

# Workplace Suicide

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Depression most often affects people during their prime working years. It can have devastating effects on the individual and their family, but can also have an impact in the workplace. Without treatment, depression costs the U.S. economy billions of

dollars in absenteeism, lost productivity and its effects on workplace morale. The good news is that more than 80% of people with clinical depression can be successfully treated and return to their usual level of performance. If people in the workplace learn to recognize this illness as well as how to reach out and support a depressed colleague, it is more likely that the person will get the help they need.

Among the signs that a person may be struggling with depression are changes in their mood or job performance, lateness, missing work, withdrawal from the workgroup, expressing sadness

or hopelessness or talk of suicide. There are also many reasons that people don't seek help. The person may feel embarrassed, have confidentiality concerns, have fears that they will lose their job or worry about whether they can afford treatment.

A co-worker who notices these signs can be helpful by expressing genuine concern and listening to the person's story. Since it may be difficult for the person to share their struggle, be careful to accept the person's feelings in a nonjudgmental way. Encourage them to involve others so that they don't feel so alone. If there are concerns that the person might be thinking about suicide, approach the issue directly and ask: "Are you thinking of killing yourself?" or "Do you feel

**Portage Path Behavioral Health's  
SUPPORT Hotline**  
Call 330-434-9144 or 1-800-273-TALK  
for 24-hour assistance.

**The Summit County Suicide  
Prevention Coalition**  
[preventsuicide@adm.org](mailto:preventsuicide@adm.org)

like you want to die?" Instill hope that help is possible and offer to go with them either to the company's employee assistance program, if available, or help them find another source of mental health counseling. If they are in immediate danger, do not leave them alone until help can be found. This may require mobilizing other employees or the person's friends or family. If the risk for suicide seems imminent, take the person to an emergency room or crisis center. And, if the person is

unwilling to seek help, don't hesitate to call 911.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, the SUPPORT Hotline (330-434-9144) and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) are available 24 hours a day. If you are interested in training or becoming involved in the Summit County Suicide Prevention Coalition, call (330) 762-3500 or contact [preventsuicide@admboard.org](mailto:preventsuicide@admboard.org).

