

Suicide in the Workplace

Traditionally, companies around the globe have viewed suicide as a personal issue rather than a workplace issue. For the last four years, suicide has been added to the agenda in every workplace violence keynote, training, or break-out session that we deliver for our clients since 800,000 people die from suicide every year globally. That's one person every 40 seconds and double the amount of people who die from homicide. Our mission at The Stay Safe Project is to keep people safe...from others and from themselves.

With suicide rates already on the rise, a global pandemic hit – vastly increasing mental health issues such as anxiety and suicidal ideology, economic struggles, social isolation and new barriers to proper mental health. If a person was susceptible to suicide before COVID-19, then he/she is certainly at a higher risk now due to the immense amount of stressors which most of us haven't experienced until now.

Suicide is happening in workplaces more than ever before, which means employers need to have a plan in place to protect their employees from their own mental health just as they do for external safety hazards. When a suicide occurs in the workplace, organization leadership is often at a loss as to dealing with the complicated, tragic event. Take the steps below so that you are prepared:

Suicide Prevention Training

Your employees' mental health needs to be a priority – now more than ever. Suicide Prevention Training needs to be mandatory. The coping mechanisms offered in these trainings can be helpful to every employee as they navigate challenges throughout their lives now or in the future.

Suicide Crisis Plan

If the unfortunate act of suicide occurs at the workplace, employers need to have a crisis plan in place that answers the questions:

- How do we notify next of kin?

- Who do we contact to clean up the scene?
- What kind of counseling should be offered to co-workers and witnesses?
- What statements should be made internally and externally?

Warning Signs of Suicide

It's everyone's job to keep each other safe in the workplace. Employees should be on the lookout for warning signs of suicide. One warning sign alone may not mean someone is in trouble, but many signs are cause for concern. [Teach the warning signs and risk factors](#) and have a system in place where employees can come forward to express concern.

There are many amazing resources for anyone struggling with suicidal thoughts, including the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#). When you create a workplace culture of caring where people feel that they will not be stigmatized for their mental health struggles, you have the ability to help them personally, and improve the safety and happiness of your entire workplace.

– *Written by Carol Cambridge, Workplace Violence Expert*