

Suicide & The Workplace

Creating *Hope* Through *Action*



BACKGROUND

According to the International Labour Organization, 57% of global citizens 15 years and older are employed, meaning we often spend more waking time working each week than we do with our families. Therefore, our workplaces hold a huge potential to provide a supportive structure for our mental health. Co-workers are often in a position not only to notice changes in the behaviour or mood of someone who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts, they are often trusted peers who can make a life-saving difference by supporting their colleague and being a bridge to helpful resources. Furthermore, a co-worker's suicide death leaves a lasting impact that few managers are prepared to respond to.

As our data regarding workplace suicide emerges, we see global trends emerging. That is, male-dominated industries, such as construction and extraction, farming and agriculture, public safety and first responders, manufacturing, and transportation often have suicide rates well-above their country's national averages. In addition, medical-related occupations such as physicians, veterinarians, nursing and midwifery, and paramedics also have an elevated risk. Finally, people who work in media, sport, and creative occupations also seem to have an elevated risk for suicide and suicidal intensity.

Increasingly, companies, labour unions and professional associations are taking action to make suicide prevention a health and safety priority for their workforces. Some countries such as the United States of America, Australia, Canada, and UK even have standards or guides for workplace suicide prevention. Most of these strategies centre on a responsive, comprehensive, and sustained approach that is integrated into the organization's health and safety culture.

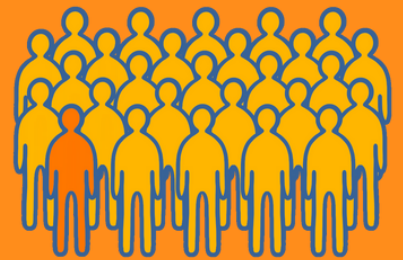
HOW CAN WE DO MORE?

Workplace leaders can begin to build a workplace suicide prevention strategy by seeking first to understand their workforce. By listening to workers and their experiences around despair, distress, help-seeking, help-giving, and suicide bereavement, leaders and stakeholders can develop more robust and culturally responsive initiatives.

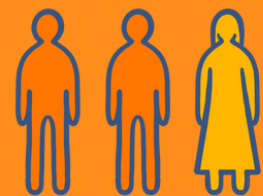
Leaders need to be bold and champion the effort by declaring, "this is why suicide prevention matters to our mission and this is why it matters to me." By modelling confidence and openness with the topic, they demonstrate that suicide prevention matters, and that the topic is safe to talk about.

STATISTICS

Suicide prevention is a global challenge. Suicide ranks consistently among the top 20 causes of death globally across all age groups. One in every 100 deaths worldwide is the result of suicide. It can affect every one of us.



The global suicide rate is over twice as high among men than women.



Over half (58%) of all deaths by suicide occur before the age of 50 years old.



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Some approaches can include training programs, a workplace communication strategy that validates people's lived experience with suicide, peer support, mental health services, self-care empowerment, and crisis response plans. If your workplace has a training programme or communicates about mental health challenges, consider taking part.

YOU CAN ALSO HELP CREATE HOPE THROUGH ACTION.

YOU CAN *be the light* *

TAKE ACTION

- * Take the pledge to make suicide prevention a health and safety priority at work.
- * Build your knowledge around workplace suicide prevention and access resources.
- * Raise awareness about mental health and suicide prevention.
- * Consider providing suicide prevention trainings at your workplace.
- * Encourage early intervention and help-seeking behaviours at your workplace.

RESOURCES

Additional workplace suicide prevention and postvention resources include:

- * [Preventing suicide at work: information for employers, managers, and employees \(WHO\)](#)
- * [Workplace Suicide Prevention](#)
- * [International Crisis Resources](#)
- * [A Manager's Guide to Suicide Postvention in the Workplace](#)
- * [Supporting someone in the workplace at risk of suicide](#)



Written in collaboration with the IASP Special Interest Group on Suicide & The Workplace

STATISTICS

Suicide occurs across all regions in the world, however, over three quarters (77%) of global suicides in 2019 occurred in low and middle-income countries.



10 September is World Suicide Prevention Day (#WSPD). 'Creating Hope Through Action' aims to inspire confidence in all of us; that our actions may provide hope for those that are struggling.

