



canopy
Innovative Wellbeing

Suicide Prevention Resource Guide



This resource guide is designed to support workplaces in preventing and responding to suicide. The following is intended as an information resource only. If you are experiencing a life threatening situation, seek medical help or dial 911.



Suicide Prevention

Death by suicide is a serious public health issue. According to the World Health Organization, nearly 800,000 people die by suicide each year, which is 1 person every 40 seconds.



Someone Dies by Suicide Every 40 Seconds

The key to lowering suicide rates is prevention, including education about recognizing suicidal behavior and connecting people who are at-risk with appropriate resources.

Addressing Stigma

Talking about mental health and suicide prevention reduces the stigma, increasing the likelihood someone who is struggling will ask for help.

Understanding the myths and facts about suicide make a difference, it could save a life.

Suicide Myth or Fact?

Myth:

We shouldn't talk about suicide.

Fact:

Many people find talking about their suicidal feelings to be a source of support. It can help someone connect to the appropriate resources, understand their feelings better and explore ways to move forward.

Myth:

Suicide only impacts certain people.

Fact:

Suicidal thoughts and actions can impact anyone. Suicidal behavior is complex and there is no single cause. Many different factors contribute, and early detection of symptoms can prevent them from worsening.

Myth:

Talking about suicide encourages someone to take action.

Fact:

Talking about suicide in a safe and supportive way can reduce the risk of suicide.

Myth:

If someone wants to end their life, there is nothing anyone can do to stop them.

Fact:

With help and professional support, many people recover from suicidal feelings.

Make Suicide Prevention a Workplace Priority

- **Clearly communicate with employees that mental health is important. Role model empathy, providing space for regular meaningful engagement with employees.**
- **Create a work environment that fosters communication, a sense of inclusion, respect and connectedness.**
- **Engage leaders to share information about Canopy benefits, including mental health and crisis support services.**
- **Partner with Canopy to identify opportunities for training and development, helping managers learn to identify signs and symptoms that someone may be in crisis.**

Training and Development Opportunities

Canopy offers virtual and in-person content on topics such as:

- **Suicide Prevention in the Workplace**
- **Managing Stress and Anxiety During Uncertain Times**
- **Manager's Guide to Critical Incidents in the Workplace**
- **Mental Health Conditions in the Workplace: A Manager's Role**
- **Mental Health First Response for Leaders**
- **Mental Health First Response at Work**

Customized training is available. Meet with a Canopy organizational development consultant to determine what best meets your workplace needs.



**Click Here For
Our EAP Toolkit**

Addressing Suicidal Behavior in the Workplace

Identifying persons who may be at risk for suicide is a key part of a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention in the workplace:

Warning Signs of Suicide

- Talking about suicide, death, ‘going away’ or not having purpose in life
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness or feeling trapped
- Dramatic mood, behavior, or performance changes
- Withdrawal from colleagues, friends, or family
- Having no desire to take part in favorite activities
- Experiencing changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Engaging in reckless or self-destructive behavior

Discussing suicidal remarks or an employee’s mental state can be challenging. Not everyone in crisis is suicidal, but it is important to understand what you can do, outlined below.

What You Can Do

Ask:

If someone you know is talking about suicide or shows other warning signs, talk about it. Most of the time, people who are considering suicide are willing to discuss it if someone asks them out of concern and care. Some things you could say include:

“I have been concerned about you and want to see how you are doing.”

“How can I help support you right now?”

“Are you thinking about suicide?”

“Can I help connect you with professional support?”

Listen.

Listen without judgment. If you think someone is in immediate danger, seek urgent medical attention.




Urge professional help.

Engage in professional support, Canopy offers access to mental health professionals 24/7 or reach out to your local suicide prevention hotline.

Take care of yourself.

Be aware of your own emotions and coping skills. These are challenging conversations, seek help if you need it.

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting outdoors. The man, in the center, is wearing a dark puffer jacket and looking down with a serious expression. The woman, on the left, is wearing a red jacket with a white fur collar and glasses, also looking down. They appear to be in a natural setting with a body of water in the background.

“Starting the conversation with someone you think may be considering suicide helps in many ways. First, it allows you to get help for the person. Second, just talking about it may help the person to feel less alone, less isolated, more cared about and understood.”

Responding to an Urgent Need

If someone is threatening to engage in suicidal behavior, communicates they are close to acting on a suicidal impulse, or if you strongly believe they are in immediate danger, these steps can help you manage the crisis.

- **Take the person seriously, stay calm and remain present.**
- **Express concern and listen attentively.**
- **Ask direct questions, find out if the person has a specific plan for suicide.**
- **If possible, reduce access to lethal items or places.**
- **Seek professional support from an EAP mental health professional, local suicide prevention hotline or call 911 if there is an imminent safety risk.**
- **Stay connected, follow-up after a crisis to establish ongoing support and demonstrate that you care.**

Managing Organizational Distress

As a manager or supervisor, you play an important role in providing support to employees following a critical incident. Employees will need emotional support and understanding while you focus on maintaining a stable work environment. Communicating the suicide death of an employee is very challenging.

- **Messaging should include helpful resources, such as the EAP, for those receiving the message and communicate the wishes of the family as appropriate.**
- **Be thoughtful about how you communicate the loss. It is important to confirm with the family if they want the death to be reported to others as a suicide.**
- **The family may not perceive the death as a suicide or may wish to protect their privacy. In these situations, acknowledge the death, but avoid the manner of death in communications.**

The death of someone by suicide is a shocking and upsetting occurrence. In supporting the workplace, it is helpful to:

- **Acknowledge and name the tragedy as clearly as possible**
- **Demonstrate compassion and empathy**
- **Connect people with the EAP**

There are often unanswerable questions as well as complicated grief. Common feelings and reactions to the suicide can include:

Anger:

How could they do this to us?

Shame:

We shouldn't talk about this.

Guilt:

Was I available enough?

Fear:

Will this happen again to someone I know?

Avoidance:

If we pretend this didn't happen, it will go away.

Allow people to express their feelings and share their feelings with others as they feel comfortable. It may be helpful to schedule critical incident response services either virtually or on-site.

Canopy's Critical Incident Response Services

Include:

- Supervisor / manager consultation
- Group debriefings provided on-site or virtually
- Individual counseling
- Educational written materials



Ongoing Support

Remember that grief is important, necessary, and inevitable. Everyone will have different timelines to healing.

There may be milestone or anniversary reactions, and people may feel encouraged to take action to honor someone who has lost their life to suicide.

If you observe that emotional reactions are ongoing, getting worse, or interfering with daily activities, reach out for professional support. Canopy is available to offer consultation, suggestions, and connection to care.

Additional Resources

Alliance of Hope for Suicide Survivors

<http://www.allianceofhope.org/>

This organization for survivors of suicide loss provides information sheets, a blog, and a community forum. Through the forum, survivors can contact others with similar losses, share their stories, and discuss healing from a loss by suicide. The forum operates like a 24/7 support group with a team of trained moderators and a mental health clinician who contributes regularly.

Friends for Survival

<https://friendsforsurvival.org/>

This organization is for people who have lost family or friends to suicide and professionals who work with people who have been touched by suicide. All of the staff and volunteers have been directly impacted by a suicide death. The organization produces a monthly newsletter and runs the Suicide Loss Helpline (1-800-646- 7322), which is available 9 a.m.-9 p.m., seven days a week. It has also published the guide Pathways to Purpose and Hope, which provides comprehensive information on building a community-based suicide survivor support program.

Heartbeat:

Grief support following suicide

<http://heartbeatsurvivorsaftersuicide.org/>

This organization has chapters providing support groups for survivors of suicide loss in various states. Its website provides information sheets for survivors and a leader's guide on how to start a new chapter of HEARTBEAT.

Parents of Suicides and Friends & Families of Suicides (POS-FOS)

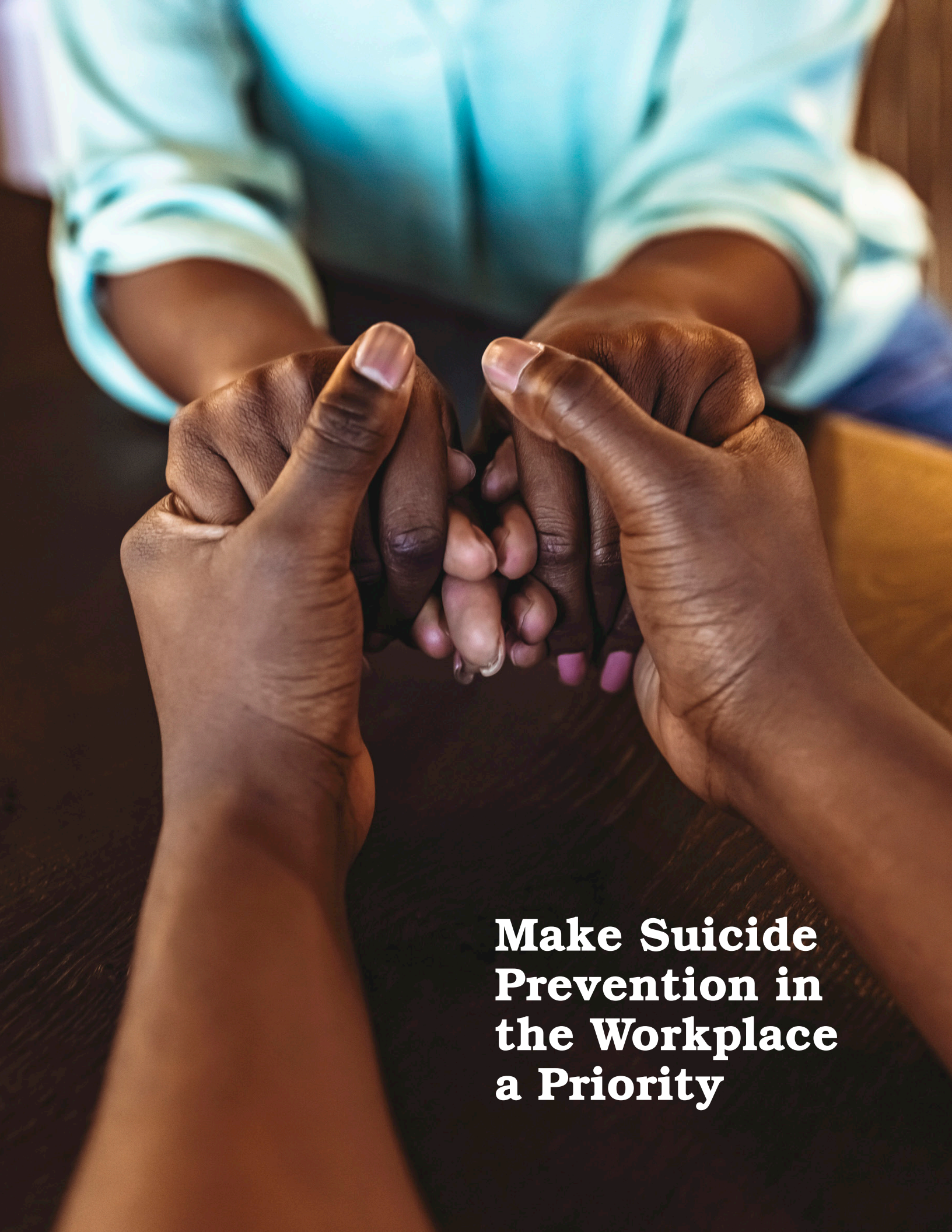
<http://www.pos-ffos.com/>

This website provides a public message board called Suicide Grief Support Forum, a listserv for parents, a separate listserv for others, and an online chat room for an international community of survivors of suicide loss.

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

24/7 free & confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 800-273-TALK (8255).

A close-up photograph of two hands, one with dark skin and the other with light skin, clasped together in a supportive grip. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with fingers interlaced. The background is blurred, showing a person wearing a light blue shirt and a wooden surface. The lighting is warm and focused on the hands.

**Make Suicide
Prevention in
the Workplace
a Priority**



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