

Suicide Prevention

Resources for Risk Management

2018

*The Philadelphia Insurance Companies developed this resource with
The Zero Suicide Institute at Education Development Center.*

*Zero Suicide is a system-wide quality improvement approach to
improve the care provided to people at risk of suicide. The Zero Suicide
Institute provides training and consultation to health care
organizations adopting this framework.*

Suicide Prevention Resources for Risk Management

Impact

Suicide is a national problem. In the United States, there are over 44 thousand suicide deaths a year and over a million people report making suicide attempts. In 2016, close to 10 million people reported seriously considering suicide. Suicide and suicide attempts costs the U.S. \$93.5 billion annually.


It will take a commitment from every sector and industry—health care and education to retail and hospitality—to drive suicide rates down in this country.

Contents

This publication describes some key resources for reducing the risk of suicide in a number of strategic settings, including the following:

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Each section begins with resources for systemic efforts to prevent suicide and moves on to more specific tools for recognizing and responding to suicidal behaviors in individuals.

Many—but not all—of these resources are available to individuals at no cost. Please note the fee-for-service icon: 

Behavioral Health

Behavioral health settings are on the “front lines” when it comes to providing preventative suicide care to individuals with suicidal ideation. The following resources are designed to optimize suicide care in behavioral health settings.

Zero Suicide

Zero Suicide is a system-wide approach to improving care and reducing suicide and suicidal behaviors among people seen in health and behavioral health care settings.

- » [The Zero Suicide website](#)
Features information and a toolkit that can help organizations implement the Zero Suicide approach. Most of these resources are available at no cost.



- » [The Zero Suicide AcademySM](#)
A two-day in-person interactive training for teams from health and behavioral health care organizations that teaches the core principles of the Zero Suicide framework and helps organizations launch their approach. There is a fee for attending a Zero Suicide Academy.



- » [The Zero Suicide Institute](#)
Provides fee-for-service consultation, training, and tailored assistance to health and behavioral health care organizations to help them design, implement, and sustain the changes necessary for optimal patient care.

- » [Zero Suicide in Health and Behavioral Health Care](#)
A short video that describes how the Zero Suicide approach will improve care and outcomes for individuals at risk of suicide in health care systems.
- » [Suicide Prevention: An Emerging Priority for Health Care](#)
An article examining the feasibility of improving suicide prevention in health care settings and the promising results of using the Zero Suicide approach in primary care and behavioral health care settings.

- » [Suicide Care Training Options](#)
A list of suicide care training programs appropriate for clinical and non-clinical staff at health and behavioral health care agencies. Some have fees.

Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR)

[AMSR](#) is a one-day in-person training that teaches behavioral health professionals the core competencies for providing suicide care to patients. It presents five of the most common suicide care dilemmas faced by providers and the best practices for addressing these dilemmas. AMSR is for health care providers who have a master's or doctoral degree in behavioral health care, including social workers, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurses.

Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)

[The Columbia Lighthouse Project](#) has developed a set of suicide risk screening tools that will help health care and behavioral health care providers assess the level of suicide risk in a patient over his or her lifetime, more recently, or since the patient's last health care contact. The Lighthouse Project also offers tools for screening children, people with cognitive impairments, and patients at discharge and in emergency departments, as well as training in the use of these tools.

Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM)

[CALM](#) is an online workshop that teaches mental health clinicians and medical providers how to ask patients who are at risk for suicide about their access to lethal means of self-harm (such as prescription drugs or firearms) and how to work with patients, and their families, to reduce patient access to lethal means and thus reduce their risk of suicide.

Joint Commission Sentinel Event Alert 56

[The Joint Commission's Sentinel Event Alert 56: Detecting and Treating Suicide Ideation in All Settings](#) recommends steps to reduce risk and prevent suicide in health care and behavioral health care settings. It includes recommendations for screening, assessing, preserving the safety of, treating, discharging, and providing follow-up care for patients at risk for suicide.

SAMHSA TIP 57

[TIP 57: Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services](#) was developed by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA). TIP 57 helps behavioral

health professionals understand the impact of trauma, assess, treat, and reduce suicide risk of patients who have experienced trauma, and build a trauma-informed workforce. [The Tip 57 Quick Guide for Clinicians](#) summarizes the principles, tools, and procedures of providing trauma-informed care for behavioral health counselors and clinicians.

Substance Abuse Treatment Programs

Many of the resources recommended for behavioral health care settings, including Zero Suicide, can help reduce suicide risk in substance abuse treatment programs.

Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR)

[AMSR](#) is a one-day in-person training that teaches behavioral health professionals the core competencies for providing suicide care to patients. It presents five of the most common suicide care dilemmas faced by providers and the best practices for addressing these dilemmas. AMSR is for health care providers who have a master's or doctoral degree in behavioral health care, including social workers, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurses.

Substance Use and Suicide: A Nexus Requiring a Public Health Approach

[This short publication](#) summarizes the relationship of substance abuse and suicide and provides practical direction for how substance abuse prevention and treatment programs and suicide programs can work together.

SAMHSA TAP 33

[TAP 33: Systems-Level Implementation of Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment](#) (SBRIT) is a part of the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) Technical Assistance Publication Series. TAP 33 describes the core elements of screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment programs for people living with or at risk for substance abuse.

SAMHSA TIP 50

[TIP 50: Addressing Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Substance Abuse Treatment](#) includes (1) information and best practices for substance abuse counselors working with clients who have suicidal thoughts or behaviors, (2) an implementation guide for administrators to help them build programs that will reduce the risk of suicide while addressing their clients substance abuse issues, and (3) a literature review on depressive symptoms designed for use by clinical supervisors, counselors, and administrators.

Child & Adolescent Social Work and Foster Care

Many of the resources recommended for behavioral health care settings can help reduce suicide risk in child and adolescent social work and foster care settings.

Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR)

[AMSR](#) is a one-day in-person training that teaches behavioral health professionals the core competencies for providing suicide care to patients. It presents five of the most common suicide care dilemmas faced by providers and the best practices for addressing these dilemmas. AMSR is for health care providers who have a master's or doctoral degree in behavioral health care, including social workers, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurses.

Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)

[The Columbia Lighthouse Project](#) has developed a set of suicide risk screening tools that will help social workers assess the level of suicide risk in individual children, as well as training in the use of these tools.

Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM)

[CALM](#) is an online workshop that teaches mental health clinicians and medical providers how to ask patients who are at risk for suicide about their access to lethal means of self-harm (such as prescription drugs or firearms) and how to work with patients, and their families, to reduce patient access to lethal means and thus reduce their risk of suicide. The National Association of Social Workers has approved this workshop for continuing education contact hours.

Foster Care Providers: Helping Youth at Risk of Suicide

[Foster Care Providers: Helping Youth at Risk of Suicide](#) is a short publication that provides information and resources for professionals and volunteers who interact with youth in foster care settings as well as the adults who care for these children.

Youth Suicide and Self-Harm: What Advocates Need to Know

[This issue of the American Bar Association's Child Law Practice](#) describes what attorneys can do to protect clients in the child welfare system from suicide and ensure that youth at risk for suicide receive appropriate mental health care.

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) Best Practice Guidelines: Serving LGBT Youth in Out-of-Home Care

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) youth have a dramatically higher risk of suicidal behaviors than their heterosexual peers do. [These comprehensive professional guidelines](#) explain how child welfare and juvenile justice professionals can best serve LGBT youth in state care.

Suicide Prevention Resources for Parents/Guardians/Families

The short publication [Suicide Prevention Resources for Parents/Guardians/Families](#) guides parents, family members, guardians, and caregivers to online resources that can help them protect the young people in their care from suicidal behaviors.

Middle and High Schools

Administrators, mental health providers, and teachers all have essential roles in preventing suicide among middle and high school students. These toolkits are packed with resources designed to promote behavioral health in schools.

Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)

[The Columbia Lighthouse Project](#) has developed a set of suicide risk screening tools that will help school staff assess the level of suicide risk in individual students, as well as training in the use of these tools.

Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools

[Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools](#) will help high schools and school districts design and implement a multifaceted program to prevent suicide and promote behavioral health.

After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools

[After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools](#) will help schools respond in the immediate aftermath of a suicide in the school community and reduce the adverse impact—including additional suicide deaths and attempts—among other students.

The Role of High School Mental Health Providers in Preventing Suicide

[This short publication](#) designed for high school mental health providers includes guidance on recognizing and responding to the warning signs of suicide in young people and information on resources to help school-based mental health providers address suicidal behaviors.

The Role of High School Teachers in Preventing Suicide

[This short publication](#) addresses the knowledge and skills that high school teachers need to recognize and respond to the warning signs of suicide among their students as well as recommendations for other resources that will help them prevent suicidal behaviors in their schools.

Shooting Ranges and Gun Retailers

For a person at risk of suicide, reduced access to lethal means is a vital protective factor. Shooting ranges and gun retailers can use the following resources to help provide this protection to their customers.

Means Matter

[Means Matter](#) is a program at the Harvard School of Public Health that seeks to “increase the proportion of suicide prevention groups who promote activities that reduce a suicidal person’s access to lethal means of suicide and who develop active partnerships with gun owner groups to prevent suicide.” This campaign offers materials and advice on how firearms instructors can include suicide prevention in their firearms training classes. It also supports the creation of Gun Shop Projects in which the owners and staff of firearms retailers and shooting ranges work together to prevent suicide among their customers.

Common Ground

[Common Ground](#) is a short video about how gun retailers can help protect their customers from suicide risk. The video features one of the gun shop owners who helped found New Hampshire’s Gun Shop Project, a suicide prevention campaign in New Hampshire that is spreading across the nation.

Residential and Hospitality

Managers and staff in hotels, apartment buildings, and condominiums can be provided with information on the warning signs of suicidal behavior and how to respond to guests and tenants who may be a danger to themselves. Managers and staff can be trained as gatekeepers and offer suicide information to guests and residents on posters or by distributing resources such as the Lifeline Wallet Card.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



[The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) (Lifeline) is a network of local crisis centers that provide free and confidential support to people in suicidal or emotional crisis 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Lifeline provides this support through a toll-free telephone number (1-800-273-8255) and a web-based chat system. Lifeline Wallet Cards feature information about the warning signs of suicide and how people can get help by calling Lifeline. [Download or order these cards](#) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration website.

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