

Kerry Webb, Nurse Consultant, Suicide Prevention Lead, Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health NHS Trust.

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Due to unforeseen circumstances, the numbers were low for the workshop. However the discussion which this allowed was rich and valuable.

Attendees began by explaining their interest in being at the workshop specifically.

There was personal experience from almost all there, one supporting 2 suicidal people in the recent past. One of the supported individuals were having suicidal thoughts & the other one took their own life. The impact of this on the attendee was clear.

The importance of asking the BIG question first was discussed – ‘Are you thinking of hurting yourself or someone else?’

Kerry gave an overview of suicide rates, risk factors, how to spot the signs and the resources available. The annual cost to the UK of suicide is estimated to be £1.67m (2009).

The National Confidential Inquiry into suicides were discussed, looking at numbers in the general population and mental health services, as well as thoughts on why the suicide rates in Scotland may be lower.

There was a more general discussion about why certain geographical areas have higher incidences of suicide than others.

Middle aged men are the highest risk category, so employers in these areas need to be aware of this.

As part of the confidential inquiry, common methods of ending life are also captured. Social adversity, such as living alone, being unemployed or newly arrived in the UK are also big factors in suicide.

Employment is a big area in people’s lives and as they are affected by family events, stress, change, restructures, financial uncertainty, job security etc, it is important that employers consider safety plans, not only for their employees but the organisation as well.

Personal safety plan which is collaborative & considers history, access to means, current plans etc are effective.

It was clear that many representatives undertake interventions as part of their role but very few have been given the specific tools to look after their colleagues or themselves effectively.

Kerry revealed an easy way to remember how to spot the signs of someone who may be considering suicide as follows:

Is Path Warm?

I ideation
S substance use
P purposelessness
A anxiety
T trapped
H hopelessness
W withdrawn
A anger
R recklessness
M mood change

Resources

[Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training \(ASIST\)](#)

A Manager's Guidebook to Suicide Postvention (see link)

Supporting someone in the Workplace at risk of suicide (see link)

[Support after suicide](#) (local search for support available)

International Association for Suicide Prevention (see link)

[Comprehensive Blueprint for Workplace Suicide Prevention](#)

[Workplace Bullying](#)

[Spot the Signs and Save a Life](#)