

Building Resilience and Preventing Suicide in the Coast Guard



Reviewed, DIR-T USCGAUX

Welcome to the US Coast Guard Auxiliary **Building Resilience and Preventing Suicide**.

Independent Learner Instructions.

This document is derived from the mandatory training of the same name. It contains both images and narratives regarding the training topic and is provided in a “presenter notes” format.

As an independent learner you are expected to read all content contained in this document to include both the text within the images and the notes below the image (if any). Some images do not have notes or are self-explanatory.

As you work through this training material you should keep in mind that as an independent learner, you are responsible and accountable for learning and understanding the course content.

You should also understand its importance to our organization and the execution of our varied missions and be able to apply the knowledge gained through this independent training experience.



Introduction

At the U.S. Coast Guard, we have the important mission of protecting our nation. To accomplish this mission, we work hard – around the clock, around the world. It's important in this environment to stay healthy, to cope with the challenges we encounter, and to have support and resources available when we need them. The goal is to be *resistant* – to have as many good days as possible, and *resilient* – to weather the bad days and move on.

NOTE: Facilitator should clarify the importance of individual's awareness to long term, pervasive signs of depression and most importantly individual being receptive to reaching out for help. (Address gender issue-males less receptive to recognizing and reaching out for help).



Stress Management and Personal Resilience





Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Stress is a physiological response that can be traced back to the primitive “fight or flight” reflex. Resilience refers to a person’s ability to cope effectively with stressful situations.

In this module, you’ll learn:

- How to recognize when you are stressed
- How to improve your own resilience
- What to do if you are not managing your stress

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Everyone receives physical cues that indicate stress. Why is this important??? If you can identify physical stress signals, you’ll experience greater success in managing stress before it escalates. The problem is that most people don’t pay attention to these cues. Think about where you receive physical stress messages. For example, some individuals get dull or throbbing headaches. Others may find that back muscles may constrict, manifesting in the upper or lower back. Some people experience upper neck strain or shoulder pain. Take a few minutes to identify where you get physical cues that indicate you’re experiencing stress. (Facilitator may want to self-disclose at this point, sharing where s/he receives physical cues).



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

What Causes Stress?

Most people are affected at some point by one or more common, completely normal life stressors, such as money, relationships, illness, or significant loss.

However, negative events are not the only source of stress. There are times that even positive events can be stressful, such as graduating from school, getting a new job, a promotion, or a challenging new assignment, or having a new baby.

At moderate levels, stress enhances performance and health. It can push you to become the very best at whatever it is you are doing.

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Let's talk about how even positive life events can cause stress. (Facilitator may address the process of life changes, i.e. even changes that are considered positive means change in what is **known** by the individual .Even a good change can cause stress because it means going from a known to unknown experience. (Facilitator may want to self-disclose from personal experience, being aware to choose an example that is benign and will not distract from the topic).

Discuss how moderate level stress is helpful. Discussion Point-Stress is very idiosyncratic, that is individuals experience a wide tolerance range. A helpful example may be those individuals who work best under pressure while others need to work under a relaxed time schedule. How well do you know yourself and what you need to manage commitments? (Again, facilitator may offer some examples to elicit further feedback from group)



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

How Can I Tell When I Am Stressed?

Stress can affect you in any or all of the following areas.



Physical



Mental



Emotional



Behavioral



Spiritual

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We've discussed physical cues that can serve to make us pay attention. Now let's talk about the effects stress may have on other areas of functioning. (Facilitator may want to elicit response in each of these areas before proceeding to the subsequent slides. This helps to increase group cohesiveness and mutual support as people share similar experiences).



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Physical Effects of Stress

Common physical effects of stress may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Headaches
- Hyperventilation
- Muscle tension
- Fatigue
- Indigestion
- Chest constriction
- Nausea
- Vomiting



Facilitator may add individual responses that are not on this list.



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Mental Effects of Stress

Common mental effects of stress may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Confusion
- Inability to concentrate
- Difficulty making decisions
- Inability to problem solve
- Disorientation
- Slowed or inaccurate recall



Most of us can relate to physical cues of stress, but what about the mental and subsequent behavioral effects. Many times people attribute these symptoms to external events and aren't aware that all the above cognitive difficulties can be due to an individual's reaction to stress. (Facilitator will be prepared to offer a specific situational example to which group members can relate to their own experiences).



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Emotional Effects of Stress

Common emotional effects of stress may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Loss of emotional control
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Anger
- Guilt
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Fear
- Grief



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Just as the we receive physical stress cues, emotional cues are indicators of stress. Two words that will help to gauge when these normal emotions (mood states/negative thoughts) are DURATION- i.e. how long have you been experiencing these emotions/mood states/negative thoughts, and INTENSITY- i.e. are these emotions/mood states/negative thoughts more elevated than what may be normal...for YOU. Remember...everyone reacts differently to life circumstances. Facilitator should again emphasize the importance of knowing what is normal for individual.

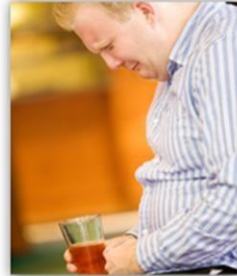


Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Behavioral Effects of Stress

Common behavioral effects of stress may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Impulsiveness
- Overeating
- Alcohol/drug use
- Sleep deprivation
- Crying
- Social withdrawal



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We all engage in these behaviors now and again and that's considered normal. Again, the Facilitator will review concept of DURATION and INTENSITY. Facilitator will ask group members to give examples of benign impulsive behaviors as opposed to impulsive behaviors that are unsafe (unsafe to you and/or others)? We all overeat from time to time, however a change in duration and intensity of eating habits may indicate unresolved anger and sadness. Crying is a healthy response to emotional intensity, however do you find yourself crying spontaneously at situations which you would not normally respond with such intensity. How about isolating behavior? We all need "time out," however do you find it difficult to spend time with others? Remember...DURATION and INTENSITY.



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Spiritual Effects of Stress

Common spiritual effects of stress may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Anger at higher power
- Withdrawal from faith-based community
- Crisis of faith



If you are normally spiritually connected with your faith, the underlying emotions and thoughts associated with stress may bring about spiritual conflict.



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Balancing Work and Personal Life

For most individuals, work and personal life are in a state of flux. Priorities shift and we must negotiate between competing aspects of our lives.

Because of the many demands of personal and professional life, we are constantly being asked to place priority on one aspect of life over another. Many times, family responsibilities come into conflict with professional obligations or aspirations, and this may cause stress.



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Think about juggling priorities and the conflict this may create. Consider the various roles we all maintain-husband/wife/mother/father/worker/coast guard auxiliary member.

What does “state of flux” mean to you? (Each role we maintain in society call for our attention and we have to learn how to give our attention to what is most important during any given time in our lives). Not easy since most times our attention is being pulled in several different directions at once. You may want to engage others members into a discussion about challenges we all face in regulating obligations with the time we have. Many individuals experience a need for perfectionism in every role. How does this societal phenomenon impact personal stress?



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

What Should I Sacrifice?



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Think..... Again, self-awareness is key. Take time to consider what is really important to what you feel is a fulfilling life? Think about the concept of perfectionism and the concept of “good enough” instead of perfect.



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

What Should I Sacrifice?

Ultimately, we are involved in a continual process of deciding what "it" is worth. The "it" changes based on the situation, but the choice is the one constant.

How many times have you missed a recital or a ball game because you have a work deadline? Or how many times have you had to miss an important meeting because life simply got in the way?

The decision of what to give up, sometimes what to sacrifice, can be very difficult and stressful. Many times, it might feel like either way you choose, you lose.

Think about the importance of practicing good decision-making, Again, self-awareness about what is important to individual, making a decision and being ok with the direction/action taken.



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Knowing Your Limits

Acknowledging that balance is important in all aspects of life, it is important to know your own personal limitations. Sunshine is a good example. It has just as many health benefits as it does harmful effects.

Different people need and can tolerate different amounts of sun exposure, and that is based on a multitude of factors. Regardless of who you are, sunshine burns if you get too much.

Similarly, how much stress you can take before you get "burned" depends on a number of factors, including your past experiences, your perception of the situation, and the tools you currently possess. It's important to know your limits and to recognize when you are getting burned.

What are your individual stress tolerance levels. As stated in this slide, this is due to personality factors, learned responses, etc. Think about the importance of learning coping skills to help us to manage and tolerate normal stress-challenge perceptions of the situation (are our thoughts and emotional reactions to the situation making it worse than it really is)?



Stress Management and Personal Resilience



What do you think your limits are? What is your tolerance level for stress?



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

What is Resilience?

Known as a process of adapting in the face of stress or adversity, resilience refers to a person's ability to bounce back. Being a more resilient person can help you cope more effectively with stressful situations.



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There's no getting around it. We WILL have stress in our lives. Much of the intense stress we experience is due to not having answers or resolution of difficult situations or dilemmas. Resiliency means learning skills to tolerate stress and accompanying distress while we resolve situation and find answers. Most difficult problems in life take time to resolve. Much is gained by learning how to manage uncomfortable feelings and thoughts while you work to find answers. Learning these skills will give you the tools to reduce stress. How do you practice distress tolerance which allows you to sit with uncertainty in every day life?



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

How Can I Increase My Resilience?

There are many protective factors that can help you increase your "bounce." These factors can be learned, practiced, and used when needed to help you stay healthy as you cope with life stressors.



Physical



Mental



Emotional



Behavioral



Spiritual



Social

Which of these protective factors do you use? Are there any others you think might work for you?

Think of some examples from each of the categories listed.



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Physically Protective Factors

- Exercise regularly
- Minimize caffeine, alcohol, and sugar
- Maintain routine sleep patterns, or 7-8 hours nightly
- Laugh
- Eat healthy, balanced meals
- Stretch
- Visit the doctor and dentist regularly
- Stay hydrated



Remember the physical cues we get that may be the first sign our bodies are giving us that we are stressed? If we were to maintain the above list, we would receive positive cues that we're doing well and are fortifying ourselves for inevitable stress that life presents. There are often times overlooked benefits of laughter, especially benefits received in maintaining perspective regarding stressful situations.



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Mentally Protective Factors

- Recognize your identity is more than your job
- Create a positive view of yourself
- Be confident in your strengths and abilities
- Increase communication skills and problem solving
- Talk to someone you trust when you feel frustrated



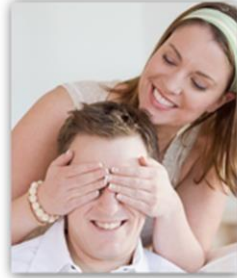
Are you able to identify your strengths? Are you able to reach out and talk to a trusted individual about thoughts and feelings?



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Emotionally Protective Factors

- Pay attention to what you are experiencing emotionally
- Practice relaxation exercises, such as deep breathing
- Make time for play and hobbies
- Accept that change is part of living
- See problems as challenges



Create coping tools for getting through tough times. Identify your feelings and don't spend energy blocking them. They're just feelings-information that let's you know where you stand. Deep breathing is a great skill for relaxing mind and body. Do you ever notice that you hold your breath or breath very shallow, especially during stressful situations? Pay attention to this the next time you're experiencing stress in your life. Remember...develop realistic perspective. Are you catastrophizing a situation...making it worse than it really is?



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Behaviorally Protective Factors

- Create healthy routines
- Organize clutter and create a space that decreases stress
- Find outlets to express your creativity
- Organize your calendar and manage time well
- Curb dependence on that which is harmful

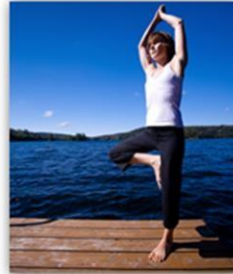




Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Spiritually Protective Factors

- Trust that you are exactly where you are meant to be
- Seek learning
- Engage in beliefs that sustain you
- Give back to your community





Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Socially Protective Factors

- Engage in relationships that are healthy and limit those that drain your spirit and your resources
- Accept help and support from those who care about you
- Maintain healthy personal and professional boundaries
- Learn to say "no"
- Teach those around you to treat you with respect by respecting yourself and others
- Make an effort to spend quality time with friends and family





Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Coping Skills

In order to deal with stress, each person develops a set of coping mechanisms or skills. These are closely related to the protective factors that help increase resilience.

It is important to recognize that we all have some healthy and less healthy ways of coping. Some of our coping mechanisms are natural inclinations, or automatic responses. Others are skills that we must learn and practice.

The more healthy coping mechanisms we have available to us, the more resilient we are. Select each hyperlink to learn more about healthy and unhealthy coping mechanisms.



[Healthy](#)



[Unhealthy](#)



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Healthy Coping Mechanisms

Most people have some healthy things they do when they are stressed. Examples of healthy coping mechanisms include:

- Exercise
- Participation in recreational activities
- Simply hanging out with friends and family





Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms

Less healthy coping mechanisms include, but are not limited to:

- Excessive use of alcohol or other substances
- Excessive or too restrictive eating
- Too little or too much sleep
- Excessive shopping or gambling
- Excessive consumption of caffeine





Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Coping Mechanisms Sometimes Fail

Most of the time, your healthy coping mechanisms automatically "deploy," and without even knowing it, you will begin to return to a state of balance in your life.

At some point in life, you may find that methods you normally use to cope aren't working as well as they have in the past, or you may be faced with a situation that seems too large to tackle on your own.

If you feel you are losing your ability to cope, you can seek help.



[Employee Assistance Program](#)



[Other Professional Help](#)



Stress Management and Personal Resilience

CG SUPRT (Employee Assistance Program)

Everyone needs help from time to time. When times get tough, most of us can benefit from talking through our problems with someone who is experienced and objective. Someone who can help us sort things out. CG SUPRT can do just that. When you call the program, you will speak with a trained counselor who can help you set goals and find solutions.

CG SUPRT counselors and coaches will help assess your concerns and develop a plan of action. The plan may include short-term problem solving with a CG SUPRT counselor, a referral to another resource, or sharing of information. The program provides health and financial coaching, professional counseling, education, and referral services to you and your family members for a variety of issues such as:

- Marital and family problems
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Depression and anxiety
- Work-related concerns
- Legal and financial challenges
- Health improvement
- Balancing work and life demands

Call CG SUPRT at 855-CGSUPRT (855-247-8778) 24/7 to set up services. You can also explore CG SUPRT on-line solutions at www.cgsuprt.com where you will find articles, tip sheets, self-search tools, self-assessment tools, audio clips, and videos.





Stress Management and Personal Resilience

Other Professional Help

You may experience some of the negative effects of stress, or symptoms that signal a problem. If not dealt with, some of these common stress reactions can become more like chronic conditions. It is also possible for even the healthiest things that we do to cope to become unhealthy. With uncontrolled stress, coping skills can become habits, habits can become obsessions, obsessions can become compulsions, and compulsions can become addictions.

In these cases, a professional is best equipped to provide help. Additional resources for helping you manage include:

- Physicians
- Mental health professionals
- Spiritual leaders





Stress Management and Personal Resilience

When Should I Seek Immediate Assistance?

You should consider seeking professional assistance if you experience any of the following due to stress:

- Chronic sleep disturbance
- Chronic feelings of depression
- Declining job performance
- Serious relationship troubles
- Loss of usual interests
- Withdrawal
- Crying spells
- Uncontrollable anger
- Feelings of confusion
- Anxiety
- Paranoia



If you are having thoughts of harming yourself, you should seek help immediately. Resources include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), your mental healthcare provider, or 911.



BUDDY CHECK



Buddy Check

Introduction

Everyone struggles with stress at some point. It is important to know when to seek help for yourself, but what about others?

There are times when you sense that a work buddy or coworker isn't managing stress effectively, and you may not be sure what you can – or should – do to help them. Buddy Check is a system that helps you have these difficult conversations.

In this module, you'll learn how to:

- Recognize when a coworker isn't handling stress very well
- Use Buddy Check system to approach that coworker
- Convey that you care and refer him or her to the appropriate resources





Buddy Check

Noticing Your Coworkers' Behavior

You see many of your coworkers on a daily basis, sometimes more than you see family or friends. You know what's normal for them, and what isn't. You may notice that Sandra only curls her hair on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Jim always wears a crisp, clean shirt, and Roger always comes and goes from the office with a smile on his face.



Tricia knows Jen to be a person who is normally even-tempered.



Buddy Check

Noticing Changes in Your Coworkers' Behavior

This patterned behavior becomes comforting in its predictability, but what happens when there's a change? What do you do when you notice that Sandra doesn't seem to be washing her hair, let alone curling it, Jim's shirts are coffee-stained, and Roger's typical smile is all but erased from his face?

Some of these changes in behavior should set off your internal alarm. They may signal that your coworker (or friend, or loved one) is not handling their stress effectively.



Jen's behavior sets off Tricia's internal alarm.



Buddy Check

Noticing Changes in Your Coworkers' Behavior

Examples of changes that might alert you that something is wrong may include changes in attitude (Jen), physical appearance (Sandra), or mood (Jim).

Additional examples include the following:

- A friend may overreact when you give him the wrong directions to your favorite restaurant in a neighboring town
- Your spouse may come home one day and walk straight into the living room and start yelling at the kids for something that happened months ago
- You may catch your coworker staring off into space when she is supposed to be working on an important report



Do you think Jen's reaction is a normal response to spilled coffee?



Buddy Check

What Buddy Check Is and Is Not

Buddy Check is...

an effective method of talking with and listening to a person in crisis or distress

Buddy Check is not...

counseling, and you don't have to have training in counseling or mental health in order to use the techniques



Buddy Check

You Already Use Buddy Check

Many of the skills associated with Buddy Check look and feel very similar to the communication skills you use with friends, family, and coworkers on a daily basis. It is based on two people having meaningful communication, which is something that we do in our everyday lives.





Buddy Check

Goals of the Buddy Check System

Using active listening skills and exhibiting empathetic understanding will help you accomplish the following goals:

- Establish a compassionate human connection
- Gauge the individual's immediate and future needs
- Offer practical assistance
- Help get them to a professional more equipped to assist when necessary



Buddy Check

How is Buddy Check Different from Everyday Conversations?

Buddy Check differs from your typical day-to-day interactions in a few important ways. Select each hyperlink to learn more.



[Intention, Attention, and Structure](#)



[A Quieter Inner Dialogue](#)



Buddy Check

Intention, Attention, and Structure

Buddy Check is a helping skill that requires more intention, attention, and structure than you use in your normal day-to-day conversations.

- Intention – Set an intention to be helpful and non-judgmental
- Attention – Pay closer attention by quieting your thoughts to listen more effectively
- Structure – This structure can help you approach difficult conversations that you might otherwise avoid



Buddy Check

A Quieter Inner Dialogue

There is a typical volley that takes place in friendly conversations. The conversation is usually two-sided, and each member of the discussion is listening not only to the other person but also to their own inner dialogue. It's this dialogue that spurs you to recount a related story or add your "two cents."

Buddy Check requires the helper to quiet that inner dialogue and listen in a way that many of us don't practice on a routine basis. It requires us to model healthy responses, remain calm, and be courteous. It requires compassion, empathy, and a desire to help.



Buddy Check

How Do I Carry Out a "Buddy Check"?

When you notice that someone you work with is in need, you should ask, care, and refer. The next few pages provide simple guidelines for how you can discuss your concerns.





Buddy Check

Buddy Check: Ask

As you may remember from the scenario, Tricia asked Jen if she was okay, and when Jen responded sarcastically, Tricia insisted they go get coffee and talk.

The following are examples of statements you can use and questions you can ask your coworker when you recognize he or she is not handling their stress in an effective manner:

- "Hey _____. I've noticed you haven't seemed yourself lately. Are you ok?"
- "You seem really stressed. Would it help to talk about it?"
- "I'm concerned about how you're handling this situation. Can we sit down and talk?"





Buddy Check

Buddy Check: Care

In the scenario, Tricia asked Jen what was going on, responded empathetically, and gave Jen a chance to discuss the challenges in her life.

When expressing care, it is important to:

- Be attentive and compassionate
- Identify and discuss your coworker's stress
- Mention specific behavioral patterns
- Identify and respond to visible emotions
- Avoid making definite statements





Buddy Check

Buddy Check: Refer

As you may recall, Tricia provided resources to Jen in order to help decrease the stress in her life.

When referring resources to someone, it is important to remember to:

- Know your referral resources
- Remain within the scope of your role
- Avoid speculation
- Report your concerns if necessary
- Protect your coworker from harming themselves





Buddy Check

Tips for Delivering Buddy Check

The following guidelines will help you be more effective when delivering Buddy Check:



Do:

- Model healthy responses and behavior
- Maintain confidentiality
- Make referrals when you are in over your head
- Be culturally sensitive
- Stay calm
- Be prepared to listen



Don't:

- Make assumptions
- Assume trauma
- Assume mental illness
- Patronize
- Speculate
- Intrude

If your coworker doesn't want to talk, don't force it unless you believe he or she is in imminent danger of harm to self or others.



Buddy Check

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is paramount. It should be respected during every phase of assisting your coworker. Keep any information they share with you private, unless you are concerned about safety. In that case, information should only be shared with those who need to know.

Of course, there are exceptions to every rule, and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in every situation. If you are a law enforcement professional and belong to a category of mandated reporters, you should abide by state abuse and neglect reporting laws.





SUICIDE PREVENTION

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Suicide Prevention

Introduction

Now that you've learned about stress management and Buddy Check (Ask, Care, Refer), you may need to know what to do if someone you're talking to is in serious distress. It won't happen often, but it is best to be as prepared as possible.

In this module, you'll learn:

- Reasons and causes of suicidal intentions
- How to recognize signs that someone may be feeling suicidal
- How to approach and respond to someone who is thinking of ending his or her life





Suicide Prevention

When Someone Loses Their Ability to Cope

When you notice that a coworker or friend isn't coping, it's time to use Buddy Check: Ask, Care, and Refer.

Sometimes, however, you may find once you ask if they're okay, the problem is much bigger than you may have anticipated. Or the visible symptoms may point to a bigger problem.

At the far end of the spectrum, people who find themselves unable to manage may become suicidal.

Although this is rare, it is serious and life-threatening. It's important to understand, and even more important to know what to do if you find yourself in a situation where you're concerned that someone might be suicidal.



Suicide Prevention

Why Would Someone Want to Attempt Suicide?

How does someone reach a point where the only solution they see is suicide? There are several factors that influence the desire to end one's own life:

- [High stress levels](#)
- [Helplessness and hopelessness](#)
- [Life situations](#)



Suicide Prevention

High stress levels

In extreme cases, some individuals may begin to feel so overwhelmed by the stress of life that they feel without hope. They have tried everything they know to gain some sense of control over their lives, but feel like their problems are too large to solve. They believe they are beyond help.



Suicide Prevention

Helplessness and hopelessness

Experts believe that people commit suicide because they:

- Desperately want relief from their pain, either emotional or physical
- Can't see any other solution to their problems
- Feel overwhelmed and helpless

Suicidal thoughts can surface when the pain experienced by an individual outweighs their ability to effectively cope with that pain. As a result, they feel helpless and hopeless.

The key to preventing suicide is to reduce the pain or to increase the resources for dealing with that pain.



Suicide Prevention

Life situations

Suicide is a conscious and deliberate act. There are many reasons that a person might decide to take his/her own life. The following are some life situations that may influence someone to make such a drastic decision:

- Intense feelings of grief and loss caused by the death of a loved one
- Severe family, work, financial, legal, or social problems
- Serious illness
- Severe depression or other mental illness
- Severe chronic stress
- Loss of hope
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Domestic violence
- Low self-esteem
- Social isolation
- Difficulties dealing with life changes
- Alcohol or other substance abuse
- Overwhelming feelings of guilt when one's actions are perceived to have caused the serious injury or death of a colleague or friend

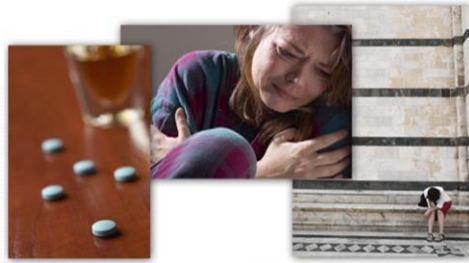


Suicide Prevention

Risk Factors

Some populations are at higher risk than others. There are several risk factors that may make some people more vulnerable to attempt suicide:

- [Previous suicide attempts](#)
- [Family history](#)
- [Lack of social network or isolation](#)
- [Substance abuse](#)
- [Depression and mental health concerns](#)





Suicide Prevention

Previous suicide attempts

The rate of suicide for people who have made previous attempts is almost three times higher than the general population.



Suicide Prevention

Family history

One out of four people who attempt suicide have a family member who has committed suicide. A history of mental illness, substance abuse, physical and sexual violence increases the family risk of suicide.



Suicide Prevention

Lack of social network or isolation

If a person has little or no support system or feels isolated, the risk of suicide is substantially higher than for those who have social support systems.



Suicide Prevention

Substance abuse

Alcohol abuse is a factor in 30% of suicides.



Suicide Prevention

Depression and mental health concerns

Thirty percent of people who are diagnosed with clinical depression will attempt suicide, with at least half of them ultimately dying by suicide.

An additional risk factor is a history of mental health concerns, including bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.



Suicide Prevention

Statistics

Although suicide is a relatively rare outcome, it's important to understand that it does happen to people in all walks of life, and that it has tremendous ripple effects. Suicides and suicide attempts are devastating for everyone involved.

Important statistics to know about suicide include the following:

- More than 32,000 people commit suicide each year in the U.S. alone. That is one suicide every 16 minutes.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death in young people between the ages of 15 and 24.
- Among persons aged 25-34, suicide is the second leading cause of death.
- Suicide is the eleventh leading cause of death overall in the U.S.





Suicide Prevention

Suicide Can Be Prevented

In many cases, suicide can be prevented. The remainder of this module will educate you on the dynamics of suicide and how you can help someone at risk.

Specifically, you will learn:

- Reasons and causes of suicidal intentions
- How to recognize signs that someone may be feeling suicidal
- How to approach and respond to someone who is thinking of ending his or her life



Suicide Prevention

How Do I Recognize When Someone is Suicidal?

Most people who are thinking about suicide exhibit specific signs, symptoms, and behaviors.

Recognition is not always easy. Some signs of suicidal ideation are obvious and some are not. By themselves, some of these may not be of concern, but in context or clustered together, they would send a warning signal. The more signs, the greater the perceived risk.

Select each category below for specific signs that someone may be at risk for suicide:

- [Noticeable signs](#)
- [Subtle signs](#)
- [Additional signs](#)



Suicide Prevention

Noticeable signs

The noticeable signs of suicidal intentions are easier to notice than more subtle signs. These may include the following:

- Direct statements about suicidal intent
- Making preparations for death in the near future
- Having weapons around in combination with excessive drinking
- Increased levels of risk-taking behaviors that are obvious to others and cause concern
- Purposeful withdrawal from friends and family
- Giving away prized personal items



Suicide Prevention

Subtle signs

More subtle or hidden signs of suicide are not as obvious to other people. These signs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Extreme loneliness
- Feelings of rejection
- Changes in personality
- Increasing frequent thoughts of death
- Acquiring a weapon
- Impaired decision-making
- Practicing the act



Suicide Prevention

Additional signs

Some signs can be seen as either obvious or as hidden. These may include the following:

- Loss of clear thinking
- Rigidity and an inability to problem-solve
- Elevated anxiety
- Feelings of sadness and confusion



Suicide Prevention

How Can I Help Someone Who is Suicidal?

Now that you have learned about the warning signs of suicide, what do you do if you begin to notice signs of helplessness and hopelessness in a coworker or friend and you think they may be at risk for suicide? How do you approach him or her and encourage them to get the help they need?

If you think that a coworker is contemplating taking his or her own life, it can be very stressful in itself. Since we all know that our cognitive abilities decrease when we are under stress, it may be helpful for you to remember the acronym "ACT."

ACT represents a three step process to take when talking to a friend or coworker who is at risk of committing suicide:

- (A) Ask: Are you thinking of killing yourself?
- (C) Care: Listen with compassion and voice your concern.
- (T) Take action: Get them professional help or, if you determine that they are not in imminent danger, get them information about the available resources.



Suicide Prevention

ACT Model: Ask

Ask, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

The first step in this process is the most challenging, but is also the most crucial and important step. Your straightforward, non-judgmental question will open communication between you and the person at risk. Those at high risk of suicide often feel alienated from others, as though no one notices or understands their problems.

But...won't he or she be offended?





Suicide Prevention

But...won't he or she be offended?

It is natural to fear that a question about suicide may anger or offend someone you care for, or that you may somehow put the idea of suicide into a person's mind.

Remember that **you cannot make a person suicidal** by asking them this question, and a person considering suicide may **welcome a chance to talk about their feelings**.



Suicide Prevention

ACT Model: Care

Care by listening with compassion and voicing your concern.

Listen without judgment. Let the person express his or her feelings and accept those feelings without judging or discounting them.

Don't act shocked, lecture on the value of life, or say that suicide is wrong.

Offer hope. Reassure the person that help is available and that the suicidal feelings are temporary. Don't dismiss the pain he or she feels, but talk about the alternatives to suicide and let the person know that his or her life is important to you and to everyone who cares about them. Remind them that **suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.**

Don't be afraid to use guilt. Emphasize the impact the suicide will have on loved ones; they will be devastated.





Suicide Prevention

ACT Model: Take Action

Take action by seeking professional help if you feel the person is in imminent danger. Call the Suicide Prevention LifeLine or 911.

Involve other people. Don't try to handle the crisis alone, or put yourself in danger.

If possible, **don't leave the person alone** until you are sure that he/she is in the care of professionals.

If you don't feel they are in imminent danger, but you remain concerned about their wellbeing after talking to them, steer them to professional resources including your EAP or another mental health professional or healthcare professional. You may want to involve a trusted supervisor as well.





Suicide Prevention

Referral Resources

Referral for further evaluation is crucial, even if the person you're talking to doesn't seem to be in imminent danger.

Resources for People Contemplating Suicide	Resources for People in Imminent Danger or Who Have Already Attempted Suicide
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employee Assistance Program• Physicians• Mental health professionals• Spiritual leaders• Psychiatric hospitals• Veterans Centers• Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call 911• Emergency departments• National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK



Suicide Prevention

Would You Have Known to Take Action?

Although rare, it is possible that you may come in contact with someone who is experiencing a more severe stress reaction and may be feeling suicidal. The first step in being able to prevent suicide is recognizing the signs. How many signs did you recognize in the video?



[Saying goodbye or going away forever](#)



[Feelings of hopelessness](#)



[Feelings of worthlessness](#)



Suicide Prevention

Saying goodbye or going away forever



Sometimes those contemplating suicide talk as if they are saying goodbye or going away forever.

In the video, Mike spoke as though he intended to go away forever by saying:

- "The bike needs someone who can care for it."
- "I just want all this to stop."

Other statements may include:

- "I won't be around to deal with that."
- "You'll be sorry when I'm gone."
- "I won't be in your way much longer."



Suicide Prevention

Feelings of hopelessness



People contemplating suicide may express feelings of hopelessness.

In the video, Mike made several statements that expressed hopelessness:

- "There's just no point to anything anymore."
- "It's just too hard. It's not worth it."
- "I just can't do this anymore."

Other statements may include:

- "I can't deal with everything – life is too hard."
- "Nobody understands me – nobody feels the way I do."
- "There's nothing I can do to make it better."



Suicide Prevention

Feelings of worthlessness



People contemplating suicide may express feelings of worthlessness.

In the video, Mike made several statements that expressed worthlessness:

- "It just reminds me of what a failure I am."
- "It's all my fault."
- "I should have done a lot of things."

Other statements may include:

- "My family would be better off without me."
- "I'd be better off dead."



Suicide Prevention

It Takes Courage to Ask for Help

If you ever find yourself in a situation where your stress symptoms don't seem to be getting better, or these symptoms are interfering with your ability to function, you may be dealing with a more serious problem.

It is important that you reach out for assistance. It's not a sign of weakness to ask for help; it shows true strength and courage. Contact CG SUPRT, or other mental health professional or practitioner, for guidance and support.



Suicide Prevention

Suicide Prevention: A Review

Important things to remember in suicide prevention:

- Know the warning signs
- Talk openly with the person
- Show care and concern
- Take the person seriously
- Never underestimate the power of understanding and support
- Seek professional help
- Call an ambulance and law enforcement personnel in an emergency



Suicide Prevention

Summary

We all have good days and bad days. The goal is to be RESISTANT – to have as many good days as possible; and RESILIENT – to weather the bad days and move on.

In this training, you've learned:

- To identify signs that you may not be managing your stress in healthy ways;
- What to do if you notice that co-workers or friends seem to be struggling with their own life stress; and
- The steps you can take if you are concerned that someone at work or at home is so overwhelmed that you believe they may be at risk for suicide.

Resources

If you or someone you know is feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or even suicidal, what should you do? Who should you contact?

Assistance is available for all DHS employees; select your component below.

Emergency Services

The Coast Guard's CGSUPRT Program is available 24/7 to assist with mental health emergencies. Their toll free numbers are:
(855) CGSUPRT (247-8778)
(855) 444-8724 (TTY, for hearing impaired)
International: dial country code then 800-02478778
www.cgsuprt.com

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention service available to anyone in suicidal crisis.
(800) 273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)
(800) 799-4TTY (1-800-799-4889), text telephone for hearing impaired
(800) 273-TALK (press 1 for military veterans suicide hotline)
(800) 273-TALK (press 2 for suicide hotline in Spanish)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Other Services and Resources

The following services and resources are available to help with Suicide Prevention and Response:

- [Coast Guard Chaplains](#) - (855) 872-4242
- [Coast Guard Medical Clinics](#) - In addition to military personnel, CG Clinics may serve dependents at some locations if space is available.
- [Coast Guard National Command Center](#) - If you need the assistance of a Coast Guard command in an emergency, the National Command Center can assist in identifying needed contact information. Call 1-800-DAD-SAFE (323-7233).
- CG SUPRT (Employee Assistance Program) - 1-855-CGSUPRT (247-8778) Web (for EAP): www.CGSUPRT.com. The CG SUPRT program helps you resolve personal problems and life challenges before they negatively impact your health, relationships, or job performance. The program provides confidential health coaching, financial coaching, professional counseling, education, and referrals. Call 24/7.
- [Coast Guard Regional Health, Safety, and Work-Life \(HSWL\) Field Offices Military Treatment Facility \(MTF\) Locator](#) (Note: only those MTFs serving both active duty and dependents are included.)
- [TRICARE Mental Health/Behavioral Care](#)
- Training - face-to-face all hands mandated training is available from HSWL FOs and online at <https://elearning.uscg.mil/>.
- Other resources are available at www.cgsuprt.com or http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/suicide_prevention.asp

Be sure to use 9-1-1 Emergency Responders for BOTH Physical and Mental health emergencies.



Completed Training Attestation

Coast Guard Core Values

- **Honor**
 - Integrity is our standard. We demonstrate uncompromising ethical conduct and moral behavior in all of our actions. We are loyal and accountable to the public trust.”
- **Respect**
 - We value our diverse workforce. We treat each other with fairness, dignity, and compassion. We encourage creativity through empowerment. We work as a team
- **Devotion to Duty**
 - We are professionals, military and civilian, who seek responsibility, accept accountability, and are committed to the successful achievement of our organizational goals. We exist to serve. We serve with pride.

Reviewed, DIR-T USCGAUX

The mandatory training that you have just completed reflects the **Core Values of the U.S. Coast Guard** and **Coast Guard Auxiliary**. As a member of this organization, you have taken an oath to uphold those Core Values. In order to receive completion credit for this training, please read, understand, and sign this document. Once completed, keep a copy for your records and provide a copy to your Flotilla Staff Officer for Information Services (FSO-IS) for AUXDATA entry.

In regards to the selected mandated training modules: Codes: _____

I, _____ (print name) as a member of District _____

Division _____ Flotilla _____ attest that I have completed and understand the course contents.

Signature: _____, Member ID _____

Date: _____

Course Code	Course Name	Frequency
502379	Building Resilience and Preventing Suicide	Every 5 years
810030	Security Fundamentals	Every 5 years
810015	Privacy at DHS / Protecting Personal Information	Every 5 years
810000	Sexual Harassment Prevention	Every 5 years
810045	Sexual Assault Prevention and Response	Every 5 years
502319	Civil Rights Awareness	Every 5 years
502306	Ethics 1 / Personal Gifts	1 time only
502290	Influenza Training	1 time only