OHIO'S VOICE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

OSPF
Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation
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Ohio Postvention Workplace Toolkit

Supporting employers and leaders in preparing effective, best-practice responses to the impact of suicide.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Many people who die by suicide are working-age adults, most of whom are employed; a significant number of workplaces throughout Ohio are likely impacted by the suicide death of an employee or colleague each year. This document was inspired by the Workplace Toolkit, published by StandBy, Australia's leading suicide prevention program dedicated to assisting people and communities bereaved or impacted by suicide.

A postvention model developed specifically for the workplace can potentially reduce uncertainty and distress, assist with preparation and leadership direction, as well as build staff confidence following a traumatic/critical incident, such as suicide. This may ultimately provide a swifter return to routine.

The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation's Workplace Postvention Toolkit has been designed to assist employers, managers, and others in leadership roles in developing a confident, best-practice response by understanding and planning for the potential impacts of suicide on individuals, groups, and communities. While other states and countries have produced workplace postvention guides, this manual was designed to provide an Ohio best practice standard for workplace postvention.

It is recommended that the information in this workbook be aligned with existing organizational tools, management guidelines, key roles and responsibilities, and relevant policies and procedures that support worker well-being.

What is Postvention?

The term "postvention" is an example of suicide prevention jargon that may not mean much to those outside the field of mental health or bereavement. Postvention refers to activities that promote healing after a suicide loss and reduce the risk of further suicide.

Suicide postvention in the workplace focuses on mitigating negative outcomes for individuals and the work environment and supporting the work of a [workplace] community in a healing process to rebuild resilience and morale. This support can include various activities, from simple ones such as ensuring access to a quiet room for 'time out' to providing support information to more structured support such as employee assistance programs, counseling, support groups, etc.

The aim is to alleviate or reduce the risk of negative workplace outcomes such as low morale, low productivity, absenteeism, staff conflict, and other well-being issues.

Who may be impacted?

Research shows that each suicide death affects approximately 135 people, especially those with close relationships to the deceased.[1] In workplaces, employees may have strong connections with colleagues, often spending more time with them than family. It's important not to assume the nature of these relationships. Sudden deaths of clients or customers can also significantly impact workers and case managers.

What makes suicide bereavement different?

Research and clinical literature have generally (although not always) found the mourning process after a suicide to differ from more normative causes of death in the following ways:[2]

- There is a greater need to seek an explanation for the death and to make sense of the death.
- Survivors experience greater levels of guilt and felt responsibility for the death (or, at a minimum, for a failure to foresee somehow and prevent the suicide).
- There is a greater level of stigmatization and shame about this mode of death and a greater need to conceal the fact that the death was a suicide.
- Survivors often experience increased avoidance and isolation from their regular social support networks.
- Exposure to the loss of a loved one to suicide increases the chances of suicidal thinking and behavior in the person exposed.

Grief is a natural and normal reaction to loss. It is also a complex and unique process. Grief is a unique experience that is as individual as the person experiencing it. Trauma is defined as exposure to an event that involves actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence. A person may directly experience the traumatic event(s), witness the event(s), learn that a traumatic event(s) occurred to a family member or friend, or through repeated exposure to traumatic events within the course of professional duties.[3]

Suicide grief is, therefore, seen as traumatic grief. Impacts may be multi-dimensional and include:

Behavior

- Risk-taking behavior
- "Don't care attitude."
- Agoraphobia
- Neglect of appearance
- Maintaining links with event
- Staying in bed

Social

- Self-imposed isolation from friends/others
- Not doing usual activities/routines
- Less tolerance of others

Physical

- Shortness of breath
- Numbness Aching limbs
- No hunger or thirst
- Feeling uncoordinated
- No sense of time
- Heightened activity
- Sleeplessness
- Exhaustion

Spiritual/Existential

- Questioning spiritual beliefs
- Feeling abandoned
- Seeking greater spiritual understanding

Psychological

- Denial
- Emptiness
- Difficulty with problem-solving and disorientation
- Seeing event over and over
- Fear & Panic
- Suicidal thinking/ideation
- Unhelpful or negative thoughts/images
- Anxiety
- Fear of being alone / abandonment
- Rejection

Environmental

- The place where the suicide occurred
- Financial implications

Postvention Planning

The best approach for a workplace response to a suicide loss is preparation. Engage senior management in conversation about suicide prevention and postvention, ensure there are policies in response to the crises in the workplace, and provide suitable bereavement support for workers. This should include information on local support and access to skilled professionals specializing in loss and bereavement following suicide.

Additional support can include 24/7 crisis support telephone lines, community mental health agencies, and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services.

This preparation and planning will better support employees' well-being. Regardless of the organization's size, a holistic view of workers and their social, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being is paramount to the sustainability of the workforce and productivity.

Some Helpful Terms

Postvention

- Postvention is an intervention conducted after a suicide, largely taking the form of support for the bereaved (family, friends, professionals, and peers). Family and friends of the suicide victim may be at increased risk of suicide themselves. Postvention is a term that was first coined by Edwin Shneidman in 1972. Postvention is a process that has the objective of alleviating the effects of this stress and helping survivors cope with the loss they have just experienced.

Suicide Attempt Survivor

- A person who has attempted suicide but did not die.

Suicide Loss Survivor

- A person who has lost a family member, friend, classmate, or colleague to suicide. Sometimes called “suicide survivor,” although the term “suicide loss survivor” is often favored to avoid confusion with “suicide attempt survivor.”

Safe Messaging

- Media or personal communications about suicide or related issues that do not increase the risk of suicidal behavior in vulnerable people and that may increase help-seeking behavior and support for suicide prevention efforts.

Lived Experience

- “Knowledge gained from having lived through a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis.”[4]

Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) Teams

- Trained suicide loss responders that provide immediate and compassionate support to those affected by suicide. For workplaces, LOSS Teams help employees process grief, reduce stigma, and foster collective healing after the loss of a colleague.

Responding to the Suicide Death of an Employee

CREATING A CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM

Having a Critical Incident Team (CIT) can be crucial for employers to manage the aftermath of an employee's suicide effectively. This specialized team, typically comprising HR and senior leaders, coordinates a compassionate and structured response to address immediate and long-term impacts. Research highlights that a well-organized response team can mitigate workplace disruptions, provide emotional support to grieving employees, and reduce the stigma associated with suicide by fostering open communication.5

Certain responsibilities and actions must be considered whether you already have a specific team or not.

What to do when a suicide death occurs at work

- **Contact Law Enforcement**: If a suspected suicide occurs on worksite property, Ohio law requires immediate contact with local law enforcement. As with all non-natural deaths, the area will be treated as a crime scene. Managers must ensure that unauthorized individuals are kept away and the scene remains undisturbed until law enforcement grants permission. Full compliance with police requests during the investigation is essential, as the Ohio Revised Code emphasizes cooperation in such incidents (Ohio Revised Code § 313.10, 2023).

- **Notify Next of Kin**: Notifying the deceased's family requires professionalism and sensitivity. A workplace representative may accompany law enforcement during the notification or reach out separately to offer condolences. Using the individual's name, expressing appropriate emotions, and providing support are essential elements of this communication. Avoid sharing unnecessary or potentially traumatizing details while answering the family's questions to the best of your ability.[5]

Language / Safe Messaging

The language surrounding suicide has evolved significantly over the past two decades to reduce stigma and promote understanding.

Instead of this		Say this
Committed/Completed Suicide	→	Died by Suicide
Successful attempt	→	Suicide death
Unsuccessful attempt	→	Suicide attempt

Employee Communication

The absence of clear communication can foster speculation and misinformation. A designated team, such as CIT, or staff member should handle communication, providing a central point for updates to employees, such as funeral arrangements and outreach to the family. Communication should be conducted in person to ensure sensitivity and clarity whenever possible.

Timely and carefully planned communication is essential in a workplace setting to manage rumors, address misinformation, and identify employees who may need support. Recommendations include avoiding assumptions about the death, confirming facts before announcements, speaking with the next of kin to ensure what they prefer to be shared, and using key talking points to provide a unified message.

What are some things to communicate to staff?
Communication should be conducted in person to ensure sensitivity and clarity whenever possible. Having a CIT who has been informed of the death and debriefed with talking points is a best practices approach.

SHARE INFORMATION PLAINLY WITH SENSITIVITY

Example: "I'm sorry to share John Smith has died by suicide." (not: "John Smith is gone" or "John Smith committed suicide")

DEVELOP A PLAN TO COMMUNICATE WITH EMPLOYEES WHO ARE NOT IN THE OFFICE

SHARE WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

- Explain who has been called to provide support and where they are located.
- Provide a conference area onsite where employees can gather.
- When possible, allow people the option to leave work.

SHARE WHAT & WHEN THERE WILL BE ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION

- Funeral Arrangements
- Communication with those outside the workplace (contractors, clients, vendors, etc.)
- Decisions Regarding Workload/Office
- Gathering Personal Belongings

Monitor online discussions about suicide, as misinformation can spread quickly. Public posts are not ideal for such sensitive topics, so consider the audience before sharing information. While online platforms may not be perfect for conversations, they can be used to engage and provide accurate information and support resources. Ideally, someone knowledgeable in suicide bereavement should monitor and moderate these discussions.

Support for Employees

Providing emotional and psychological support to employees is a top priority. Employers promote healing by offering immediate and ongoing support, ensuring safe environments, and encouraging voluntary participation while fostering a compassionate and resilient workplace culture. This can be done through several means.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are essential for supporting employees dealing with grief and trauma after a colleague's suicide. These confidential programs offer professional counseling, facilitating emotional healing and processing. Research shows EAPs enhance workplace well-being and reduce absenteeism by effectively addressing mental health issues.[6]

TRAUMA-INFORMED COUNSELORS

Ohio employers can collaborate with trauma-informed counselors through local mental health organizations or EAPs to provide essential support. Individual counseling helps employees privately address emotions, while group sessions foster collective healing. Training managers to recognize distress and respond with empathy is also beneficial. Integrating trauma-informed counseling shows a commitment to employee well-being, aiding grief processing and enhancing workplace resilience. For resources, visit https://mha.ohio.gov/get-help/treatment-services/ohios-trauma-competent-care-initiative.

LOSS TEAMS

Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) Teams are specialized crisis responders that provide immediate and compassionate support to those affected by suicide. For workplaces, LOSS Teams help employees process grief, reduce stigma, and foster collective healing after the loss of a colleague.

Ohio employers can engage LOSS Teams to facilitate immediate on-site support and provide safe spaces for employees to process their emotions. LOSS Teams offer group and individual consultations, educational workshops, and long-term connections to resources such as counseling and support groups.

To find a LOSS Team in your area, visit: https://www.ohiospf.org/postvention/loss-teams/

SUPPORT GROUPS

The loss of a colleague to suicide is profoundly emotional, and support groups offer an effective way for employees to process their grief collectively. These groups provide a safe, confidential space for sharing experiences, reducing isolation, and learning coping strategies. They help normalize grief, foster open dialogue about mental health, and reduce workplace stigma.

To find a Support Group in your area, visit https://www.ohiospf.org/postvention/support-group/

Continuing Support : One Month & Beyond

Grief following a suicide is often more complex than other types of bereavement, and it can persist in various forms over time. Understanding the nature of ongoing grief, recognizing its impact, and creating a supportive environment are essential steps for employers and staff to navigate this difficult journey together.

EMOTIONAL & BEHAVORIAL RESPONSES TO EXPECT

Employees may show:

- Emotional: Sadness, guilt, anger, confusion.
- Cognitive: Concentration issues, intrusive thoughts, existential questioning.
- Behavioral: Withdrawal, productivity changes, absenteeism.
- Physical: Fatigue, headaches, appetite or sleep changes.

Employers may notice:

- Decreased productivity and focus.
- Increased absenteeism.
- Tensions due to varying grieving styles.

SUPPORTING ONGOING GRIEF IN THE WORKPLACE

- **Normalize the Grieving Process**: Acknowledge that grief is a normal response and encourage open communication without imposing a "right way" to grieve.
- **Provide Access to Support**: Ensure continued access to metal health resources like Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), grief counselors, and support groups. Offer educational sessions on grief and coping strategies.
- **Monitor for Signs of Prolonged Grief**: Be aware of symptoms like persistent sadness or withdrawal, and be ready to refer employees to professional mental health services if necessary.
- **Foster a Supportive Workplace**: A workplace culture valuing empathy and mental health can make a significant difference. Regular team check-ins, wellness programs and opportunities for remembrance such as a voluntary memorial event can help employees feel supported.
- **Accommodate Individual Needs**: Grief affects everyone differently. Flexible work schedules, reduced workloads, or additional time off work can help employees manage their emotions while staying engaged at work.

STAFF SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

- **Acknowledge Grief:** Let coworkers know it's okay to talk about their feelings and share memories of the colleague.
- **Be Patient:** Recognize that everyone grieves at their own pace and in their own way.
- **Offer Peer Support:** Sometimes, a simple conversation or a listening ear can provide immense comfort.
- **Respect Boundaries:** Not everyone will feel comfortable discussing the loss, and that's okay. Respect their need for privacy.

Continuing Support : One Month & Beyond (Cont.)

LONG-TERM IMPACT & HEALING

Ongoing grief can also lead to positive changes within the workplace. Many organizations find that such a tragedy encourages deeper discussions about mental health, suicide prevention, and workplace well-being. Employers can use this as an opportunity to create a more supportive and resilient workplace culture by:

- Implementing mental health awareness programs
- Training managers to support grieving employees
- Promoting resources like crisis hotlines

Understanding that ongoing grief is normal is crucial for both employers and staff. By encouraging open communication and compassion, organizations can help teams navigate grief while reinforcing mental health support, ultimately strengthening the workplace.

EQUIP EMPLOYEES FOR ADVOCACY

Suicide prevention training teaches participants to recognize warning signs and assist someone in a crisis. While the desire to prevent future tragedies is understandable, hosting such training immediately after a suicide may be too soon, as grief can complicate participation and evoke guilt or blame.

When appropriately timed, prevention strategies are important. A comprehensive approach integrates proactive prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts, such as gatekeeper training to help employees recognize and respond to signs of suicide risk among colleagues. This multi-pronged strategy enhances workplace readiness and supports mental health resilience.

RECOGNIZE ANNIVERSARIES & MILESTONES

Special occasions (holidays, birthdays, wedding anniversaries) can be a difficult time for the bereaved, with memories and feelings of loss heightened. At times, this can be emotionally challenging or can create feelings of anxiety. Preparation is often the key to providing support for oneself or another, such as the employee.

Acknowledging the date as significant and a simple gesture may be sufficient to show care and support. Death anniversaries also provide opportunities to reflect on past experiences and acknowledge the healing that has taken place since the traumatic event. For some organizations, this is the time to consider advocacy in raising awareness of worker health and well-being issues by participating in a local community event (such as a fundraiser, mental health month, or suicide prevention and awareness).

Should there be a permanent memorial?

Permanent public memorials are not recommended. This can be a traumatic reminder of what has occurred and may appear to ‘glamourize’ the death. Workplaces may decide to have a ‘workplace ceremony’ instead, such as a morning coffee to speak about the deceased, or something more organized, such as participating in a community event (candlelight vigils, walks) or a suicide prevention fundraiser. At all times, be respectful of any wishes of the deceased's family. A guiding question for organizations is to consider, “What would the response be following the death of any employee under other or different circumstances?” Consultation with workers and, if appropriate, with the deceased's family is recommended.

Supporting Employees Bereaved by a Suicide Loss in Their Family

Losing a family member to suicide is a deeply challenging experience, often accompanied by guilt and stigma. Employers are crucial in providing support by offering compassion, flexibility, and resources to help grieving employees navigate their loss while maintaining workplace stability. A supportive approach benefits both the individual and workplace morale, fostering trust and demonstrating a commitment to mental health.

OFFER SUPPORT & CONDOLENCES

The first step in supporting an employee after a loss is to acknowledge the situation with empathy and sincerity. How an employer approaches this initial interaction can set the tone for the employee's experience in the workplace.

Supportive Actions:

- Send a Message of Sympathy: Reach out promptly with a personal note, such as, "I was deeply saddened to hear about your loss. Please know that we are here to support you in any way you need."
- Avoid Assumptions: Do not speculate about the situation or the employee's feelings. Let them share as much or as little as they feel comfortable.
- Demonstrate Care: Depending on your relationship, a personal phone call, card, or flowers can add a touch of empathy and support.

PROVIDE FLEXIBLE TIME OFF

Grieving after a suicide may require more time and space than standard bereavement leave allows. Being flexible helps employees process their grief and demonstrates that the organization values their well-being.

Supportive Actions:

- **Extend Bereavement Leave**: Offer more than the company's standard bereavement leave, especially if the employee needs to travel or handle extensive family matters.
- **Encourage Use of PTO or Unpaid Leave**: Allow employees to use additional time off, such as vacation or unpaid leave, without fear of job insecurity.
- **Consider Remote or Flexible Work:** If possible, offer the option to work from home or adjust schedules to accommodate their needs.
- **Be Supportive if an Employee Wants to Return to Work Right Away**: Some people, quite literally, do not know what to do after the suicide loss of a family member. Returning to work may be helpful by providing a sense of normalcy.

RESPECT PRIVACY & BOUNDARIES

Grief is deeply personal, and every individual processes it differently. Some employees may want to share their experiences openly, while others may prefer privacy.

Best Practices:

- **Let Them Guide the Conversation**: Ask the employee how they'd like the situation handled at work. For example, "Would you like me to share this with the team, or would you prefer to keep it private?"
- **Avoid Pressuring Them**: Never force an employee to discuss details about the death or their feelings.
- **Set Boundaries for the Workplace**: If the employee prefers privacy, ensure that colleagues understand and respect their wishes.

Supporting Employees Bereaved by a Suicide Loss in Their Family (Cont.)

CONNECT THEM TO RESOURCES

Access to professional support is crucial for employees coping with the loss of a family member to suicide. Employers should make it easy for the employee to access these resources.

Resources to Offer:

- **Employee Assistance Programs** (EAPs): Many EAPs provide free, confidential counseling sessions for employees and their families. Share information about how to access these services.
- **Local mental health agencies or grief support**
- **Support Groups** specifically for Suicide Loss Survivors. These groups provide a safe, confidential space for sharing experiences, reducing isolation, and learning coping strategies. They help normalize grief and foster open dialogue about the uniqueness of suicide loss. To find a Support Group in your area, visit https://www.ohiospf.org/postvention/support-group/.

Scan this QR code to find a LOSS Support Group near you

FOSTER SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Returning to work after a loss can be an emotional and challenging transition. A supportive environment helps the employee feel valued and cared for and can aid the grieving employee while fostering trust and respect among the entire team.

Practical Steps:

- **Allow Gradual Reintegration**: To help ease the transition back to work, offer reduced hours or a lighter workload.
- **Encourage Team Support**: Educate coworkers on how to provide empathy and support while avoiding insensitive comments or behaviors.
- **Provide Regular Check-Ins**: Managers can schedule informal check-ins to ensure the employee feels supported and address concerns.

EQUIP EMPLOYEES TO BE SUPPORTIVE

Managers are often employees' first point of contact and play a key role in providing emotional and logistical support during difficult times.

Consider bringing in outside expertise to speak on topics such as:

- **Recognizing Signs of Distress**: how to identify when an employee may be struggling with prolonged grief or depression.
- **Empathy in Leadership**: Provide training on active listening, validating emotions, and offering compassionate responses.
- **Referral to Resources**: Educate managers about available resources and how to connect employees to them effectively.

UNDERSTAND LONG-TERM IMPACT

Grieving the loss of a family member to suicide is not a short-term process. Employers should be prepared to support employees over time, as grief can resurface unexpectedly.

Long-Term Support:

- **Periodic Check-Ins**: Continue to check in with the employee, especially around significant dates like anniversaries or holidays.
- **Ongoing Flexibility**: Be open to providing accommodations, such as time off for counseling or reduced workloads during emotionally difficult periods.

Acknowledging the long-term nature of grief demonstrates care and understanding.

PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

A family member's suicide can highlight the importance of mental health awareness and suicide prevention. Employers can use this moment to promote a culture of openness and support.

Initiatives to consider:

- **Mental Health Workshops**: Offer training sessions on topics like grief, mental health, and coping strategies.
- **Suicide Prevention Campaigns**: Share resources about suicide awareness and prevention, such as crisis hotline numbers or educational materials.
- **Open Conversations**: Encourage a workplace culture where employees feel safe discussing mental health challenges without fear of judgment.

These initiatives support the grieving employee and benefit the organization by fostering awareness and reducing stigma.

The grief experience, especially one to suicide, is not something to "get over" or to "find closure." It is about integrating that loss into your life.

Supporting the Employee's Family

The death of an employee by suicide is a devastating event, not only for the workplace but also for the employee's family. While the employer's primary responsibility may be to their staff, offering thoughtful, compassionate support to the grieving family is also important. How an organization responds in these moments can have a lasting impact on the family, workplace culture, and community.

Supporting the family of an employee who dies by suicide requires empathy, sensitivity, and respect for their unique needs. Here are ways employers can provide meaningful assistance during this difficult time.

EXPRESS CONDOLENCES

One of the first and most critical steps is to offer sincere condolences to the family. Acknowledge their loss with compassion, avoiding stigmatizing language or unnecessary details about the manner of death. Avoid speculation or language that may inadvertently place blame or stigmatize the situation.

Practical Steps:

- Send a letter or card expressing sympathy on behalf of the organization.
- Designate a senior leader or trusted representative to attend the funeral or memorial service (if appropriate and welcome).

PROVIDE IMMEDIATE SUPPORT

Grieving families often face overwhelming emotional and logistical challenges. Employers can offer immediate support by addressing financial concerns, helping with administrative tasks, and providing access to resources.

Examples of Immediate Support:

- Assist with final paycheck processing, life insurance claims, or other benefits.
- Offer financial support, such as a donation or setting up a fund for the family.
- Provide time-sensitive information about workplace benefits or survivor support programs.

If the family consents, consider mobilizing a voluntary effort among coworkers to provide meals, childcare, or other practical help.

RESPECT THEIR PRIVACY

Every family processes grief differently, and their wishes should guide the level of involvement from the employer and colleagues. The organization should openly communicate that it respects their privacy and is available to support them in whatever way they are comfortable with.

Best Practices:

- Avoid pressuring the family to accept assistance or participate in public memorials.
- Obtain the family's consent before sharing information about the death with others, including coworkers.

HONOR THE EMPLOYEE'S MEMORY

Memorializing the deceased can be a meaningful way to show respect and support for the family. However, before taking any action, it is essential to consult with the family and consider their preferences.

Ideas for Memorialization:

- Contribute to a charity or cause meaningful to the deceased or their family.
- Create a voluntary memorial fund or scholarship in their name.
- Organize a moment of silence or other tribute with the family's approval.

Ensure that participation in any memorial activities is voluntary and sensitive to employees' and their families' differing beliefs and emotions.

OFFER LONG-TERM ASSISTANCE

Grief does not end after the funeral or memorial service. Employers should consider ways to provide ongoing support to the family as they navigate life after their loss.

Long-Term Support Examples:

- Maintain open communication, checking in with the family periodically.
- Provide updates about ongoing benefits or resources available to them.
- Extend invitations to company events honoring the employee's memory (only if appropriate and desired by the family).

CONNECT FAMILY TO RESOURCES

Families often benefit from access to professional grief counseling or support groups, particularly after a death by suicide. Employers can play a vital role in connecting them to such resources.

Suggested Resources:

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness** (NAMI Mid-Ohio): Support for suicide loss survivors. https://namimidohio.org/
- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** (AFSP): Survivor outreach programs and resources. https://afsp.org/
- **Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation** (OSPF) https://www.ohiospf.org/
- Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS)Teams. https://www.ohiospf.org/postvention/loss-teams/
- **Ohio Support Groups** https://www.ohiospf.org/postvention/support-group/

Providing the family with information about these services demonstrates care and empathy while empowering them to seek support in their own time.

The death of an employee by suicide is a heart-wrenching event that demands thoughtful, compassionate action. Supporting the grieving family is an opportunity to demonstrate the organization's humanity and commitment to care. Through these efforts, organizations can honor the memory of their employee, support their loved ones, and foster a culture of empathy and resilience.

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Mental Health RESOURCES

DON'T WAIT! CALL, TEXT, OR CHAT 988.

CRISIS RESOURCE

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
Call/Text/Chat

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation
Call (614) 429-1528

Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Call the Ohio CareLine at 1-800-720-9616 for 24/7 free, confidential support

Ohio Department of Insurance
Call the Mental Health Insurance Assistance Office (MHIA) at 1-855-438-6442

LOSS Community Services
Call (614) 530-8064

Employer's Checklist

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with the concept of postvention and its importance in the workplace.
- Review existing organizational tools, policies, and procedures related to employee well-being and crisis management.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

- Ensure clear communication channels are open for employees to express concerns or seek support.
- Provide access to quiet spaces for employees who need time to process their emotions.

SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

- Implement support services such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and counseling options.
- Organize support groups for employees affected by the loss of a colleague.

COMMUNICATION

- Develop safe messaging practices to communicate about the incident without increasing stigma or risk.
- Offer resources that encourage help-seeking behavior among staff.

TRAINING & RESOURCES

- Provide training for management and staff on how to recognize signs of distress and offer support.
- Share information about local outreach programs or LOSS Teams that can assist employees during this time.

LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

- Monitor ongoing employee well-being and morale following the incident.
- Assess and adjust workplace practices and policies to support a healthy work environment.

FOLLOW-UP

- Conduct check-ins with employees to gather feedback and ensure continued support.
- Plan for any future training or informational sessions on suicide prevention and mental health awareness.

WHAT TO DO IF MEDIA CONTACTS YOU

When someone dies in a workplace incident, the news media may report it, and you may be contacted for comment. You don't have to speak to the media if you don't want to – you may respectfully decline to provide a comment.

As an example:
"Thank you for reaching out. We are currently not conducting interviews as we are focused on supporting our team during this difficult time. Thank you for your understanding and respect."

If you speak to the media, consider appointing a spokesperson or issuing a written statement.

Additional advice if contacted by a journalist:

- Respectfully ask for time to grieve and process the loss
- Offer to take their contact information and arrange to call them back at a specific time.
- Ask for the questions to be submitted in advance so that you can prepare responses, including responding via email.

Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation

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