

# SUICIDE PREVENTION

## While Providing Services Remotely

### The Zero Suicide Team would like to thank you for the treatment, compassion and support you provide to the people we serve.

During this extraordinary time, as you continue to support both people we serve and your loved ones, please remember to check in with yourself and ensure you are prioritizing your well-being. The good advice, coping skills and compassion we offer others are also important to direct back toward ourselves.

#### SELF-CARE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Get adequate sleep**
- **Eat healthy meals**
- **Stay hydrated**
- **Exercise**
- **Limit time watching the news.** Consider setting a certain number of hours a day or a couple times each day to watch the news and then spend time watching other shows that elicit less stressful emotions like comedies, romantic comedy movies, etc. Also, turn off the tv and read books, do word searches, cook, exercise, focus on hobbies, etc. Try to prioritize and engage in activities that enhance personal well-being.
- **Limit social isolation while adhering to physical distancing recommendations.** Especially now that the Stay At Home order has been enacted, there is not a time more important than now to remain in contact with friends, loved ones, colleagues and others with shared interests and values. We encourage the use of the phrase “physical distancing” versus “social distancing” as the main goal is to maintain physical distance from people so that we prevent the virus from spreading while staying connected socially with family, friends and professionals.
- **Utilize myStrength.** myStrength is a web and mobile resource full of personalized tools to improve your mood and help with stress, depression, anxiety, substance use

and more. Sign up at [myStrength.com](https://myStrength.com) and use access code: *Wellness* to set up an employee personal account. The people we serve and community members can benefit from this tool as well. Check out the *All Staff Well-Being channel on Teams* for more access codes.

- **Complete the Science of Well-Being Course.** This free 10-week course is designed to increase your own happiness and build more productive habits. Sign up at [coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being](https://coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being)



#### THINGS TO REMEMBER:

When working with the people we serve and our friends or loved ones who may be a higher risk for suicide, it's important to remember:

#### Warning signs that someone may be considering suicide:

- **If a person talks about:** feeling hopeless, feeling overwhelmed and frightened, expressing no reason to live, believing they are a burden to others, unable to articulate any future-oriented goals, feeling trapped, experiencing unbearable emotional and/or physical pain, or stating explicit threats about wanting to die.
- **Behaviors:** Increased use of alcohol or drugs; impulsive behaviors; looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods; obtaining means;

withdrawing from activities; isolating from family and friends; sleeping too much or too little; saying goodbye; getting their affairs in order; giving away prized possessions; aggression/agitation/volatile behaviors.

- **Moods:** depression, anxiety, loss of interest, irritability, humiliation/shame, agitation/anger, relief/sudden improvement.

If you see any of these warning signs, have a compassionate conversation with the person. If they need emergency services or crisis services, please provide the person with the *Colorado Crisis Services* information:

- **Call 844-493-8255**
- **Text TALK to 38255**
- **Visit a Walk-In Center** (if not exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms). Walk-In Center locations are listed on [coloradocrisisservices.org](https://coloradocrisisservices.org).



Provide them with other online resources, such as [nowmattersnow.org](https://nowmattersnow.org).

#### **Specific recommendations for working with people at higher risk of suicide:**

- **Columbias:** Be mindful of the people on your caseload that are on the Suicide Prevention Pathway (SPP) and continue to complete a Columbia with them at every interaction.
- **Well-Being Action Plan:** Use the Well-being Action Plan as a tool during this time with the people on the SPP and with all the people on your caseload.
- **Means Restriction/Reduction:** Pay attention to helping the person secure means for anyone expressing any type of suicidality. Consider taking the Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM) training, if you haven't already or as a refresher:  
<https://training.sprc.org/enrol/index.php?id=20>

- **Review the Risk View** in the Electronic Health Record on a regular basis; update as appropriate.
- **Caring Contacts:** Since we can't mail caring contact postcards at this time, still convey to the people you serve that you care for them and are grateful you can stay connected to them during this unusual time via phone and teleconference. It is important to discuss the difference between "social distancing" and "physical distancing."
- **Protective Factors:** The heart of any intervention is to help instill hope – and protective factors do just that – instill hope. It is important to integrate these into all areas of work with people we serve, especially during these times of required "social distancing." Examples of internal protective factors include self-esteem, confidence, hope for the future, future-oriented goals, survival, problem-solving, coping skills and spirituality. External protective factors include supportive friends and family, access to professional help, pets, community connections, faith communities, positive peer relationships, work/school interests and success.
- **Substance Use:** A dynamic risk factor and warning sign for suicide is substance use. Given many recovery models focus on social connection, people struggling with and recovering from problematic substance use are particularly vulnerable during this time of social/physical distancing. It is recommended that we all have a heightened awareness of someone's change in behavior related to substance use (e.g., relapse, increased use) during this time of increased emotional vulnerability. If someone is at higher risk for suicide, a change in their behavior related to substance use may heighten their risk to engage in suicidal behavior.
- **Please remember** the importance of identifying/updating the physical address (if available), as well as email address, when delivering telehealth (especially for people on the SPP) in case a crisis arises. Consider confirming emergency contacts and any other supports that are available for the same reason.

#### **MORE INFORMATION:**

For additional resources please utilize the *Zero Suicide InSite* page: <https://mentalhealthcenter.sharepoint.com/teams/RiskManagement/SitePages/ZeroSuicide.aspx>

