

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SUICIDE

- *Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem*
- *It is the second leading cause of death in the USAF*
- *The typical AFSPC member who commits suicide is a white enlisted male, E-3 to E-5, in his late 20s*

Risk factors for suicide include...

- Serious relationship problems, especially with a spouse or significant other
- Work related difficulties
- Previous suicide attempt
- Victim of domestic violence, child abuse, rape, or other assault
- Friend/family member completed suicide
- Use of drugs or alcohol abuse
- Significant loss or anniversary of loss
- Unrealistic personal/parental expectations
- Extreme perfectionist
- Disintegrating family relationships
- Financial and/or legal problems
- Mental health problems

Warning signs of suicide include...

- Verbal threats such as "I wish I were dead" or "You'd be better off without me"
- Loss of interest in work or school
- Marginal performance on the job
- Daredevil or self-abusive behaviors
- Withdrawal from family or friends
- Development of a suicide plan
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Themes of death: leaving poems, diaries, drawings or letters where they can be found
- Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, worthlessness, guilt, or confusion
- Negative/pessimistic thinking
- Giving away prized possessions
- Significant changes in eating, sleeping, or grooming
- Saying "good-bye" via phone calls, settling debts, changing life insurance
- Expressed desire to die (notes, comments)

What you can do...

- Know risk factors and signs
- Take all threats seriously
- Be direct about what's really bothering the person
- Let the person know you care
- Help the person identify reasons to live, such as family, children, friends, his/her contributions
- Don't be judgmental; help to validate the person's feelings and the need for help in resolving problems
- Ask the person how he/she is feeling and if he/she has a suicide plan
- Remove easily accessible means of suicide, such as weapons, pills, razor blades
- If he/she has a weapon and makes any threats of violence, contact Security Policy IMMEDIATELY
- If immediate threat of suicide exists or you have any doubt, IMMEDIATELY escort the person to the local Mental Health Clinic or local Emergency Room; don't leave him/her alone!
- If there is no immediate threat, strongly encourage the person to seek help through the Mental Health Clinic, local Crisis Center, the Chaplains, or Family Support; follow-up to ensure the support was sought and given
- If you are uncertain about what to do, call the Mental Health Clinic, Chaplain, or Family Support for advice

A supervisors role in suicide prevention...

- Emphasize a positive, caring work environment
- Know your personnel
- Identify those who may be "at risk"
- Be actively concerned and involved
- Know available helping resources
- Be available and supportive
- Help the person face and solve his/her problems in a positive way that will minimize embarrassment and enhance self-esteem

SUICIDE CAN BE PREVENTED!