s loved one.

Need Help? LANL Employee Assistance Program 505-667-7339

Other Resources

New Mexico Crisis Line 1-855-NMCRISIS (1-855-662-7474)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

Working Minds: Suicide Prevention in the Workplace www.workingminds.org

New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition www.nmsuicideprevention.org

New Mexico Suicide Intervention Project 505-473-6191 www.nmsip.org