**Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Provider**

**Educational/Process Group Activity**

**Objectives:**

1. Clients will understand warning signs of suicide and how to recognize them.
2. Clients will explore their own, as well as hear from others, coping strategies and sources of support.
3. Clients will learn what a safety plan is.

**Time:** 45 – 90 minutes

**Materials:**

1. [Know the Signs Brochure](https://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/suicide-prevention-brochure-english) or the website: www.suicideispreventable.org
   1. The brochure and other suicide prevention materials in multiple languages can be downloaded for free at EMMResourceCenter.org or requested (while supplies last) by emailing info@suicideispreventable.org.
2. [Safety Plan Template Handout](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Brown_StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf)

**Additional Materials & Activities:**

1. Watch the Directing Change Film, [“Signs”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JntB4ah4cF8%20) , a 60-second film create by youth about the warning signs of suicide.
2. Play [Suicide Prevention Bingo](https://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/reconozca-las-senales-loteria), a group activity that provides information about mental health and suicide prevention.
3. Go through the [Suicide Prevention Prezi](https://prezi.com/ylfd5bxixy5v/directing-change-2017-suicide-prevention-101/) or [lesson plan](https://www.directingchangeca.org/schools/) which both cover Suicide Prevention for youth or young adults, or utilize the Suicide Prevention 101 slide template for adults.

**Education (General) Talking Points:**

Before you begin the group, provide each client with a Know the Signs Brochure.

* Today you will be discussing and learning about recognizing warning signs of suicide and how to appropriately respond to a friend, family member or to be there for ourselves if help is needed. By the end of the session, each person will know what a safety plan is and have an idea for what their own would look like.
* Suicide can be prevented. Most of us have been touched by the tragedy of suicide. We may have lost someone close to us or been moved by the loss of someone we may have never met. For example, when Robin Williams died in 2014 millions of people felt intense grief. When a suicide happens, those left behind often experience deep shock. Even if they knew the person was struggling, they may not have expected suicide would be the result.
* Each of us can support someone while *they* find their reasons for living by sharing hope and letting them know they are not alone. Our role is less about “fixing the problem” or convincing them to stay, and more about being present and listening as they search for their own reasons for living. It’s important to remember that people who are thinking about suicide often don’t want to die, they just don’t want to go on living with the pain. If that’s the case, we need to talk about the pain and also help them identify reasons for living and hope. At it’s core suicide prevention is about hope outweighing pain.
* Most suicide crises are short-lived. Recognizing when a crisis is emerging, keeping yourself or a loved one safe, and knowing when to ask for help can make the difference between life and death. This group is about how you can keep yourself or someone you care about safe during an emotional crisis.

**Education (Warning Signs & Helping Someone Else) Talking Points:**

1. Read through the [Know the Signs Brochure](https://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/suicide-prevention-brochure-english) (or one of the additional resources provided such as the Suicide Prevention 101 slide deck)

OR

1. Go through the [Suicide is Preventable Website](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/) in the following order: know the signs, find the words, reach out.

**Group Discussion Questions:**

Depending on the time allotted, choose 5 – 7 of the questions below for group discussion.

1. What are some of the warning signs that someone might be thinking about suicide? Consider thoughts, feeling and observable behaviors.
2. What are some things you can do to take your mind off your problems for a while without contacting another person? They don't have to be solutions to your problems, but things that can help you feel more calm, relaxed, or at ease in the present moment.
3. What are some people and settings that can provide distraction?
4. What are some people that you can ask for help?
5. What are some professionals or agencies that you could contact during a crisis?
6. What would be helpful things someone might do or say if you were feeling suicidal?
7. How would you ask someone you were concerned about if they were thinking about suicide? What would you do next?

**Education (Safety Plan) Talking Points:**

Provide each client with a Safety Plan Template Handout.

* A safety plan is a written list of coping strategies and sources of support that can be used by individuals who are at a high risk of suicide.
* The safety plan is best to be created while you are feeling well and can think clearly, rather than waiting until you are actively suicidal.
* The first step in creating your safety plan is to familiarize yourself with the types of situations, images, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that might precede or accompany suicidal urges for you.
* Secondly, you’ll create a list of activities that can be soothing to you when you’re upset.
* You’ll then move on to identify a list of contacts you can talk to if you are unable to distract yourself with self-help measures. List names, phone numbers, or other contact information and be sure to have backups in case your first or second choices are unavailable. This will also include professionals or professional organizations.
* Once completed, you should put your safety plan in writing and keep it in a place where you can easily find it should the need arise.

**Group Activity:**

* Spend 5 – 10 minutes taking some time to write out your own coping skills and resources.

**Conclusion Talking Points:**

* Suicide is preventable. Everyday friends, family and co-workers struggle with emotional pain. And for some, including ourselves, it can be difficult to talk about the pain but if we are able to recognize the warning signs and reach out for help, we have the power to save a life.

**Follow-Up:** Have each individuals counselor follow up with them in their next session to touch base and discuss their patient safety plan.

**Resources:**

Know the Signs Campaign [website](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/) and [resource center](https://emmresourcecenter.org/)

National Suicide Prevention: [Patient Safety Plan Template](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Brown_StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf)

Suicide Prevention Resource Center: [Safety Planning Guide: A Quick Guide for Clinicians](https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/safety-planning-guide-quick-guide-clinicians)

Suicide Safety Plan: [Safety Planning Intervention](http://suicidesafetyplan.com/Home_Page.html)

Suicide Prevention MY3 APP: [MY3APP](https://my3app.org/)