



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE NEWSLETTER

FALL 2024

PROVIDED BY SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

How to Support Someone Struggling with Suicidal Thoughts

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Each year, September marks National Suicide Prevention Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about suicide, its prevention, and the resources available for those in crisis. It's an important time to emphasize that suicide can often be prevented through timely intervention, support, and education. This month provides a critical opportunity for individuals and communities to come together, learn how to help, and ultimately save lives.

Discovering that someone you care about is having thoughts of suicide can be overwhelming. You may feel unsure about what to say or how to respond. However, knowing how to approach the situation and get them the help they need is

essential—and it may even save their life. The key steps involve recognizing warning signs, engaging in open and supportive conversations, and connecting the person to professional resources.

Recognizing the Warning Signs of Suicide
There are several behaviors that can indicate someone may be struggling with suicidal thoughts. Being aware of these signs can help you intervene early:

- Talking or writing about wanting to die or kill themselves
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness or having no reason to live
- Feeling trapped or like there's no way out

- Talking about being a burden to others
- Describing their emotional or physical pain as unbearable
- Actively seeking methods to end their life
- Giving away prized belongings
- Withdrawing from family, friends, or activities they once enjoyed

If you notice any of these signs, it's crucial to take them seriously and act promptly.

Five Key Steps to Take to Help Someone with Suicidal Thoughts
If someone you know is displaying signs of suicidal ideation, these five steps can guide you through providing support and connecting them to help:

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5 Action Steps to Help Someone Having Thoughts of Suicide

- ASK**
“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”
- BE THERE**
Listen without judgment and acknowledge their feelings.
- HELP KEEP THEM SAFE**
Reduce their access to lethal items or places.
- HELP THEM CONNECT**
Call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988).
- FOLLOW UP**
Stay in touch to see how they're doing.

National Institute of Mental Health
[nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention)

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/get-involved/digital-shareables/shareable-resources-on-suicide-prevention>



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1) ASK

Initiating the conversation is the first step in suicide prevention. Contrary to common belief, asking someone if they are thinking about suicide does not increase their suicidal thoughts. In fact, research shows that discussing it openly can reduce the risk. Ask questions directly and with care, such as: “Are you thinking about suicide?” or “Have you been having thoughts of hurting yourself?”

Avoid phrasing that may dismiss or downplay their feelings, such as: “You’re not thinking about suicide are you?” or “You’re not thinking about doing something crazy, are you?” Being straightforward allows the person to share their feelings without feeling judged or invalidated.

2) BE THERE

Once the conversation begins, being fully present is essential. Practice active listening and provide empathy and support. Give them your full attention, make eye contact, and let them know you care. You might say, “I’m here for you, and I want to help” or “It sounds like you’re feeling really overwhelmed right now.” Encourage them to talk about the positive aspects of their life, their strengths, and their reasons for living. It’s important, however, to avoid minimizing their feelings or imposing your reasons for why they should live—help them find their own.

3) HELP KEEP THEM SAFE

If the person indicates they are at immediate risk, your priority is to ensure their safety. Stay with them or make sure someone else can stay until professional help is available. Remove any items that could be used in a suicide attempt, such as guns, pills, or sharp objects. By creating a safer environment, you help reduce the likelihood of an impulsive act. If the person is actively suicidal and in immediate danger, call 911 or seek emergency assistance right away.

4) HELP THEM CONNECT

Professional support is crucial in helping someone who is having suicidal thoughts. Encourage the person to seek help by calling the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or connecting with a mental health professional. If possible, accompany them to an emergency room or help them reach out to a counselor or therapist. Even obtaining a commitment from the person that they will seek help is a positive step forward.

5) FOLLOW UP

After the immediate crisis has passed and the person has received professional care, it’s important to continue checking in with them. A simple follow-up conversation lets them know they are not alone and that others care about their well-being. You can ask, “How are you feeling since we last talked?” or “Is there anything else I can do to support you?” Continued support can be a lifeline as they work through their challenges.

The Importance of Suicide Prevention Month

Suicide Prevention Month serves as a powerful reminder that preventing suicide is a shared responsibility. By learning to recognize the warning signs, engaging in open conversations, and guiding someone toward the right resources, we can all play a role in saving lives.

It’s vital to remember that talking about mental health and suicide is not a sign of weakness. Reaching out for help, whether for yourself or someone else, is a courageous and life-affirming act. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text 988, the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, for immediate help and support. Together, we can reduce stigma, raise awareness, and ensure that no one has to face their darkest moments alone.

Suicide Prevention Resources:

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988 (call or text) or visit 988lifeline.org for online chat & suicide prevention resources

Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline: Dial 988 or visit idahocrisis.org

Idaho Suicide Prevention Coalition: spcidaho.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: afsp.org

National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention



MOM'S ZUCCHINI BREAD

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 1/4 cups white sugar
- 3 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups grated zucchini
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 325° F (165° C). Grease and flour two 8x4-inch pans.

2. Sift flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, and cinnamon together in a large bowl.
3. Beat eggs, oil, sugar, and vanilla together in a separate large bowl with an electric mixer until combined; add flour mixture and beat well. Stir in zucchini and walnuts until well combined. Pour batter into the prepared pans.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 40 to 60 minutes. Cool in the pans on a wire rack for 20 minutes. Run a table knife around the edges to loosen. Invert carefully onto a wire rack and let cool completely.

PREP 15 m	BAKE 40 m	COOL 20 m
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THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONAL INTELLIGENCE



Often, we use the terms or concepts of relational intelligence and emotional intelligence synonymously; however, they are different in many ways.

For clarification, relational intelligence is generally defined as the ability to successfully connect with people and build strong trust-filled and long-lasting relationships. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to understand your emotions, the emotions of others, and know strategies to manage both effectively. You may be curious about why this is important.

Getting to know someone for the first time, working with someone who has a different perspective, working through conflict, and simply learning to trust someone are challenges we've all gone through or will go through at some point in our life. Relationships, regardless of what kind, are hard and take work in order to be successful.

There is a general belief that the quality of your relationships is what determines the quality of your life. Strong emotional intelligence enables relational intelligence to develop and expand. When one can identify and understand their emotions and those of others we are better equipped for relationship building.

Numerous studies show that while we're more connected than ever in the digital world, we struggle to find that same connection in the real world. Just as much as relationships enrich our personal lives, it is often the quality of our relationships at work that determines the quality of life, our work, and our success. Stronger relationships

make for more meaningful discussions, more innovative solutions, and ultimately better outcomes.

How do we know if we have strong relationship intelligence and skills?

- If we are vulnerable with others and share our honest thoughts. As a result, the fear of having difficult or sensitive conversations is removed and alignment increases.
- If we willingly share information and learn with others. This results in silos being broken and people working together towards common goals faster and more efficiently.
- If we experiment with new ideas and think outside of the box. This results in innovation, creativity, and increased morale and work productivity.

Being relationship-focused doesn't mean trying to ensure that everyone gets along all the time, or that no discomfort or disagreement ever comes up. In fact, the opposite is true. If done properly, relationship building should not discourage conflict but rather encourage the safety to challenge ideas and work through conflict, so that when conflicts do arise, they can be resolved and lead to better outcomes.

Having people with strong relational intelligence in your personal and professional lives not only contributes to a culture of engagement but to better and more innovative ideas being generated, enhanced interpersonal dynamics and collaboration and a stronger sense of shared meaning and purpose. That's why it's fundamental that we encourage and foster these relational bonds.

You may be curious about what this looks like in application. Below, you will find some ideas and suggestions but first and foremost, we must begin

by showing up from a genuine place of curiosity and willingness to truly listen...on a deeper level. In doing so, we take away defensiveness and judgement and create a place for vulnerability and connection.

In a group setting, some of these questions may be helpful to start with because they are low intensity and low risk:

- Can you tell us about one person who has influenced you in your life?
- What is something new you've learned to do in the past year?
- Can you share with us a treasured memory?

There are so many different types of questions we can ask to create connection, without being invasive, and that are appropriate for a variety of settings/situations...get creative!

In a work-based setting, and if you are in a position of leadership or management, consider the following during your one-on-ones:

- Do you respect the people you work with?
- Do you feel that your peers are contributing to achieving team goals?
- Do you feel that you are part of a team?
- Do your peers welcome opinions different from their own?
- Can you count on your peers when you need help?
- Do you trust your peers?

In any interpersonal relationship, consider the following:

- How do you feel in the situation?
- Why is this affecting you?
- What deeply matters to you?
- What's your biggest need?
- What are you afraid of?
- What are you learning about yourself in this experience?
- What could help you get a sense of forward momentum?
- If you imagine the best-case scenario, what would happen?

Remember, your job is to ask and to listen deeply; we are not seeking to respond or fix a problem or situation. The goal is connection. When we feel connected, we are more invested in changing our own behavior. Remember, alone we may go faster but together we go further.

EAP COUNSELORS

SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



**Jared Belsher – Supervisor
MA, LCPC, NCC**

Jared is a licensed clinical professional counselor (LCPC) and national certified counselor (NCC) who has worked in outpatient mental health clinics and in private

practice since 2007. He received a bachelor's Degree in Political Science and a master's Degree in Community Counseling from Northern Arizona University. His approach to counseling is strength-based, which means that rather than dwelling on

things that are wrong, he focuses on the strength individuals have, and how they can use those strengths to overcome their obstacles. He uses a person-centered approach and additional counseling techniques such as cognitive-behavioral

therapy (CBT) to help clients discover healthier ways to cope and think about a problem.

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FORGIVENESS IS THE VIRTUE OF THE BRAVE – Indira Gandhi

“To the most terrifying thing is to accept oneself completely”
– Carl Jung

We often think forgiveness is something we offer to others, which while true, it is often a gift we give ourselves. I think most of us know what the concept of forgiving is, it can be quite another thing to know how to offer it to others and ourselves. There are many models of forgiveness, I will share one as described by Professor Everett Worthington. It may help first to clarify what forgiveness is and isn't.

Robert Enright describes forgiveness as “the foregoing of resentment or revenge when the wrongdoer's actions deserve it, and instead giving the offender gifts of mercy, generosity, and love. In other words, when people forgive, they give up the anger to which they are entitled and give to the offender a gift to which they are not entitled.” Forgiveness is *NOT* forgetting, suppressing feelings, demanding an apology, or necessarily reconciliation.

Worthington offers the REACH model for forgiving those who have hurt us.

Recall the hurt. To heal, we need to accept that we have been hurt and identify the hurtful events and the impacts they have had on our lives.

Empathize with your offender. This one can be very hard to do especially with someone who has harmed us. Essentially, it means putting ourselves in their shoes. An exercise that may help with this is having an imaginary conversation with the offender, sharing all you need to say about how they have hurt and impacted you, then switching spots and seeing what the person would say back to you about what they have done to harm you.

Altruistic gift. Offering forgiveness as a sheer act of altruism, no strings attached. Most of us can recall times when we have been offered this gift or other forms of help when we didn't 'deserve' it.

Commit to forgiveness. It can help to write ourselves a note stating the offenders name and

that we forgive them as a concrete step to holding onto our act of forgiveness.

Hold onto forgiveness. We write notes of forgiveness because we will be tempted to doubt that we really forgave and sometimes need to reassert that decision over and over again. For many, forgiving others can be far easier than forgiving ourselves. Some steps toward self-forgiveness can include the following:

Repair relationships. True to the 12-step tradition, we make amends to those we harmed, unless doing so would hurt others or ourselves. Offering our amends without explanations, expectations, or excuses can be the first step toward repairing relationships we have injured not only with others but also with ourselves.

Rethink ruminations. Sometimes regret and remorse dominate our thinking and keep us stuck. None of us are beyond making mistakes.

Work toward self-acceptance. Coming to accept ourselves as flawed but worthy of good things, including forgiveness, is key to moving forward and not making similar mistakes again.

Here at the EAP we would be honored to be a part of your journey of forgiveness or whatever else is on your mind.

EAP COUNSELORS

SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Jenny Lee Doty, MSW, LCSW

Jenny Lee has been practicing as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for nearly a decade. She has worked in the mental health field for more than 20 years in a variety of treatment settings including but not limited to schools, day treatment centers, hospitals, and local community agencies. Jenny Lee has provided treatment to children, pre-teens and teens, and adults in individual, group, and family settings.

Jenny Lee is skilled in working with complex family units, emotional and behavioral issues, trauma, depression, mood disorders, anxiety, co-occurring diagnosis, psychotic disorders, self-harm, suicidal ideation, gangs, and those involved with foster care and Child Protective Services. Jenny Lee practices from a strength-based approach to treatment, while using a combination of interventions tailored to meet each individual's needs.



Melissa Young, MSW, LCSW

Melissa has been a Mental Health Professional for 30+ years having the opportunity to serve in a variety of mental health settings, with diverse client populations, working in various roles. As a Clinical Social Worker she has had the opportunity to work with survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence; as an Outpatient Psychotherapist within a Community Mental Health Center; a Peace Corps Volunteer in Asuncion, Paraguay; Hospice Social Worker; and currently working as a Counselor at the Saint Alphonsus Employee Assistance Program and Safe Connections LLC. She employs an eclectic approach to her work with clients, believing that a trusting and supportive relationship is key to any therapeutic success. In addition to her professional life, she is a mother of three sons and is a proud dog, cat, chicken and horse owner.

Saint Alphonsus Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Regular Appointment Hours:
9:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m., Monday-Friday
(special appointment hours by request)

Phone: (208) 367-3300

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