

Understanding Suicide

WORKPLACE
TRAINING
& SUPPORT
SERVICE

About Suicide

Preventing Suicide – The S.A.L.T Method

Risk Groups

Reasons Why someone may consider Suicide

Signs that a person is at risk of Suicide

Suicide Prevention Training

What is Suicide?

Suicide is a major, but largely preventable, public health problem. It is the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15-44. In addition, more people take their own lives each year than die in road accidents.

Currently men are four times more likely to die by suicide than women (ABS, 2012).

It is important to understand that most people with thoughts of suicide do not want to die. As a result, we can all play a role in reducing the rates of suicide in our communities.

Preventing Suicide – The S.A.L.T. Method

1: S - SEE

Hear what the person may SAY

(Social Media, letters, poems) ... E.g., 'I'm tired of living'; 'It's all too hard'; 'My family would be better off without me'....

Notice how they are ACTING

Changes in... Eating, sleeping, socializing, alcohol/drug use... And increased risk taking behaviour, giving away possessions, putting affairs in order...

Be sensitive to how they are FEELING

E.g., lonely, depressed, sad, helpless, anxious, angry... Also, note any rapid recovery from a state of depression should be watched closely as it could mean that the person has finalised their thoughts and has decided to end their life.

Understand what they have EXPERIENCED

2: A - ASK

If you think that someone may be suicidal ask them directly:

Are you thinking of taking your own life?
Are you thinking of suicide?

3: L - LISTEN

Listening is suicide prevention's most powerful tool.

Allow them to express how they are feeling.

Tips:

- Be accepting and non-judgmental
- Be caring and patient
- Ask if unsure
- Stay with them
- Remain calm

4: T – TELL/TAKE

At this stage talk to the person about appropriate help.

Do NOT leave them ALONE - ensure that you keep yourself safe

Risk Groups

Research suggests that the following groups are at higher risk of suicide in Australia

- Men
- Young People
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people
- LGBTI community
- CALD population
- People in rural and remote communities
- People experiencing a mental illness
- People who have previously attempted suicide or who engage in self-harm
- People bereaved by suicide

Please NOTE: although you may fall into one or more of these categories it DOES NOT that you will end your life.

Reasons Why someone may consider Suicide

There are many possible reasons as to why a person may contemplate suicide. Life can be painful and overwhelming at times.

Please note: Most people will give some clues or warning signs. Never ignore any suicide threats!

The following list will give you some clues to consider:

- Relationship breakdown or break-up
- Family issues
- Abuse (sexual, physical, emotional)
- Alcohol & or Drug problems
- Mental Illness (depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder..)
- Major loss (death; including recent death by suicide of a close person)
- Work/school problems
- Unemployment/threat of unemployment/long-term unemployed
- Financial/legal issues
- Physical injury/chronic pain...

Signs that a person is at risk of Suicide

Situations:

- Previous suicide attempt
- Talking/writing about suicide
- Accessing means to suicide
- Saying goodbye or giving away possessions
- Losing interest in things they previously enjoyed
- Change in appearance
- Self-harm
- Engaging in risky behaviour
- Changes in alcohol/drug use
- Withdrawal from people

NOTE: Elevation in mood after being down may indicate that a person has made up their mind to end their life.

Feelings:

- Hopelessness
- Feeling trapped
- Depression
- Anger, irritability, moodiness
- Being withdrawn or sad
- Anxiety, difficulty concentrating
- Worthlessness
- Lack of purpose
- Difficulty finding reasons to live

Suicide Prevention Training

Suicide alertness training – SALT

This program alerts participants to signs that a person may be considering suicide. It acknowledges that while most people at risk of suicide signal their distress and invite help, these intervention opportunities are often overlooked. Participants learn to recognise when someone may have thoughts of suicide and to respond in ways that link them with further suicide intervention help.

NOTE: OzHelp provides a range of training opportunities. Please visit the 'training' section of our website for details.

Need help NOW?

If you, or someone you know is in need of urgent help:

- Ring the 000 and clearly tell the operator that someone's life is in danger
- Or call Lifeline on 13 11 14



OzHelp Tasmania gratefully acknowledges Federal Government funding and funding support from the Tasmanian State Government.

