

You're Not Alone

A mental health and suicide prevention blog for the construction industry



The Warning Signs of Suicide

by Bob Swanson

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It is estimated there are well over 1 million attempted suicides in the United States each year. There are nearly 700,000 visits to hospital emergency rooms each year due to a suicide attempt. As a result of the stigma and shame of suicide, many attempts are unreported or misreported. Approximately 90 percent of those who attempt suicide will not make a further attempt. Attempted suicides, however, do have a lasting impact on the person involved, their family, friends and coworkers.

There are many clues of an impending suicide, and all of these clues should be taken very seriously. Some clues are subtle cries for help, and others are more obvious. A subtle clue might be the statement, "Who cares if I'm dead anyway," or "I'm tired of life and I just can't go on." A more direct clue might be the statement, "I wish I were dead," or "I've decided to kill myself."

In addition to statements such as these, many times there are noticeable changes in a person's behavior such as the following:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious, agitated or reckless
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing from family or friends
- Decreased productivity
- Decreased problem solving ability

All of these clues exhibit a loss of hope in the future. In addition, a recent report from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), indicated that 29.4 percent of suicides in 2015 took place within two weeks of a life-changing event relating to a partner relationship, a health issue, a financial issue or a job-related issue. These type of events exhibit not only a loss of hope in the future but also a loss of individual control.

When we notice a person is bleeding or having difficulty breathing, it is obvious they are having a crisis and immediate action is required. Unfortunately, signs of a mental crisis are not as noticeable, but immediate action is still required. Hopefully you will now be more aware of some warning signs of a potential suicide. In next month's blog, I will discuss possible action steps for you to take.



About the Author - Bob Swanson

Bob Swanson is the past president of Swanson & Youngdale and the first Chairman of FCA International. He tragically lost his son Michael to suicide on March 13, 2009 at the age of 33. Bob now focuses his efforts on creating awareness of the impact of mental health and suicide in the construction industry.

Find more of Bob's blogs at:

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