

# 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.workingminds.org)

New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition [www.nmsuicideprevention.org](http://www.nmsuicideprevention.org)

New Mexico Suicide Intervention Project 505-473-6191 [www.nmsip.org](http://www.nmsip.org)