

Responding to death by suicide checklist

This checklist outlines the key actions to take to respond to death by suicide

Sensitively communicate with the family of the deceased employee.

Appoint a senior manager to take responsibility for co-ordinating the organisation's response.

Develop communication guidelines for informing employees about a suspected suicide, although all formal statements to employees need to be tailored to the individual circumstances.

Provide appropriate information about the death of a colleague and avoid misinformation or rumours. It is important to remember that an individual who has died by suicide should be afforded the same level of confidentiality as they had in life.

Ensure bereaved employees are aware of your organisation's bereavement policy and support on offer. Sensitively promote the available wellbeing services for bereaved employees.

Support people managers, especially around having sensitive and supportive conversations with bereaved employees.

Be aware of the potential impact on people and allow for a period of disruption and adjustment.

Show empathy and compassion.

Organise an appropriate and sensitively staged tribute for the deceased employee.

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Co-ordinate the practicalities in a sensitive manner, for example the empty desk or workstation of the employee will be a difficult reminder of their absence, and HR should have a discussion about how to sensitively gather their belongings and return them to their next of kin.

Manage other practicalities, such as informing any external clients or stakeholders and alternative arrangements for future contact with the organisation.

Provide ongoing wellbeing support.

Refer to the [postvention section](#) of the Responding to suicide risk guide for more information.

Responding to risk of suicide checklist

This checklist is intended to serve as a reminder of the key actions to take if you are required to respond to risk of suicide.

If the crisis is immediate and someone is in imminent danger of taking their own life, call an ambulance and do not leave them alone. Also be aware of dangers to others.

Ask about their suicidal thoughts in a calm, confident, sensitive but clear way. For example, 'Have you had thoughts about ending your life?', or 'Do things get so bad for you that you think about suicide?' The actual words you use are less important than that they are clear and to the point.

If there is no immediate risk to life, direct the individual to their doctor as the first step for support or specialist mental health services.

Offer appropriate wellbeing support to managers or colleagues who have received suicidal thoughts from the employee.

Samaritans offer practical advice and videos explaining simple actions that can help you be there for someone who is experiencing suicidal thoughts, as well as the importance of seeking professional support and when to step back to look after yourself.

The **Responding to suicide risk** guide covers this scenario in more detail.