

CLAREMONT EAP your trusted resource

MANAGER SUPPLEMENT

April-June 2020



First Aid Suicide Risk in the Workplace

The Coronavirus pandemic has created a new reality for every aspect of our lives, including work. Some employees continue to physically go to the workplace, while many work remotely. Either way, employees may share feelings of increased stress, anxiety and even despair. Either in-person or on the phone, managers may observe behavior changes or hear warning signs of suicide risk from an employee.

As you know, Claremont EAP is available to managers to discuss concerns about suicidal employees. Claremont can help managers determine next steps and available resources. Intake counselors are available 24/7 at 800-834-3773. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is another important resource for employees in emotional distress or suicidal crisis. This hotline is available 24/7 and provides free and confidential support. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number is 800-273-8255.

Claremont recognizes that timing in crisis is critical and a manager may need to act swiftly. In those cases, here are some guidelines to help you assist employees who show signs of suicidality.

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CLAREMONT EAP'S

COVID-19 **RESOURCE CENTER**

Easy access to global news and EAP resources

A Message to Managers from Claremont EAP

Often, the employee who needs their Employee Assistance Program the most doesn't think to call for assistance. A manager's referral to the EAP can be an effective strategy for improving an employee's effectiveness, productivity, motivation and morale. A referral to the EAP can also decrease absenteeism, reduce turnover, foster acceptance of change and reduce stress.

For confidential help, call: **800-834-3773** or visit: www.claremonteap.com

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Warning signs to look out for from an at-risk employee:

- Explicit comments about wanting to end one's life.
- Indirect comments such as, "What's the point of living?" or "No one would even notice or miss me if I would disappear."
- Expressing hopelessness or helplessness.
- Social media posts or statements about death.
- Inquiring about life insurance policy details, particularly as it relates to cause of death.
- Getting end-of-life affairs in order, such as making a will, trust or expressing funeral preferences, etc.
- Distribution of their possessions.
- Obvious mood swings or changes in behavior; down, depressed, somber or withdrawn behavior.
- Neglect of appearance, hygiene or work quality.

Increased risk during extreme difficult periods such as home quarantine

Many people are struggling with anxiety and fear regarding the Coronavirus. In addition to those concerns, someone who has recently suffered a significant loss, such as a death, break-up, divorce, bankruptcy may be at an increased suicide risk. Extreme financial stressors, legal problems, substance abuse, and impulsivity are other signs of increased risk.

Practice Self-Care

Managing an employee who displays warning signs of suicide

How to respond if an employee shows warning signs

Managers are not expected to do a suicide risk assessment, but must engage fast in "first-aid" and ask questions to determine appropriate next steps.

Ask the employee if they are experiencing suicidal thoughts

- As soon as you become aware of an employee's suicide warning signs, locate the employee and stay with them either inperson or on the phone.
- If you're physically in the workplace, lead the employee to a private place where you can talk and determine next steps.
- Be direct and transparent about your concern with the employee regarding their thoughts of suicide.
- Ask the employee what they mean by their comments. You might be concerned you will give them ideas they didn't already have. However, research shows that, on the contrary, when questioned about suicidal remarks, most people feel relief, not distress.
- Allow the employee to talk about their suicidal thoughts; this often gives a person a sense of hope.
- Let the employee speak, and listen to what the employee is willing to share.
- Express that you care, value and are concerned for them. Show empathy and compassion, and put aside any feelings of anger about what the employee is considering.
- Avoid dismissing the employee's feelings, minimizing their pain and challenging their values by saying things like, "Have you considered what it would do to your loved ones," or "You don't really want to hurt yourself."
- Avoid the urge to question the employee and don't offer advice about the problems they are experiencing. Instead, offer them hope that with the appropriate help, solutions for the problems they are facing can be found.

If the employee tells you they intend to harm themselves:

- Dial 911 immediately. Their safety is your top priority.
- Check your company policy regarding contacting the employee's emergency contact to alert them of concerns.
- Let the employee know you have concerns about their safety, given what they told you and that you have a responsibility to make sure they get immediate help. Tell the employee "Your safety is what's most important right now."
- When calling 911, provide all the details the employee has shared with you and others.
- Upon arrival, emergency responders will speak to the employee to further assess and determine next steps.
- In situations where the employee works remotely/offsite or has not reported to work in a reasonable amount of time and isn't reachable, 911 may also need to be contacted.
 Calling 911 to do a welfare/safety check is better than waiting another day to see if the employee reports to work.
- After having addressed the immediate safety concerns, consult with the appropriate resources within your company.

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can be very stressful. After getting the support for the employee, consider getting support for yourself, too. Call Claremont EAP at **800-834-3773** to access your free and confidential counseling services.