

Some Lethal Myths

Bringing up suicide may only make things worse. *Wrong: Talking about it is the only way to help*

Someone who's suicidal will always want to die. *Wrong: Being suicidal is a temporary state and intervening may keep it from recurring*

If I'm wrong I may lose a friend or cost him his job. *Wrong: Do nothing and you and his family may lose him forever*

He's helped suicidal people and knows what to do. *Wrong: He may not be able to ask for help and needs your help now*

Sources of Help

- **National Suicide Help Line** 800-273-TALK (8255) (Press [1] to reach the **Veterans Crisis Line**)
- **Safe Call Now** 206-459-3020 Confidential 24/7 crisis line for emergency responders
- **Fire/EMS Helpline** - 1-888-731-FIRE (3473) National Volunteer Fire Council 24/7 crisis line
- **Montgomery County Emergency Service (MCES)** 24/7 crisis intervention 610-279-6100

Montgomery County Emergency Service
50 Beech Drive
Norristown, PA 19403-5421

PLACE
STAMP
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What First Responders Need to Know About Suicide

Information for Police Officers, EMTs and Paramedics, and Fire Fighters and their Families

Purpose

First responders routinely assist people who appear to be at risk of suicide. However, they often don't see warning signs in members of their unit or themselves. Stigma may also keep them from asking for help. Here's what you need to know and what you can do if someone that you work with seems suicidal.

How Suicide Happens

A suicide may occur when both intent to die and the capability for potentially lethal self-harm come together.

A desire to die may result from a person's *belief* that he is a burden to those he cares about or is disconnected from those important to him.

A capability for lethal self-harm may result from personal or job-related trauma, exposure to violence, pain, access to firearms, military training, and other experiences.

Early Warning Signs

Talking of being trapped, losing control
Increasing alcohol/drug use
Withdrawing from family/friends
Anxiety/agitation/sleep problems
Mood changes, anger, growing pessimism, unnecessary risk-taking
Growing self-criticism
All or nothing, black/white thinking

Some Serious Signs

Indifference to job duties
Giving away pets, favored items
Making final arrangements
Sleep disturbances, nightmares

Possible Triggers

Marital issues, divorce, separation
Personal financial problems
On-job critical incident
Disciplinary action, suspension
Death of child, other loved one
Serious injury, disability

How to Help

Go with your gut, trust your instincts.
Reach out as soon as possible.
Directly ask "Are you thinking about hurting your self?"
If yes, insist on getting help ASAP
Involve a trusted mutual friend
Don't believe "I'm really okay now."

Dealing with Danger Signs

An immediate emergency response is indicated if the person is:

- Voicing clear threat to kill self
- Citing a specific suicide plan giving when and how
- Seeking lethal means or referring to available means

Anyone of these signals imminent dangerousness and you should:

- Remove weapons if safe to do so
- Summon emergency help
- Don't let person leave or be alone

Involve supervision or command as it may be a life-threatening situation

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SUICIDE PREVENTION

www.montcocares.org