



Look, Listen and Be Aware:

Signs of Suicide

Sometimes people let us know through their actions that they are having severe difficulties coping with the stress, anxiety and/or depression in their life and may be choosing death by suicide as a way out. Being aware of these actions and signs of suicidal ideation may help save someone's life. The below signs are examples of what you might see or hear from those contemplating suicide.

Giving away valuable or meaningful possessions.

"Julie has had her dog, Buddy for over 3 years and just recently she asked me if I could take him because she doesn't feel able to care for him right now."

Speaking of not being around for the future.

"'I just can't take it anymore.' or 'I just can't do this anymore.' Brian mentioned this in passing and then said nothing more about it. I didn't know what he was talking about, so I let it go."

Talking, discussing, fixating on death or suicide

"Amy shared with me some of her writings and discussed her interest and fascination with death. One of her closest friends committed suicide last month."

Additional signs:

- Having reckless and dangerous behavior
- Increasing the use of alcohol and/or drugs
- Sleep issues; too much or too little
- Not taking basic care of self
- Having a history of suicide attempts
- Putting personal business in order
- Neglecting doctor's orders
- Increased anger & intensified mood swings
- Withdrawing, isolating, disconnecting from others
- Decline in personal appearance
- Rapid improvement in mood; the decision has been made which relieves the internal struggle

If you or someone you know has these thoughts, actions or signs do not ignore them. Get help for yourself or that person. Call your EAP to discuss your concerns or visit EAP4YOU.com to get more information and resources.

800-EAP-4YOU (800-327-4968) | TTY:877-492-7341 | EAP4YOU.com

COVID-19 and Hope:

The Light at the End of the Tunnel



In frightening and uncertain times, it's hard to feel hopeful. However, studies show that having hope for the future helps build our resilience – the ability to get through tough times and recover quickly from setbacks. Moreover, hope can help ward off or reduce anxiety, trauma and depression.

Hopelessness can leave a person highly vulnerable to self-harm impulses. At times it is common to experience thoughts of self-harm when feeling depressed and overwhelmed. In the moment, it may seem as though your unhappiness will never end. But it's important to realize that with help, you can overcome these negative feelings.

Hope isn't the relief of fearfulness or the sidelining of anxiety. It's the choice to see beyond the current circumstance to something better despite the challenging, negative feelings we may currently have. The most resilient people, those who can recover quickly from times of fear and move toward positive action, actively practice hope and optimism daily.

5 Ways to Cultivate Hope and Reduce Anxiety:

- 1. Focus on your strengths.** Tapping into natural strengths cultivates a sense of hope and resilience. For example, if you're naturally creative, think about how you can use that to strengthen and overcome challenges.
- 2. Practice gratitude.** Research shows that practicing gratitude is more effective than self-control, patience or forgiveness in creating hope for the future. Try keeping a gratitude journal or thinking back at the end of the day on three things you are grateful for.
- 3. Re-frame negative thoughts.** When you feel afraid or hopeless, try zeroing in on what's scaring you and look at it in a different way. For example, if you're thinking, "I'm never going to stop feeling anxious about everything that's going on" instead think, "It's natural to be anxious right now, and there are things I can do to make them better".
- 4. Limit Media Exposure.** Both news and social media can have negative effects on hope and mental health.
- 5. Spend time with hopeful, optimistic people.** According to the science of "emotional contagion", when you surround yourself with people who are hopeful, you are more likely to feel that way. Connect with a counselor, people at your church, or on a virtual support group.

Practice self-care and reach out for help if needed.

- Eat well
- Practice relaxation
- Exercise daily
- Take time for yourself
- Get enough sleep
- Avoid alcohol and drugs

Your EAP is here for you. There are a variety of ways to connect with us including: by telephone 800-327-7341 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7368, online at [EAP4YOU.com](https://www.eap4you.com), through video, by live chat or text message. Reach out today to learn more.



Get Help:

Make the call today.

Alisha has lived with anxiety on and off since her early 20's. She grew up in a family that did not talk about their feelings. Alisha was married for several years when her husband unexpectedly left the marriage for another relationship. This left her emotionally devastated and intensified her anxiety and depression. She felt as though she was losing everything that was important to her. Alisha contemplated suicide but with the encouragement of a close friend decided to reach out for help. Alisha called her EAP and after connecting with a counselor was able to make significant improvements in her life.

Alisha's life was changed for the better by her willingness to seek counseling.

If you or a household member would like to access your EAP benefits, they are available 24/7, 365 days a year. We have licensed clinicians ready to assist you through whatever you might be going through.

Call 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY:1-877-493-7341 or visit EAP4YOU.com to learn more.



USPS
Employee
Assistance
Program

CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM



There is Hope:

Make the call today.

Have you ever felt hopeless and questioned if there was any point to living? Well, you are not alone but, there is hope! John also had similar thoughts and was even contemplating suicide. John was depressed and turned to alcohol to help him cope with the stressors in his life. He continued to drink excessively and started having problems at work and at home. John's wife was concerned and suggested he call the EAP for help.

By using his EAP benefits, John found a new sense of hope and was able to reconnect with his family, be successful at work and is sober today.

If you or a household member would like to access your EAP benefits, they are available 24/7, 365 days a year. We have licensed clinicians ready to assist you through whatever you might be going through.

Call 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY:1-877-493-7341 or visit EAP4YOU.com to learn more.



CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM

Suicide Risk Recognition:

Is someone you know struggling?

People who have a higher risk for suicide are at times hard to recognize because they may not want people to be burdened by their struggles. They may display signs of concern in their conversation, behavior or body language. These may be the subtle warning signs that they are thinking of self-harm.

When you observe someone you believe may be at risk, you may be reluctant to speak up. Maybe you fear you will say the wrong thing, fear that you may not have the “right” words to say, or hesitancy to approach the person for fear that you might make things worse.

Managers, supervisors and coworkers, which are often the first to notice a change in an employee, can provide support that could potentially prevent their suicide and get the help that is needed. Just as you would have the courage to help someone having a medical emergency, you too can help someone who may be considering suicide, thoughts of self-harm, depression and/or anxiety.

You may notice someone showing signs of risk.

Some signs include:

- Giving valuable personal items away
- Suggesting the world would be better off without them
- Increased outburst while on duty
- Death/suicide of a close significant other
- Relationship deterioration
- Increased alcohol and drug use or relapse

Your EAP is here for you. There are a variety of ways to connect with us including: by telephone 800-327-7341 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7368, online at EAP4YOU.com, through video, by live chat or text message. Reach out today to learn more.

If you recognize a risk of suicide in someone, find a private moment and ask the following:

“If you have some time, I would like to take a few moments to sit and talk with you.”

“I’m concerned about you and I’m here to listen. Are there things you would like to talk about?” If they agree to share and they are having thoughts of self-harm, say to them, “I’d like to support you and would like to get some help to do that; can we call the EAP together?”

When a person shares their thoughts of self-harm, stay with them and get help to support them through calling the EAP, their support system and if needed the authorities. It is a decision that may save a life.

Suicide Prevention and Resilience:

In the Time of COVID-19

Suicide is a major health and social concern. During the COVID-19 pandemic, common suicide risk factors (loneliness, increased drinking, helplessness, hopelessness, etc.) can be intensified and combined with pandemic related concerns may lead to greater depression and thoughts of self-harm. Frontline and certain essential workers may be at even greater risk due to their continued work and possible exposure to and effects of the pandemic. If you are experiencing several of the below challenges, recognize their seriousness and ask for help.

- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Job loss
- Chronic stress
- Chronic pain
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Social isolation
- Increased alcohol and drug use
- Stigma from others
- Mental health issues
- Prior suicide attempt
- Loss of loved one to COVID-19
- Ongoing uncertainty
- Post-traumatic stress
- Increased access to firearms
- Loss of routine
- Family problems
- Burdensomeness
- Financial insecurity
- Domestic violence
- Fear of contagion
- Quarantine fatigue
- Survivor guilt

Suicide is preventable. There is always hope. Suicide prevention aims to provide knowledge, identify resources and increase protective factors such as resilience strategies.

Resilience Strategies:

Resilience is a protective factor against suicide risk. Resilience is the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity, it is both a natural and learned skill. Individuals who are more resilient are less likely to experience suicidal thoughts. Building resilience is a key component to suicide prevention. Accepting that there will be changes that need to be made is the first step towards building resilience. Try some of these additional ways to build your resilience and help prevent suicide.

- Stay connected
- Do for others
- Limit media
- Eat healthy
- Exercise
- Practice positivity
- Identify resources
- Instill hope
- Develop goals
- Express gratitude
- Trust your instincts
- Increase patience
- Find ways to relax
- Increase flexibility
- Remain optimistic
- Keep a sense of humor
- Support resilience in others
- Practice sleep hygiene
- Seek assistance as needed
- Keep mentally active

If you want to learn more about suicide prevention and/or building resilience, reach out to your EAP. We have counselors available to assist you 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Give us a call or visit EAP4YOU.com to learn more.