

'After A Suicide'

Adapted¹ and reformatted by NOMV

Communication Tips

- **In-person** is always preferable with staff; **Provide space and time for people to express and process their emotions and reactions**
- **Only engage with factual information**
- Provide information in **concise, actionable, and appropriate language**
- External communication is best handled through a written death notification statement
- Consider the variety of cultural beliefs surrounding suicide. **Allow individuals the space and time to process the news of loss as they best know how**

Immediate Steps

Days 1-4

- **Confirm facts and share promptly**
 - **Timeline:** Prior to formal communication with staff
 - **Priorities:** Avoid speculation, confirm need for crisis response
 - **Tasks:** Verify facts, assemble crisis response team and resources, and implement response protocol
- **Contact the family**
 - **Timeline:** Prior to formal communication with staff
 - **Priorities:** Convey support and determine family's plans & wishes
 - **Tasks:** Offer condolences and willingness to assist, ask about family's preference for disclosing the death was by suicide, inquire about funeral arrangements.
- **Convene a crisis response team**
 - **Timeline:** As soon as possible after the death once accurate information and the wishes of the family are available.
 - **Priorities:** Focus on factual information, honor the family's wishes
 - **Tasks:** Create plan for notifying community members of the death as well as plan for structuring immediate workplace tasks and flow. Ensure support resources are in place.
- **Establish and share a plan for notifying impacted persons**
 - **Timeline:** As soon as the crisis response team has outlined their plan
 - **Priorities:** Focus on facts, honor the family's wishes, emphasize available support
 - **Tasks:** Deliver factual news about the death in the context of the family's wishes. Disseminate fact sheets about suicide and resource sheets detailing available support. Describe expectations for workflow and work tasks in the immediate future. Prepare individuals to handle community questions in response to the news, emphasizing family wishes and messaging guidelines.

Short Term

Weeks 1-4

- **Support your team**
 - **Timeline:** Employee need for additional support should be expected for a minimum of four weeks following a colleague's death
 - **Priorities:** Ensure available support is culturally sensitive and diversified to meet varying individual needs
 - **Tasks:** Facilitate access to mental health services, grief counseling, and peer support. Provide reasonable accommodations that support enhanced need for self-care. Clearly publish and reference crisis resources.

Long Term

After month 1

- **Elevate mental health and suicide prevention in the workplace**
 - Prevention is not the same as crisis support - explore prevention programs to supplement crisis intervention
- **Memorialization**
 - Sensitivity is important
 - Focus on how they lived
 - Remain sensitive to anniversaries of losses

Additional Considerations

- **Develop a Response Plan:**
 - Establish a comprehensive postvention plan detailing steps to take immediately following a suicide, including communication protocols and support mechanisms.
- **Provide Education:**
 - Offer educational events on topics such as grief, depression, and stress reduction to enhance understanding and resilience among staff.
- **Utilize External Resources:**
 - Engage with organizations like Not One More Ve at www.nomv.org for education, resources, and support.

Resources



American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA): Provides a comprehensive guide and additional resources for coping with suicide in veterinary workplaces.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP): Offers educational programs tailored to medical professionals and community support for suicide prevention.



Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)
Features guidelines and toolkits for suicide postvention in various settings.

National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention
Works with over 250 partner organizations to advance the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention*



988, crisis lines by country
Wikipedia page with crisis lines by country worldwide