

Balanced LIVING

HELPING SOMEONE WHO IS SUICIDAL

Suicide can often take friends and family by surprise. However, in many cases, people give clues that they are thinking of taking their own life. If you are aware of these red flags, you could help the person seek help early and prevent the individual from going into crisis.

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

If you hear someone talk of ending their life or causing harm to themselves, or if you see the person give away prized possessions, the individual may be crying out for help. These, along with the following behaviors, can be warning signs that a person is contemplating suicide and should be taken very seriously. If you or someone you know exhibits any of these warning signs, seek the guidance of a professional.

- ▣ Looking for ways to kill themselves (searching online or buying a gun).
- ▣ Talking about being hopeless or having no reason to live.
- ▣ Talking about being trapped or in unbearable pain.
- ▣ Increasing use of alcohol or drugs.
- ▣ Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly.
- ▣ Acting out, showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- ▣ Withdrawing or isolating themselves.
- ▣ Extreme mood swings.
- ▣ Talking about being a burden to others.

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RISK FACTORS OF SUICIDE

There are risk factors that may increase a person's likelihood of considering, attempting or committing suicide. They can't cause or predict a suicide attempt, but they are important to be aware of:

- ❑ Alcoholism or substance use disorders.
- ❑ History of trauma or abuse.
- ❑ Mental disorders, particularly mood disorders.
- ❑ Loss of relationship(s).
- ❑ Previous suicide attempt(s).
- ❑ Terminal illness or chronic pain.
- ❑ Job or financial loss.
- ❑ Easy access to lethal means.
- ❑ Lack of healthcare, especially mental health and substance abuse treatment.
- ❑ Exposure to others who have died by suicide (in real life or via media/Internet).

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS SUICIDAL

Take warning signs and risk factors seriously: If you see a friend or family member exhibit them, share your concerns with someone who can help. Ask direct questions of the person you suspect may be suicidal:

- 1 Do you feel there's no other way out?
- 2 Do you plan to commit suicide?
- 3 If so, what is your plan?

If the person indicates they are suicidal, stay calm. Don't try to talk them out of it, but do try to make a deal: Have the person agree that he or she will not try anything until talking to you or another trusted person first. From there, seek help of a family member, counselor, teacher, or suicide prevention hotline immediately. Try to have someone stay

with the suicidal person until an intervention from a professional happens. Show compassion, care, and understanding, even if it is difficult to do so.

IF YOU FEEL SUICIDAL

If you are contemplating suicide, talk to a family member, trusted friend, doctor, Continuum EAP professional or local suicide hotline right away.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline = 24-hour suicide prevention assistance.
1-800-273-TALK

National Hopeline Network = 24-hour suicide crisis support.
1-800-SUICIDE

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Life Advantages ©2019

GETTING A GRIP ON MULTITASKING

A job that requires you to multitask has many facets — and you're responsible for keeping all of them functioning at a high level. Being responsible for a range of activities and projects keeps your job interesting but it also can make you feel overwhelmed.

It takes skill to be successful at a job with many priorities. You must be organized, good at managing time and proficient in setting priorities.

The following recommendations can help you increase your chance of being successful at every aspect of your job.

Analyze

The first step is to analyze your job. You need to know which tasks are required, and how to set priorities in getting them done. You also need to allot the appropriate amount of time to each task. To begin, take two lined pieces of paper and title them Urgent Tasks and Plan-Ahead Tasks.

Urgent Tasks are those that must be done immediately, such as answering the phone, taking

care of customers and dealing with the daily crises that are inevitable. List all of these on a sheet of paper.

Plan-Ahead Tasks are anything you can schedule in advance, such as writing a report, attending a meeting or planning for a new product or service. List all of these on a second piece of paper.

Prioritize

Next, rate the tasks on each page as **A, B or C**, with **A** being the most important ones. This takes some thought, and you may want to get your supervisor's input.

Plan-Ahead tasks that are important for your company's future success also should rate an **A**. These are tasks such as developing a new product or doing market research.

The problem is, these important tasks can easily be set aside to take care of the more pressing ones. But it's essential to find time to do them, or your company's future may be at risk.

Schedule

The next step is to schedule these tasks on your calendar. To make it easier to organize your tasks, use four different colors to highlight them on your two lists, based on their frequencies:

- **Daily Tasks = Yellow**
- **Weekly Tasks = Green**
- **Monthly Tasks = Blue**
- **Yearly Tasks = Pink**

With your calendar and your two pages of tasks, set aside blocks of time for performing each task. Use the same color you used on your lists to highlight on your calendar the block of time for each task. That way, you'll be able to see at a glance if it's a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly task.

First schedule all of your **A** tasks, then the **B**'s, followed by the **C**'s.

Using your calendar enables you to see if you have enough time to do all the tasks assigned to you. More than likely, you'll discover you don't have enough time to do everything, so here are some options:

- **Armed with your task lists and your calendar, go to your supervisor and together work out a doable plan.**
- **Search for ways to do some tasks more efficiently.**
- **Look for unnecessary tasks that can be eliminated. Look at those you rate as C and determine if they're necessary.**

Ensure success

Even after your plan has been put in place, it has to be managed. To do so, check your task list each week for items that can be eliminated or time frames that need to be expanded or shortened. If you do a little fine-tuning, your multiple priorities will cease to be a source of stress or frustration.

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FOR PEACE OF MIND, act instead of react

Some people's lives seem like a soap opera. But though endless crises and confrontations can be entertaining on TV, they make for frustrating, unsatisfying lives. If you'd rather have peace of mind than daily dramas, you need to take charge of the script.

"Learn to act for yourself instead of just responding to what's happening in your life," advises Gretchen Grindle, M.Ed., N.C.C., CEAP, a counselor in Virginia.

Make deliberate choices about how you look at things — and how you want to deal with them.

Most people react without thinking, "especially in situations in which they feel hassled or threatened," says Grindle. "We're constantly responding to stimuli — an annoying co-worker, a whining child, a grumpy spouse. Instead of considering what's really going on or the most constructive way to respond, we often lash out in ways that aren't very helpful."

Of course, this usually results in negative consequences. If another person is involved, the result is likely to be hurt feelings, angry responses or out-and-out resistance.

Even when people are alone, they often let circumstances control them, instead of the other way around. For example, when you're caught in traffic, you feel powerless, so you make yourself miserable with anger or frustration.

"Instead, choose to use the time in a way that builds positive thoughts," says Grindle. "Do relaxation exercises, listen to a book on tape, plan what you'll do the rest of the day. You'll arrive just as soon, and in a much better frame of mind.

"Learn to separate what you can control from what you can't," says Grindle. "You can't control another person, and many situations

are also beyond your power. You can only control how you act, so your focus should be on your contribution."

Act with care and courtesy: To start acting instead of reacting, Grindle says, "reflect on what has been working in your life and what hasn't. In the big picture, has your behavior been getting you where you want to be?"

Here are some more strategies that can help you be more active and less reactive.

- **Make a daily to-do list.** "Start each day by planning what you want to do and setting priorities. Even if you don't get everything done, the process is important," says Grindle. "You're reclaiming control instead of just putting out fires."
- **Maximize your physical health.** Being "all that you can be" increases your confidence and sense of control. A healthful diet, regular physical activity and enough sleep all help you feel up to daily challenges.
- **Get a handle on anger.** You may have a right to be angry, but you don't have a right to act destructively on that feeling. Walk away until you get hold of yourself.
- **Let go of resentment.** Carrying around old grievances is like keeping a 10-pound weight tied around your neck. You don't have to forgive old wrongs, but you can accept them and move on.
- **Learn to listen.** "Listening gives you power because it helps you learn more about the other person. It puts you in a better position to create a win-win situation," says Grindle.
- **Speak respectfully to everyone.** Simple courtesies set the stage for constructive interactions. Consider how others will respond to what you're about to say. If it's likely to cause hurt or anger, find a more positive way to make your point.
- **Give others the benefit of the doubt.** If someone in the express checkout line has a couple of extra items, forget it. If you make it your problem, it will haunt you the rest of the day.
- **Count your blessings.** Reminding yourself about the good things in your life is a great way to feel more competent — and confident.

"Most people today lead lives that are ripe for stress," says Grindle. "Take time to claim some happiness — kiss your spouse, hug your children. Whatever else you need to do, this is a very important action to take."