Suicide can be an uncomfortable topic of discussion, but the more knowledgeable we are about suicide, the more we are able to support others in distress. Let’s talk about it.

**MYTH:** Talking about suicide will increase the risk of someone making a suicide attempt.

**FACT:** Talking openly about suicide, without shock or judgment, will convey your genuine concern and serve as an immediate intervention.

**MYTH:** People who attempt suicide will continue to be unwell and suicidal.

**FACT:** This type of thinking perpetuates stigma. The truth is that many individuals who have attempted suicide can make a full recovery with the proper care and support.

**MYTH:** Suicide isn’t common; very few people actually follow through with it.

**FACT:** Suicide claims thousands of lives each year. In the United States, there is one death by suicide every 13 minutes. In Canada, suicide is ranked as the ninth leading cause of death.

**MYTH:** Suicide is more common among low-income individuals.

**FACT:** Suicide shows no prejudice to economic status; it crosses all socio-economic boundaries.
Signs that your co-worker may be experiencing distress:

• Seems to be much more withdrawn or sociable than usual
• Looks worn out or in a daze
• Shows up late, calls in sick frequently, or fails to meet work deadlines
• Is experiencing a difficult situation but seems to be out of touch with reality
• Seems overcome with sadness or despair (cries, seems to be 'elsewhere', ruminates)
• Talks about not being able to do anything about a difficult situation, or says there is 'no way out'
• Is more irritable than usual

Signs that your co-worker may be at risk of suicide:

• Makes references to having found a solution, or talks about how everything will be settled soon and they won’t be bothering people anymore
• Talks directly, or indirectly, about suicidal thoughts
• Suddenly seems happier or carefree, after having gone through a period of despair
• Is suddenly generous, paying off debts, or giving away possessions to co-workers and friends

What can you do?

Start the conversation. If you’re concerned about someone’s well-being, check in with them. Ask honest questions like, “I get the feeling that something’s on your mind. Are you OK?”, or “You really don’t seem like yourself, and I’m concerned. Is everything OK?”

Listen without judgment. Having someone to talk to is very important and can help keep people safe. Never ridicule the person you’re talking to, don’t make them feel guilty, and do not try to fix the problem. The best way to help is to make the person feel understood, so that they know they are not alone.

Encourage professional help. Let the person know that you care about their well-being and encourage them to connect with a professional for help. Let them know that their Assistance Program offers confidential support and is available 24/7/365.

If your friend, family member, or co-worker refuses help, but you are concerned for their safety, call your assistance program for expert advice.

The workplace plays a key role in our physical, emotional, and psychological well-being; a working person spends more waking hours at work than anywhere else during the day.

Co-workers are often the first people to recognize the signs that something may be wrong or that an individual is experiencing mental health problems.