

# Be aware of the warning signs of suicide

Warning signs are not risk factors. Warning signs indicate an immediate risk of suicide whereas risk factors indicate someone is at heightened risk for suicide, but little or no immediate risk of suicide. Knowing the warning signs of suicide helps people know what actions to take right now to help someone at immediate risk for suicide.



The following signs require immediate attention:

## Talk:

Talks about wanting to die/kill oneself, "I wish I were dead."

Expresses hopelessness, pain and feeling like a burden, "Others are better off without me."

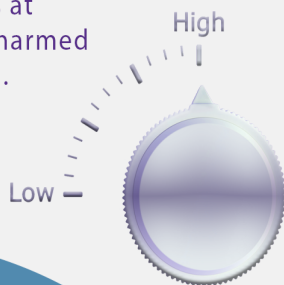
## Behavior:

Looking for ways to kill oneself; sending goodbye messages; giving away valued possessions; putting affairs in order; Reckless misuse of alcohol, drugs, or weapons.

# Take action to get help

Most suicides are preventable. People can recover from acute crises and mental health conditions. It is important to know how to protect yourself, your coworkers and your loved ones.

**High Risk:** If the person is at high risk and has already harmed himself or herself, call 911. Do not negotiate with someone who has a gun and get to safety.



# Conversation

Ask the hard question, "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"



If the person is not in imminent danger, start a conversation to help them share their concerns, and find out how you might help them. Offer to connect the individual to our **Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-222-0364** and ask for the on-call crisis counselor.

**Crisis Line:** If the person is at risk for suicide, stay with the individual. Connect them to the

**Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988**



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

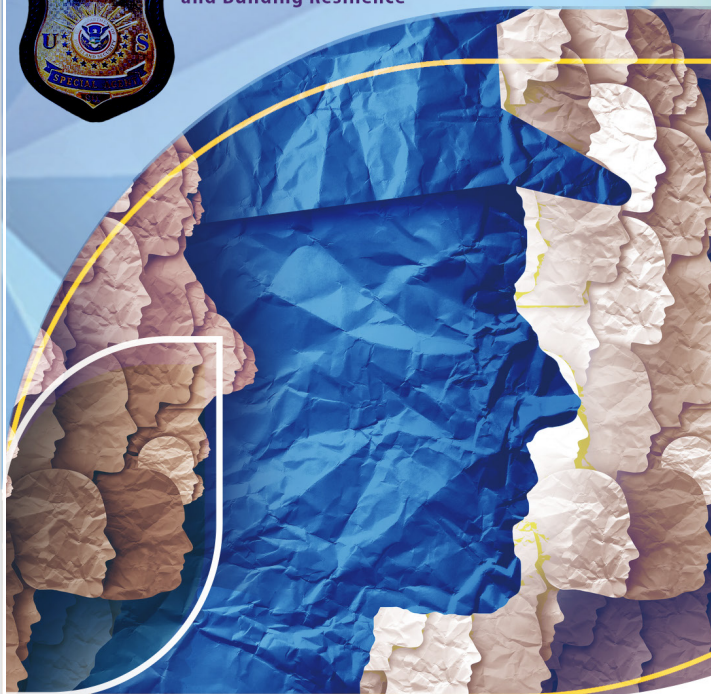
EAP

# Suicide Prevention

Is Everyone's Responsibility



LAW ENFORCEMENT EDITION  
Tactics for Prevention, Early Intervention and Building Resilience



STRONGER TOGETHER

You are not alone



# Suicide is a serious national and law enforcement concern.

Suicide rates have increased 36% in the past 20 years. LEOs may be at an even heightened risk of suicide.

## What are the risk factors for suicide?

- Prior Suicide Attempt • Mental Illness (depression)
- Social Isolation • Relationship Problems
- Financial/Legal Concerns • Job Problems or Job loss
- Substance Abuse and/or Alcoholism
- Serious Medical Illness • Barriers to Health Care
- Stigma associated with mental illness or help-seeking
- Bullying • Suicide cluster in the community
- Adverse childhood experiences (child abuse and/or neglect)
- Access to Lethal Means



Because of the inherent nature of LE stressors, LEO's may be at an even higher risk because of access to deadly firearms. Most people with risk factors for suicide do not kill themselves. Knowing these factors can raise awareness of when to seek support and treatment.



Like peak physical health, law enforcement personnel's mental health is just as critical for operational performance, fulfilling personal relationships and well-being. In fact, the mind and body operate as one to influence overall health.



**Meaningful connections** to co-workers, family and friends and your community are one of the strongest ways to build resilience and protect against the inherent stressors of law enforcement.

## Years of research

indicate that the stressors of a Law Enforcement (LE) career can degrade physical and mental health. Moreover, mental health conditions like PTSD, depression, anxiety and even a brief personal crisis can lead to suicidal thoughts.

Knowing the signs and symptoms for yourself and co-workers along with seeking early treatment is critical for resolving conditions and periods of personal hardship. Another key factor is a routine of healthy habits and social connections to build resilience for when tough times due occur.

Why are protective factors for suicide prevention and good mental health important?

Protective factors are individual characteristics and actions we can take to protect people from suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

The main protective factors for suicide are:

- Available, effective and early mental health treatment
- Strong connection to individuals, family, communities and social institutions
- Access to health care
- Good problem-solving skills
- Meaning and purpose in life
- Healthy coping skills
- Belief system that discourages suicide
- Lethal Means Safety



## Lethal Means Safety

Lethal means safety is an intentional, voluntary practice to reduce one's suicide risk by limiting access to those lethal means during a high-risk period.

- Any step(s) that increase the time and distance between a suicidal impulse and a firearm will reduce suicide risk.
- A locked firearm poses a lower suicide risk than an unlocked firearm
- An unloaded firearm poses a lower risk than a loaded firearm.

Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988