



Suicide Prevention Training

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NC Lawyer Assistance Program
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Viewer Discretion Advised

The following presentation and video involves discussion of serious mental health circumstances including suicide. If you have experienced trauma, loss, or other difficulties involving depression or suicide and are unsure if stories on these topics might cause you distress, please consider taking steps to prepare yourself before viewing this presentation and film.

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Some Quick Statistics

- 48,000 completed suicides a year in US
- Approx 25 attempts per documented death (1,400,000 attempts per year)
- Since 2018, 2.5 times the rate of death by suicide than by homicide
- Suicide is 3rd leading cause of death for lawyers, both nationally and in NC
- Women attempt more; men complete more

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Alcohol & Drugs a Huge Factor

- Alcohol & drugs are more of an indicator than depression
- In one study, as many as 97.7% of completed suicides tested positive for alcohol, marijuana, cocaine or heroin
- Most studies confirm numbers at or higher than 75%

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Direct Clues and Cues

- Any mention or discussion in the open of suicide should be taken seriously and steps should be taken to get the lawyer help immediately – even if he or she has been talking about suicide for months or years.
- Many stories.

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Indirect Clues and Cues

- “I just want out.”
- “You won’t have to worry about me.”
- “I won’t be around.”
- “Who cares if I am dead anyway?”
- “I can’t go on like this.”
- “Everyone will be better off without me.”

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Behavioral Clues and Cues

- Acquiring a gun or stockpiling pills.
- Getting personal affairs in order.
- Assigning/Giving away legal work to others for no apparent reason.
- Giving away prized possessions.
- A relapse after a prolonged period of sobriety.

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Situational Clues and Cues

- Diagnosis w/ a serious or terminal illness
- Loss of a major relationship
- Death of a spouse, child, best friend, esp. if by suicide
- Fear of becoming a burden to others
- Being fired*
- Anticipated loss of financial security*
- Threat of incarceration*

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*Lawyer-Specific Situations

- A lawyer's reputation and job are the last thing to go. If those are threatened, whether via malpractice claims or discipline, suicide becomes an option.

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Asking the Question

- Be direct
- Allow for silence
- Be prepared for the possibility of "yes"
- Asking the question will not push someone over the edge

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Protective Factors

- Hope
- Medication compliance
- Sobriety
- Positive self esteem
- Love for family
- Responsibility for family, esp. kids
- Obligation to others
- Good friends
- A therapist/counselor
- A support network
- Difficult access
- Faith/religious beliefs
- Good health
- Pets
- Calm environment

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What about liability?

- The **Good Samaritan Act** offers legal protection to people who give reasonable assistance to those who are, or whom they believe to be injured, ill, imperiled, or otherwise incapacitated.
- Lay person, acting in good faith, not being compensated, is immune from liability.

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Fear of Stigma vs Actual Stigma

- In our experience with our volunteers, they are never stigmatized for seeking help or openly sharing their stories.
- Yet fear of stigma remains the single greatest barrier to lawyers seeking help.

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Crisis Resources

- 911 – ask for a CIT trained Officer (CIT = Crisis Intervention Team)
- 741741 Text Crisis Line
- 1-800-273-TALK (8255) National Suicide Hotline
- 1-888-628-9454 Spanish Suicide Hotline

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In case you need to reach us

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Thank you!

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