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# STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

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Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

## Understanding Suicide: Awareness, Action & Support

September is Suicide Prevention Month, a time to come together as a campus community to raise awareness, foster hope, and strengthen our commitment to mental health and well-being. Suicide affects individuals, families and communities, and while the topic can be difficult to discuss, open conversations and informed support can help save lives.

### ■ INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

- 1 in 20 U.S. adults (5%) have serious thoughts of suicide each year.
- About 1 person dies by suicide in the U.S. every 11 minutes.
- 79% of all people who die by suicide in the U.S. are male. (Although more women than men attempt suicide, men are 4 times more likely to die by suicide.)
- In the U.S., suicide is the second leading cause of death among people ages 10-14 and among people ages 15-24, and the eleventh leading cause of death overall.

### ■ WARNING SIGNS

Recognizing the signs of suicide is a critical step in providing timely support. Here are several indicators that may signal someone is at risk:

- Increased alcohol and drug use
- Aggressive behavior
- Withdrawal from friends, family and community
- Dramatic mood swings
- Impulsive or reckless behavior

Suicidal behaviors are a psychiatric

emergency. Seek immediate help from a health care provider or contact a suicide crisis resource (see box on page 2) if you or a loved one starts to take any of the following steps:

- Collecting and saving pills or buying a weapon
- Giving away possessions
- Tying up loose ends, like organizing personal papers or paying off debts
- Saying goodbye to friends and family

### ■ SUPPORT IN A CRISIS

When a suicide-related crisis occurs, friends and family are often caught off-guard, unprepared and unsure of what to do. The behaviors of a person



experiencing a crisis can be unpredictable, changing dramatically without warning. There are a few ways to approach a suicide-related crisis:

- Talk openly and honestly. Don't be afraid to ask questions like: "Do you have a plan for how you would kill yourself?"
- Remove means such as guns, knives or stockpiled pills.
- Calmly ask simple and direct questions, like "Can I help you call your psychiatrist?"
- If there are multiple people around, have one person speak at a time.
- Express support and concern.
- Don't argue, threaten or raise your voice.
- Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong.
- If you're nervous, try not to fidget or pace.
- Be patient.

### ■ UAB RESOURCES

The UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center (EACC) offers free, confidential support services for UAB employees and members of their immediate household. The EACC's dedicated team of certified counselors and an extensive collection of available services are designed to help



you identify, understand and resolve work-related and personal issues to help you achieve a successful work/life integration.

### SUICIDE CRISIS RESOURCES

- ▶ **Birmingham Crisis Center:**  
205-323-7777
- ▶ **National 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:**
  - Call or text 988
  - Chat online at 988lifeline.org
- ▶ **Crisis Text Line:**  
Text "UAB" to 741741
- ▶ **Alabama Domestic Violence Hotline:**  
1-800-650-6522

Visit the EACC online at [uab.edu/eacc](https://uab.edu/eacc) to make an appointment.

The EACC also offers virtual suicide prevention training. QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention offers hope through positive action. As a trained QPR Gatekeeper, you will learn to recognize the warning signs of people in trouble, and will have the tools to act vigorously to possibly prevent a suicide.

### Upcoming Sessions:

- September 4, 8:30-10 a.m.
- September 9, 3:30-5 p.m.
- September 16, 3:30-5 p.m.
- September 25, 8:30-10 a.m.

Visit [go.uab.edu/EACC-Calendar](https://go.uab.edu/EACC-Calendar) and select a date to register.