

**PSY BAR®**

## The Suicidal Employee: Real Issues, Managing Real Risk and Practical Tips

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PsyBar, Chief Clinical Officer  
2019 EAPA World Conference

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Describe the problem and impact of suicide on the work environment.
- Identify warning signs and behaviors that signal a person may be at risk for suicide.
- Discuss ways to respond to an individual who is at risk for suicide.
- Create a strategy to develop an effective suicide prevention plan in your work setting.

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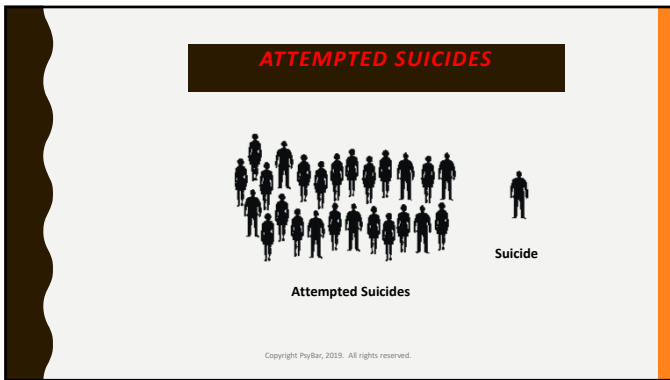
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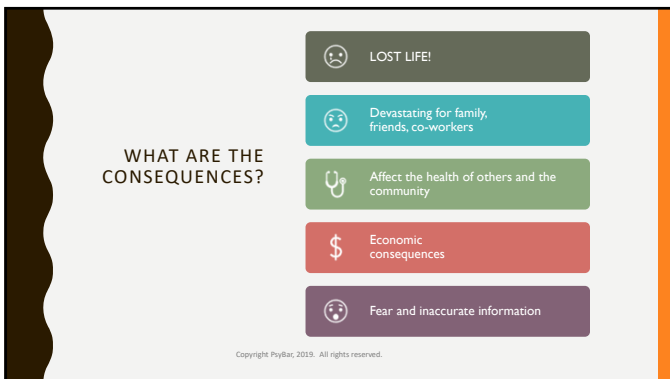
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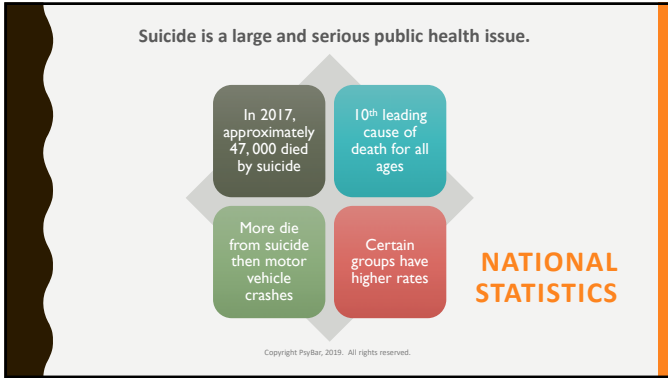
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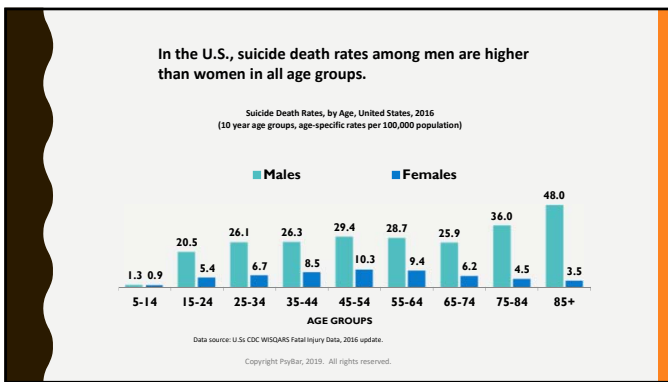
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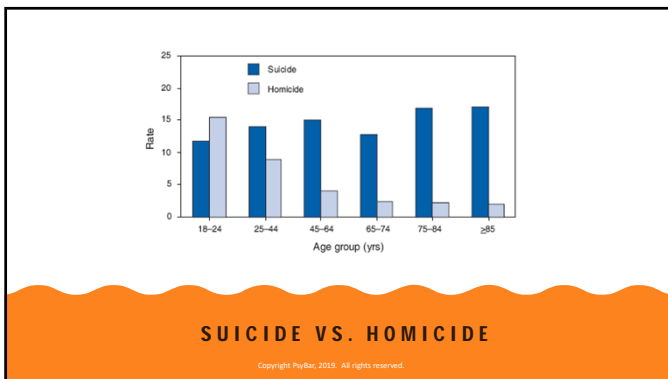
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## NATIONAL OCCUPATION STATISTICS

Men in high skill and high stakes occupations are almost 1.5 times more like to die by suicide (Business Insider).

People in occupations requiring no education after high school are more at risk for suicide.

Construction industry is at highest risk for suicide.

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## NATIONAL OCCUPATION STATISTICS

The occupational groups with the highest rates of suicide for men were:

Construction and extraction	Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media	Installation, maintenance and repair
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For women, they were:

Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media	Protective service	Health care support
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## SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

A sign that a person is suffering deeply and needs treatment

Suicidal thoughts or behaviors are both damaging and dangerous and are considered a psychiatric emergency.

Having suicidal thoughts does not mean you are weak or flawed.

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Many more think about or attempt suicide and survive.

In 2017, 1.4 million adults attempted	2.7 million have had a plan
9.3 million have had suicidal thoughts	836,000 ER visits due to self-inflicted injury per year

**STAGGERING STATISTICS**

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### WHY ISN'T SUICIDE TALKED ABOUT MORE?



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### MYTH VS. FACT

Talking about suicide will lead to and encourage suicide.	Suicide only affects individuals with a mental health condition.	Once an individual is suicidal, they will always remain suicidal.
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### MYTH VS. FACT

Most suicides happen suddenly without warning.

Anyone can learn to help someone who is struggling with thoughts of suicide.

Someone who is suicidal is determined to die.

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### FRAMING SUICIDE RISK



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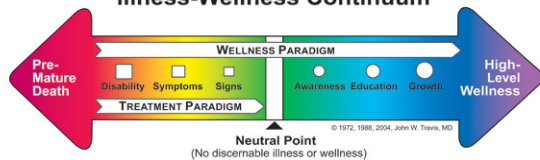
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### Illness-Wellness Continuum



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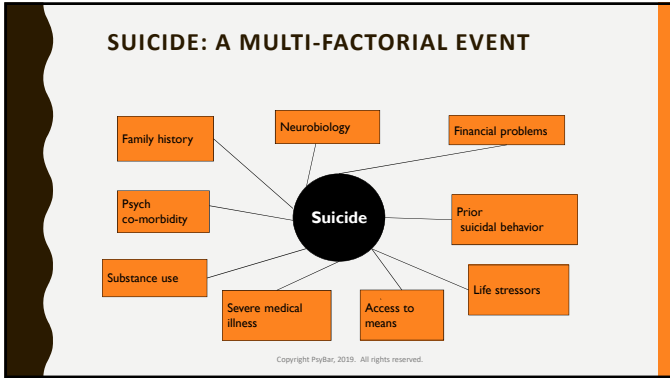
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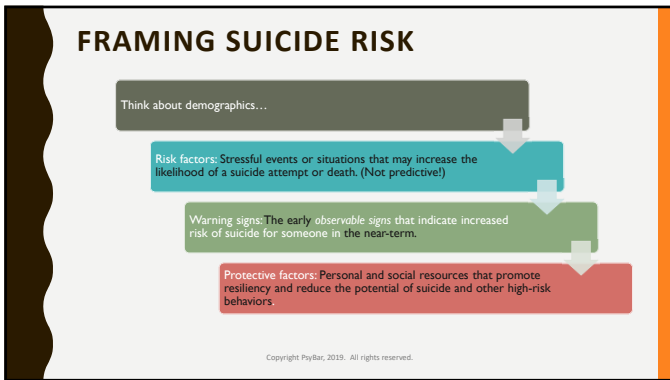
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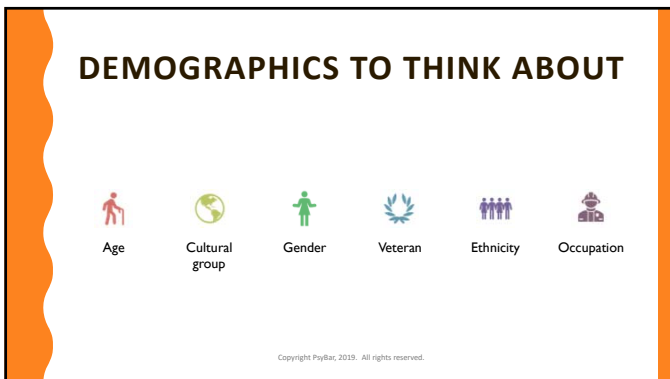
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**RISK FACTORS:  
STATIC  
(UNCHANGING)**

- PRIOR SUICIDE ATTEMPT
- HISTORY OF ABUSE, NEGLECT, TRAUMA
- HISTORY OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
- CHRONIC DISEASE AND DISABILITY
- FAMILY HISTORY

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**RISK FACTORS: ACUTE (MODIFIABLE)/  
POTENTIAL WARNING SIGNS**

- Suicidal statements/expressions
- Feelings of hopelessness, failure
- Current mental health issues
- Mood/behavioral changes
- Minimal/unresponsive to supports
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Sleep disturbance
- Social isolation

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**POTENTIAL TRIGGERS**

- Recent loss or major life change
- Recent suicide(s) in family/community
- Recent arrest/incarceration
- Financial problems/job loss
- Relationship break up/rejection
- Acute mental illness

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### MORE IMMINENT WARNING SIGNS

- Preparatory behaviors
- Mood shift
- Recent major crisis
- Accessing a means to do it

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### PROTECTIVE FACTORS



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### PROMOTING A HEALTHY WORKFORCE AND RESPONDING TO SUICIDE RISK

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## HOW PREPARED IS YOUR COMPANY?

- Do you have a workplace suicide prevention program?
- What policies and procedures do you have for an employee at risk or in crisis?
- Do you have a plan for after a suicide attempt or death?
- Do you have EAP or mental health contact info visible at your workplace?
- Do you provide education or training on mental health, suicide prevention?
- Do you have specialized suicide prevention training for HR, managers and EAP providers?
- Do you have a culture of caring?

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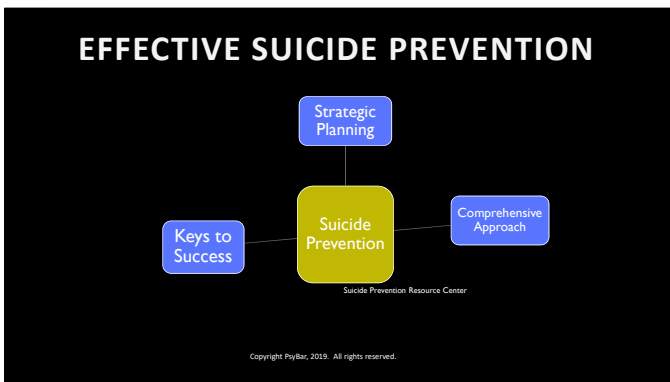
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## STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Describe the problem
- Choose long-term goals
- Identify key risk and protective factors
- Select or develop interventions
- Plan
- Implement, evaluate and improve

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**KEYS TO SUCCESS**

- ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE
- PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION
- SAFE AND EFFECTIVE MESSAGING AND REPORTING
- CULTURALLY COMPETENT APPROACHES
- EVIDENCE BASED PREVENTION

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### COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Foster	Foster communication, belonging, connectedness, respect
Identify and assist	Identify and assist those at risk for suicide
Respond	Determine suicide risk response and return to work
Prepared	Be prepared to respond to a suicide death (postvention)

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### 3 BASIC INTERVENTION STEPS

- Show You Care**—listen carefully—be genuine  
"I'm concerned about you . . ."
- Ask the Question**—Be direct, caring and non-confrontational  
"Are you thinking about suicide?"
- Get Help**  
"You're not alone. Let me help you."

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### RTW CONSIDERATIONS FOLLOWING SUICIDE RISK-RELATED LEAVE

- Has a doctor cleared the employee?
- FFD evaluation needed?
- Accommodations appropriate?
- Partner with EAP or OCC Health Professional

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### POSTVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE

Postvention is psychological first aid, crisis intervention and other support offered after a suicide to affected individuals or the workplace as a whole.

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### SUICIDE AND THE WORKPLACE

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## 10 ACTION STEPS FOR DEALING WITH THE AFTERMATH OF A SUICIDE

**Immediate:  
Acute Phase**

**Short-Term: Recovery Phase**

**Longer-Term: Reconstructing Phase**

- 1. Coordinate: Contain the crisis.
- 2. Notify: Protect and respect the privacy rights of the deceased employee and their loved ones.
- 3. Communicate: Reduce the potential for contagion.
- 4. Support: Offer practical assistance to family.
- 5. Link: Identify and link impacted employees to additional support resources and refer those most affected to professional mental health services.
- 6. Comfort: Support, comfort, and promote healthy grieving of the impacted employees.
- 7. Restore: Restore equilibrium and optimal functioning in the workplace.
- 8. Lead: Build and sustain trust and confidence in organizational leadership.
- 9. Honor: Prepare for anniversary reactions and other milestone dates.
- 10. Sustain: Transition postvention to suicide prevention.

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## REMEMBER....



Suicide is preventable



Understand your work setting and develop a suicide prevention plan



Goal is Zero suicide



Know the basic steps to follow if someone is suicidal

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## Questions?



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