



SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING



Health providers are at significant risk for stress and burnout compared to the general population. This can lead to conditions such as insomnia, anxiety, substance use and feelings of depression. Add the burdens of COVID-19, grief and other losses and we see health provider suicide rates increasing. We can all make a difference to intervene and potentially save a life.

HOW CAN I TELL IF SOMEONE IS STRUGGLING?

There are behaviors and comments that people express that can let you know they may be struggling. Below are some examples of things to watch for, especially if they are new or represent a behavior change for the person.

- Changes in sleep (too little or too much)
- Withdrawal or isolation
- Acting anxious or agitated
- Behaving recklessly
- Giving away personal items of value
- Having extreme mood swings
- Increasing the use of alcohol and/or drugs



If the person is talking about...

- Feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Seeking revenge
- Feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain
- Wanting to die or kill oneself
- Wanting the pain to end

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NEXT STEPS: WHAT CAN I DO?

If you see or identify worrying signs, let the person know that you care and want to help.

Begin by asking questions like:

- Are you okay?
- You seem to be going through some tough times, what can I do to help?
- Who can I contact to provide you with support right now?

Assume you might be the only person who knows this colleague is struggling.

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As you continue talking with the person, you might encourage them to seek help.



- Let me help you find someone to talk to.
- Getting help is what strong health professionals do.

If the person is in extreme distress, you may need to ask the questions below. It is not true that asking about suicide will "put the idea in their head."

- Are you thinking about hurting yourself?
- Are you planning on ending your life?
- Are you considering suicide?

If the person answers yes to any of these questions and/or you suspect they may hurt themselves imminently, call 911 or go with them to the emergency department for screening.

DOs and DON'Ts



DO ask about their wellbeing and if they feel they want to hurt themselves. This **will not** increase the likelihood that the person will hurt themselves.

DO ask about their struggles. This can be a relief to the person and shows them that you care.

DO ask about where the person prefers to access mental health services.



DON'T make a joke of the situation. This can minimize the person's pain and make it less likely they'll open up to you.

DON'T tell them they shouldn't feel this way or dismiss their experience. This can make the person feel as though they can't trust you.

DON'T ignore warning signs and assume someone else will intervene.

RESOURCES

National Suicide Prevention Hotline:
1-800-273-TALK

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
*Healthcare Professional Burnout, Depression and
Suicide Prevention*

bit.ly/3oaC9Aa



American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Suicide Prevention in Healthcare Settings

bit.ly/3rpbCkA



American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
*Facts about Mental Health and Suicide
Among Physicians*

bit.ly/2ZKjYc



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