



Suicide prevention

A guide for supervisory staff

Why should I be aware of suicide?

Statistics show that:

- More than twice as many peace officers die because of suicide than are killed in the line of duty.
- All police officers have firearms, and firearms are the most frequently used means of suicide.
- Law enforcement suicide significantly impacts partners, colleagues, supervisors, first responders, family, friends and the community at large.
- Eighty percent of people who attempt suicide tell somebody first via their actions or actual statements.

Contact:

Tips for coping

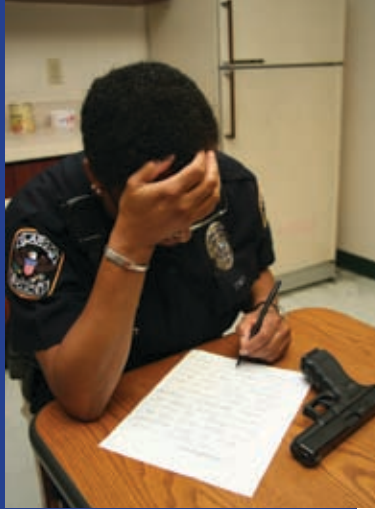
- Cherish your family.
- Congratulate yourself on victories.
- Create an outside hobby.
- Celebrate the good things in life.
- Eat healthy and exercise regularly.
- Remember your priorities in life.

Your job should not be your first priority. It should not define who you are, but rather be something that you do.



Why do people attempt suicide?

Though the reasons may vary, frequently, people attempt suicide because they want others to know they are in psychological pain; they want the pain to end. In addition, depression, anxiety, alcohol, drugs, a relationship loss and being under investigation increase the likelihood a person will attempt suicide. Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.



Suicide risk factors/ indicators

1. Threats to harm oneself.
2. Prior suicide attempt(s).
3. Disturbance in sleep, appetite or weight.
4. Thinking is constricted – there's an attitude of all or nothing, or issues are black or white.
5. Risk-taking behavior has increased.
6. There is a plan and a means to carry out a suicide.
7. The person is emotionless and/or numb.
8. Anger and/or agitation.
9. Sadness and/or depression.
10. Hopelessness, with no orientation toward the future, or the giving away of valued possessions.
11. Problems at work/home.
12. A recent loss (of status or of a loved one).
13. The person is under investigation.
14. Social isolation and/or withdrawal.
15. Increased consumption of alcohol/drugs.



Supervisor responsibilities

- Obtain suicide prevention training for your agency.
- Make sure that information about suicide prevention is available to line staff.
- Be aware and encourage the use of resources such as chaplains, peer support and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).
- Ensure that your subordinates feel they will be given assistance and support when they bring a problem forward.

What you can tell your line staff

- When you suspect someone is having suicidal thoughts, reach out as soon as possible.
- Ask the person if he/she is thinking about suicide. Your asking him/her will not make him/her go out and do it.

It is courageous and appropriate to take steps necessary to help a co-worker who is at risk for suicide.