

# Suicide prevention: What can you do?



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Suicide impacts everyone and we have a shared responsibility to prevent it. The suicide rate in Oregon has been consistently higher than the U.S. rate over the last 30 years, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

While there is no single cause of suicide, it can occur when stressors exceed a person's coping ability. This handout provides guidance on what employers can do to prevent suicide and includes resources to share with those looking for help.

What you can do in the workplace:

### Talk about it

Talking about mental health and suicide prevention removes the stigma, allowing employees to share their concerns and making them more likely to ask for help.

Here are a few specific ways to do it:

- Share experiences and stories of hope at company meetings
- Include mental health and suicide prevention in safety meetings and company newsletters
- Have mental health screenings at wellness fairs

### Warning signs

Some behaviors may indicate that a person is at immediate risk for suicide. These three signs should prompt you to immediately call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or a mental health professional:

- Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

Other signs indicate a serious risk, especially if they are new:

- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

### Provide training and resources

Establish a network of supervisors and employees who can recognize and respond to workers exhibiting signs of suicide risk and can assist them in getting professional help.

Here are a couple organizations that provide this type of training:

Mental Health First Aid

[www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org)

QPR Institute

[www.qprinstitute.com](http://www.qprinstitute.com)

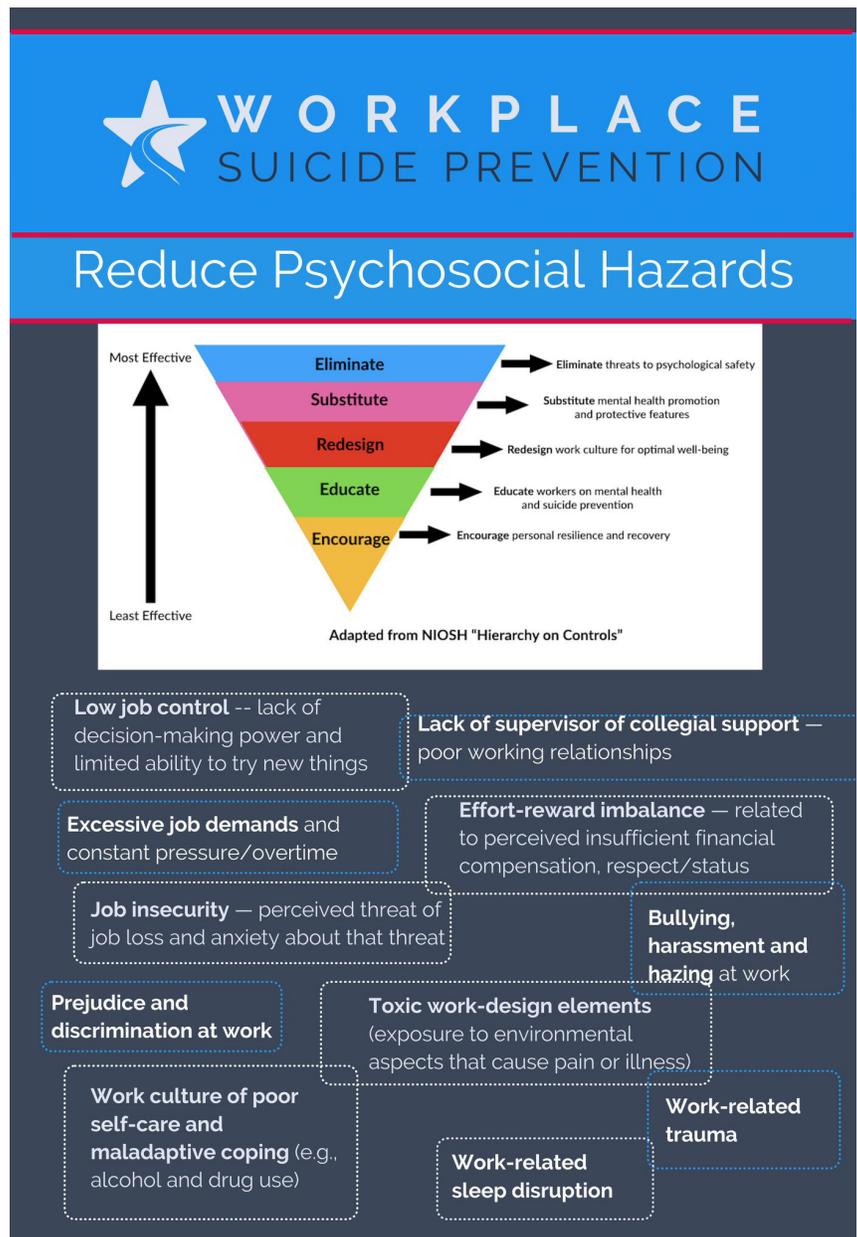
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Check your employee assistance program to ensure suicide prevention resources are available and easy to use. Let your employees know about the program and provide instructions for accessing the benefits. If you don't have an assistance program, consider adding one to your benefits package.

Offer training to employees so they can recognize when they need support. Enhance resilience by providing resources and education to help people build life skills, such as critical thinking, stress management, and coping. Resilience—the ability to cope with adversity and adapt to change—is a protective factor against suicide risk.

### Establish a recovery plan

Create guidelines and policies that include suicide bereavement and other programs as a component of emergency preparedness plans. Have a plan that allows your organization to respond quickly and compassionately in the crisis period after a suicide death. Be prepared to respond to the immediate emotional needs of people affected by the crisis as well as to the long-term effects and risks that may be associated with exposure.



Source: [www.workplacesuicideprevention.com](http://www.workplacesuicideprevention.com)

Research connects a number of job stress-related factors to risk of suicide death and attempts. Identifying job stressors and controlling them when possible can be an effective component of workplace suicide prevention.

### Here are several places to get more information:

- Workplace Suicide Prevention: [www.workplacesuicideprevention.com](http://www.workplacesuicideprevention.com)
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: [www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)
- Oregon Health Authority Suicide Prevention: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PREVENTIONWELLNESS/SAFELIVING/SUICIDEPREVENTION/Pages/index.aspx>
- Crisis Text and Suicide Hotline: [www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)  
[www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)