

Suicide

Our Dirty Little Secret

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Class Objectives



- At the conclusion of this session the student will be able to:
 - Evaluate the warning signs of suicide
 - Discuss ways to deal with those thinking of suicide
 - Determine if EMS could make a difference on a suicide call
 - Evaluate who is the real victim of suicides and how to help them

Let's Get Up



Myth OR Reality



- Everyone has mental illness problems at some point.
- Only a small percentage of mental health patients are violent.
- Perfectly healthy people may have symptoms occasionally.

Attitudes Toward Death 1 of 3

- Changes in society have changed people's attitudes toward death.
 - Life expectancy has increased.
 - Family mobility may mean less support for grieving people.



Attitudes Toward Death 2 of 3

- Death no longer occurs at home
 - Rest Homes
 - Accident Scenes
- Dead loved ones now kept at a funeral home instead of at home
 - Making people less familiar with death.



Attitudes Toward Death 3 of 3

- Death is something we all have to face.
- Coming to grips with death is part of delivering care.



REASONS FOR SUICIDE (1 OF 2)

- DEPRESSION
- FAMILY LOSS
 - Geriatrics?
- JOB LOSS
- DIVORCE
- MONEY PROBLEMS



REASONS FOR SUICIDE (2 OF 2)

- MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
- JUST HAVE TOO MUCH GOING ON
- COMPILATION OF ISSUES
- POOR COPING SKILLS
- ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE



Why Else Might Someone Do This?



Suicide: Things To Remember

- Attempted suicide is a cry for help.
- Immediate intervention is necessary.
- Suicidal patients will usually exhibit warning signs.
 - Let's look at some of them...



SUICIDAL MAY BE CLOSE (1 of 3)

- DISCUSSES IT
- NOTE WRITTEN
- PLAN IN PLACE
- HANDS YOU IMPORTANT ITEMS
- PAST HISTORY
 - Attempts or Destructive Behavior



Suicide Could Be Imminent (2 OF 3)

- HANDS YOU GUN
- WANTS TO MEET FACE TO FACE
- AFFAIRS IN ORDER
- UNREASONABLE DEMANDS
- WANTS TO SEE ESTRANGED FAMILY



The Pressure Is On (3 of 3)

- Vacant look or stare
- Avoids eye contact
- Air of tearfulness or sadness
- Deep despair
- Avoids talking about the future



Suicide By Cop?

- This is a reality you will be faced with.
- Are there any warning signs?
- What is the Officer thinking?

WHAT DO I SAY

- ARE YOU GOING TO COMMIT SUICIDE?
- DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?
- DO YOU HAVE A WEAPON?
 - WHERE IS IT?
- HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT?
 - FAMILY
 - CLOSED CASKET VS VIEWING
 - LOSS OF LIFE INSURANCE



What Do I Do? (1 of 3)

- Be prepared to spend extra time
- Get a plan of action worked out
- Identify yourself
- Assess and reassess the scene
 - Scene Safety Is Imperative To YOU



Can I Do More? (2 of 3)

- Avoid getting too close
- Stay with the patient
- Avoid fighting with
 - Patient
 - Family



Helpful Items (3 of 3)

- Express interest in patient
- Stay CALM
- Be Direct and Honest
 - But Reassure
- Never Judge
 - Walk A Mile Theory



It's Too Late

- Who is the real victim of suicide?
- Our profession is not immune.



Suicide Hits Close To Home

- Who knew or knows someone?
- What were the warning signs?
- What could we have done?



Dealing With The Shock (1 of 2)

- Do helpful things
- Make simple suggestions
- Be Honest
- Act calm



Dealing With Family (2 of 2)

- Be yourself and sincere
- Avoid sad and grim comments
- Orient family to procedures
- Not the time for a case of the giggles



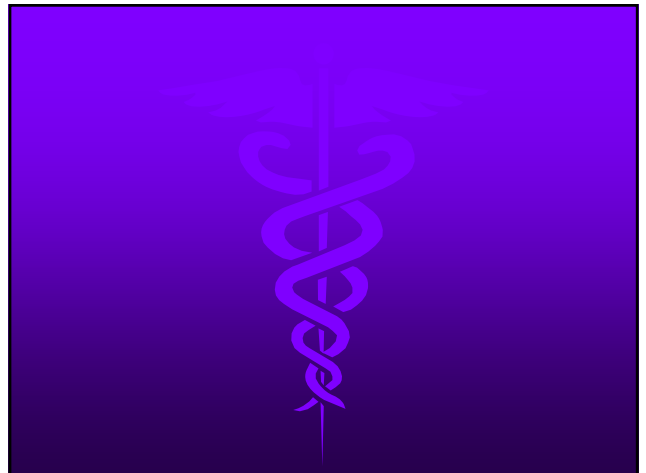
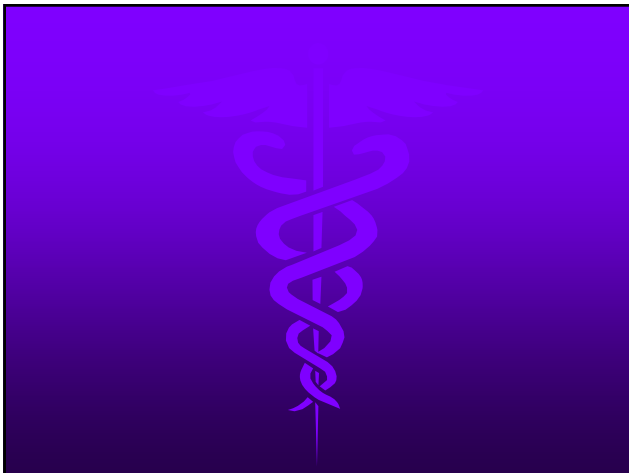
Grieving Process

1. **Denial:** Refusal to accept, "Not me"
2. **Anger:** Blaming others or "why me"
3. **Bargaining:** Promise to change, "Ok but let me..."
4. **Depression:** Open expression of grief, "OK, but I haven't..."
5. **Acceptance:** The simple "yes", "OK, I'm not afraid"



A Case History

- History of Mental Illness
- Son also has History
- Suicide Pact
- Warning: This is graphic!



Can The Incident Affect You?

- It almost goes without saying



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN YOU

- Feeling of guilt
- Feeling of helplessness
- Anxiousness
- Inability to Concentrate
- Inability to make decisions
- Loss of appetite
- Over eating
- Loss of interest in work
- Loss of interest in sexual activities
- Irritable
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs

Taking Care Of #1

- CISD
- Nutrition/Water/Fluid
- Change of stations
- Talk to your partner
- Change shift hours
- Balance time and time to self
- Date night
- Call your mom



In Summary

- Life Is Short
- Live Everyday Like It May Be Your Last
- Bring Everyone Around You Up
- SMILE EVERYDAY
- REMEMBER:
• You Can Only CHANGE...
What You CONTROL



Does Time Allow?

- Magic Carpet Ride
- Take Care Of Your Mind



Thanks

- Thank You
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