

Focus Institute EAP

Suicide Prevention

Approximately 70% of suicides are among working age adults.

It can be a challenge to reach working age adults. Where they live, recreate, and work vary widely. However, most will spend a significant portion of their day at work. The workplace offers an excellent opportunity to offer a lifeline to those in distress.

Consider your own workplace. If you were in a crisis would you know where to turn? Is your workplace supportive when employees are experiencing emotional health challenges?

The good news is that **suicide can be prevented.**

Many people who feel suicidal don't want to die, they want to end their pain and keep from being a burden to others. People who find themselves in a suicide crisis can and do recover.

The following actions can help:

Create a supportive environment wherever you work, live and play. Supportive environments make healthy choices easier and they can broadcast a message of help and hope in any environment.

Find the Words: Check in with the people around you, especially if you notice that something may be wrong, or their behavior has changed.

Avoid rushing to judgement and instead find a time to have a real conversation with them. Lead with open ended questions.

Let them know you are available to listen and to help.

Ask them directly if they are thinking about suicide. This can be difficult to do, but being direct provides an opportunity for them to open up and talk about their distress and will not suggest the idea to them if they aren't already thinking about it.

Know the Signs: Most people who are considering suicide show some warning signs or signals of their intentions. You may have noticed that a coworker or a friend has been frequently late to work or missed more days than usual or hasn't been able to keep up with their daily routine. There may be more going on under the surface. They may be experiencing mental health or substance abuse issues, having financial problems, going through a divorce, or coping with illness in the family. They may feel hopeless, that there is no way out from their problems, and fear that they may lose their job, their house, or disappoint their family.

Pain isn't always obvious, but most suicidal people show some signs that they are thinking about suicide. The signs may appear in conversation, through their actions, or in social media posts. If you observe one or more of these warning signs, especially if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change, step in or speak up.

Know the Signs:

- **Putting affairs in order**
- **Giving away possessions**
- **Anxiety or agitation**
- **Sudden mood changes**
- **Withdrawal**
- **Talking about being a burden to others**
- **Reckless Behavior**
- **Changes in sleep**
- **Feeling hopeless, desperate, trapped**
- **No sense of purpose**
- **Uncontrolled anger**
- **Talking about wanting to die or suicide**
- **Increased alcohol or drug use**

Reach Out: You are not alone in this.

Focus of Stillwater is your EAP resource. We offer 24 hour crisis line in which a counselor can be reached in a moment's notice. Our number is 405-377-6768. You may also email us at Emily@focusofstillwater.com or Sabrina@focusofstillwater.com

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Stress Management

For many adults, time spent at work is balanced, often precariously, against the need to care for children and aging parents. For some, financial struggles and resources (car, home, etc.) are more prevalent.

Job related stress can come from a lack of communication, organization, understaffing, unpredicted business, etc.

As a leader, the ability to manage your own stress is important not only for your own mental health but for supporting your staff as well.

Ways to Help Yourself:

When feeling heightened levels of stress, some of the things you can do to manage how it affects you are:

- Deep Breathing Exercises
 - Diaphragmatic breathing (4,7,8)
- Meditation
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Use counseling resources so that you aren't carrying it all on your own.

Managing Stress in the Workplace:

Everyone deals with stress on an individual level. Providing your staff with the tools for stress management can be helpful to increase self-soothing.

- Leadership is essential in helping manage stress and adjusting the work environment.
- Good communication and Positive Language
 - Increasing good communication helps the team to be on the same page and provide cohesiveness.
 - Increase motivation, rapport, and overall positivity.

Positive Language:

- Have short conversations with staff at the beginning of their shift.
 - Set clear expectations.
 - Communicate what the goals are for the day and any other important announcements
- Ask before reacting.
 - It's easy to see things disorganized (dishes, shirt orders, etc.) and jump to conclusions. It may help to ask to find out the reasons before reacting.
 - This will help with reactivity within the staff and allow for a safe environment for staff to come to you with concerns.
 - Increases motivation.