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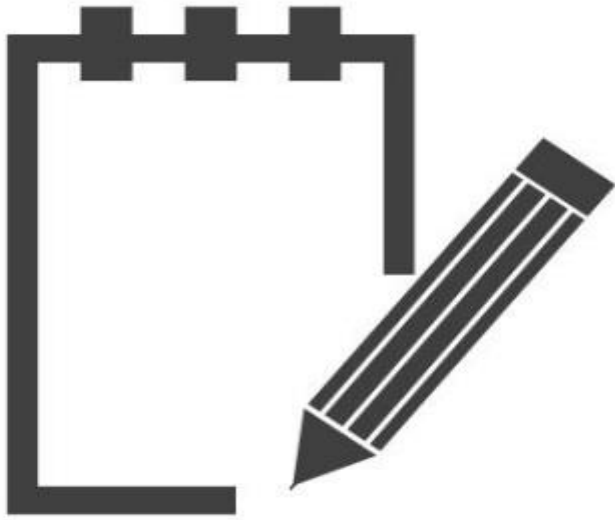
Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement
and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability

BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE

Suicide

Law Enforcement and Community: Crisis Intervention Team Training

Module Overview



Suicide

- Trends
- Assessment
- Interventions

Suicide Overview - Demographics



- **Suicide Rates by Gender**

- Men die by suicide 3.5 times more often than women

- **Suicide Rates by Age**

- The rate of suicide is highest in middle age, particularly White men

- **Suicide Rates by Race/Ethnicity**

- The rate of suicide is highest among Whites and second-highest among American Indians and Alaska Natives

Suicide Trends

Suicide Attempts

- At least one million people in the U.S. engage in intentionally inflicted self-harm each year.
- Females attempt suicide three times more often than males.
- The ratio of suicide attempts to suicide death in youth is estimated to be about 25:1, compared to about 4:1 in the elderly.

Suicide Methods

- Firearms are the most common method of death by suicide, accounting for almost 50% of all suicide deaths.
- The second most common method is suffocation (including hangings).



The Criminal Justice Response

- Large amounts of resources are committed each day to saving the lives of those threatening suicide.
- Police officers are routinely dispatched to threatened suicides, and suicide is a daily occurrence in America's prisons and jails.
- For first responders, threatened suicides can be a very dangerous type of intervention.



Suicide: Definitions

Suicidal Thoughts

Suicide Attempt

Completed Suicide



Myths About Suicide



- **True or False:** People who talk about suicide are manipulative and just trying to get attention.
- **False**
- Most people who die by suicide talk about it first. Always take talk about suicide seriously. Always.
- **True or False:** Young people never think about suicide, they have their entire life ahead of them.
- **False**
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24. Sometimes children under 10 die by suicide.

Myths About Suicide



- **True or False:** You can't stop somebody who wants to kill themselves
- **False**
- If you discourage someone, even briefly, they are extremely unlikely to try again.
- **False or Fact:** Suicide only strikes people of a certain gender, race, financial status, age, etc.
- **False**
- All kinds of people complete suicide.

Suicide Assessment



Warning Signs

Verbal	Person may talk about being a burden to others, feeling trapped, or having no reason to live.
Psychological	Person may have a mental health condition, substance misuse, or serious or chronic health condition and/or pain.
Emotional	Person may display a depressed, irritable, or anxious mood.
Behavioral	Person may be looking for a way to kill themselves, acting recklessly or aggressively.
Situational	Person may be undergoing a divorce, job loss, death of loved one or another significant negative change in their life.

Suicide Assessment (continued)

Risk Factors

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Male• Age: young or old• Previous suicide attempts• Constant suicidal thoughts• Recent losses• Family history of suicide• Feeling hopeless | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Few existing resources• Alcohol or drug use• Disorientation• Hostility• Well-developed plan for suicide• Well-developed plan for final arrangements |
|--|--|

Three key words to be aware of



HOPELESS

HELPLESS

WORTHLESS



Video: The Bridge Between Suicide and Life



Asking about suicide

- What concerns do you have about asking a depressed person about suicide?
- Studies have shown that depressed people have suicidal thoughts and talking about them does not increase the risk of them taking their own life.



How do you ask about suicide?

Two steps

1. Briefly describe the indicators you are concerned about

"Your mom tells me you haven't wanted to go out at all..."

"You've had a lot of losses and you sound very depressed..."

2. Ask directly about suicide

"Others in similar circumstances have thought of ending their life. Have you thought of killing yourself?"



Appropriate Questions

Questions to Ask

Are you thinking about hurting or killing yourself?

Have you ever wished you were dead or that you could go to sleep & not wake up?

Do you ever feel so badly that you think about suicide?

Do you have a plan to die by suicide or take your life?

“YES”: Follow-up Questions to Ask

When would you do it (today, tomorrow, next week)?

How would you do it?

Does the person have what they need to carry out the plan?

Does it have to be today?

Case Scenario



You have been called to a park where an individual is sitting on a bench. He appears despondent. After you introduce yourself, he tells you to go away, "It doesn't matter anymore," and "you are too late to make a difference"

Suicide & Homicide

Suicidal people may be dangerous to others...



Ask if the person has any thoughts about hurting or killing other people.

If yes:

- Does the person intend to act on them?
- Who is the intended victim?
- What is the plan?
- Does the person have access to the means to carry out the plan?
- What have they done in the past?

Be Aware of “Suicide by Cop” (Officer Assisted Suicide)

A method of suicide in which a suicidal person deliberately acts in a threatening manner, with the goal to provoke a lethal response from police.

2 types:

- **Planned**
- **Crisis Driven**



“Suicide by Cop” (continued)



Verbal & Behavioral Indicators

- Approach:

- Maintain distance; safety first
- Slow down pace (when possible)
- Calm, slow voice

- Establish Dialogue:

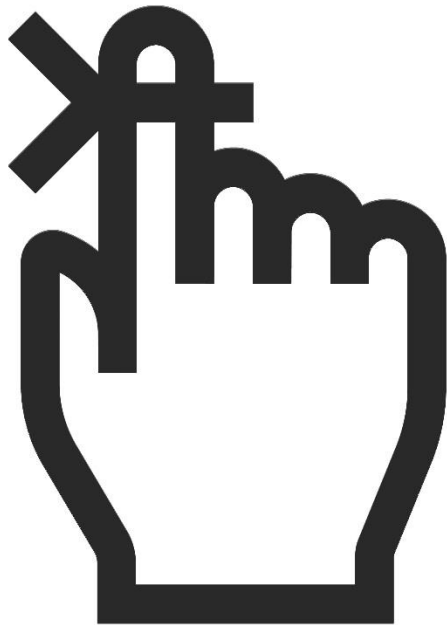
- What does he or she want?
- What Happened?
- Explore resolutions

Keep These Things in Mind



- Suicide is an individual crisis that causes crisis in others.
- Suicide produces trauma in all who experience it in any way.
- It happens within a family system, not an isolated event.
- It is almost always preventable.

Remember 3 Things:



1. Most suicide attempts are expressions of extreme distress, extreme psychological pain, not harmless bids for attention. Most people don't want to end their lives, they want to end their pain.
2. A person who appears suicidal should not be left alone.
3. A person who appears suicidal needs immediate mental health treatment.

Tips for Responding



- Listen (let the person talk; don't interrupt)
- Don't minimize the persons' feelings (be empathic)
- Tell the person you want to help

Tips for Responding



- Avoid platitudes such as...
 - "It'll get better"
 - "I know how you feel"
- Ask directly about suicide
- Offer hope

Video: Stories of Hope and Recovery: A Video Guide for Suicide Attempt Survivors Story Sampler



Hope, Help, and Worth



Module Wrap-Up

Questions?