



Nottingham Trent
University

An Organisational Response to Suicide Prevention & Postvention

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Why we need prevention & postvention



Figures by workplace can be difficult.

ONS (2024) publishes occupational figures up to 2022, e.g. indicating 7 deaths in fire service officers, up to 22 police officers or PCSO & 2-3 senior staff each year.

Different professions can have characteristics which increase suicide risk e.g.

- Men are three times more likely to die from suicide e.g. 80% of staff in Fire and Rescue Services and 65% of police officers are men (Home Office, 2024)
- People who work in the emergency services, especially front-line and call centre staff, experience high exposure to suicidal behaviour, e.g. FRS had over 3000 'Suicide/attempt' incidents in 2023 (Home Office, 2024).
- Exposure and witnessing of suicide increases the risk of suicidal behaviour & has ongoing impacts on personal and professional life, mental health, and emotional distress.
- Appropriate response and support can prevent adverse outcomes.

How organisations (and people) may act

Minimal communications or information

Business as Usual

Hyper-vigilance

Simplify the reason: 'Not to do with work'

'Nothing we could have done'

Count the numbers

Focus on process [but not people]





Managers Guide: Six questions



Am I cultivating a compassionate culture in which people feel safe to talk about their personal experiences and concerns?

Do I understand experiences of suicide?

How am I facilitating staff engagement in appropriate training and awareness opportunities?

Where can I refer people to access support?


How am I supporting the development of a suicide prevention organisational culture?

Do I understand how to respond after a death by suicide (postvention)?



How am I supporting the development of a suicide prevention organisational culture?

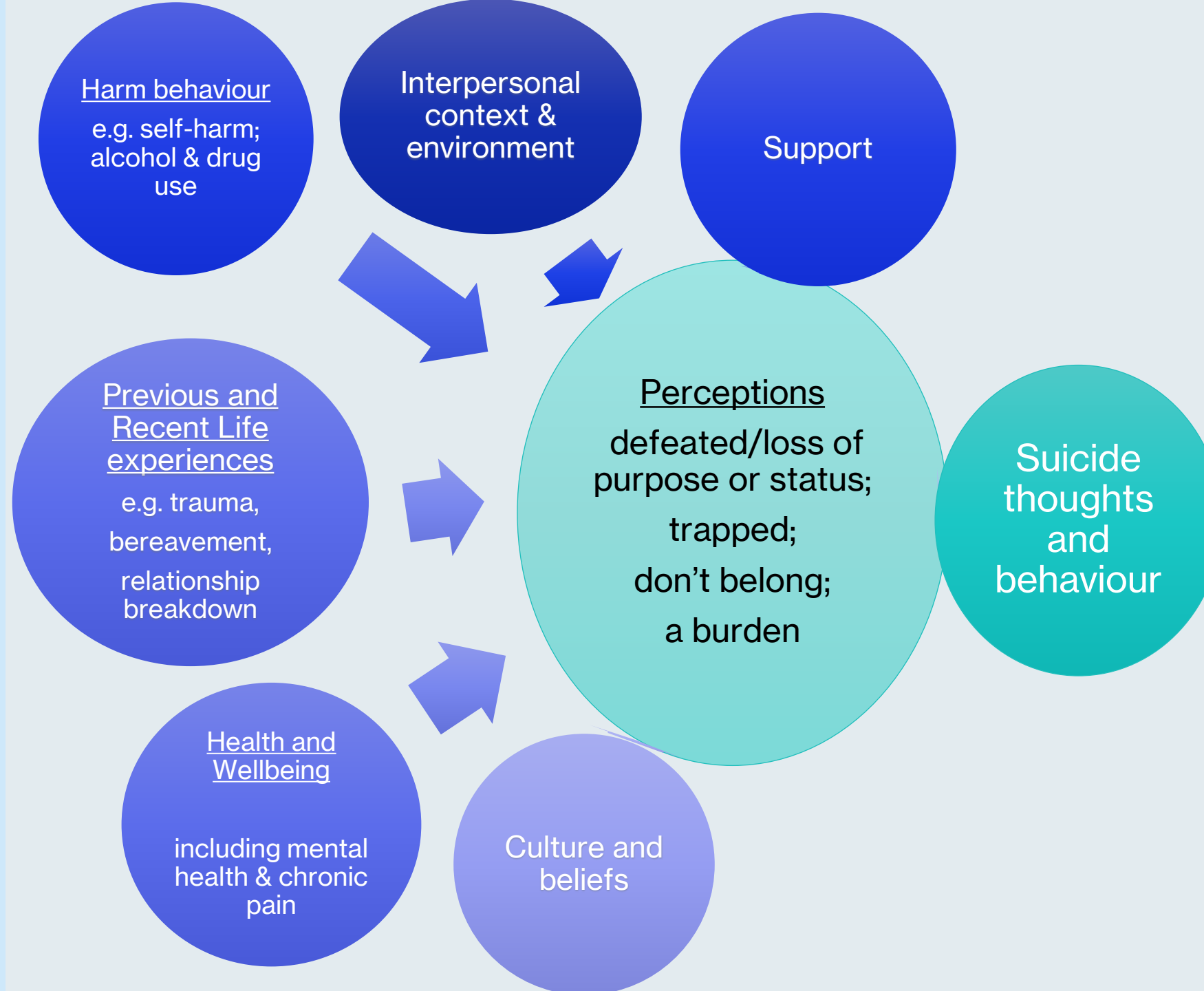


A close-up, low-angle shot of a red and yellow navigation light on a ship's mast. The light is illuminated, casting a warm glow. The background is a dark, textured blue. The image is partially obscured by a white, torn-paper-like border on the right side.

1. Do I understand experiences of suicide?

The 'reasons' are individual and a combination of many factors.

Many routes in means...
... many routes out



Which door?

Pathway is often an accumulation of troubles and perceptions.

Prevention is not only at crisis point – but needs to be ready and confident for when it is.

Suicide can be seen as the only choice – the only door.

The right environment can:


Prevent a crisis developing

Support people to cope, change perceptions & see other door(s).

Provide choices



How well do our current health & wellbeing policies and communications reflect the experience of suicide?



2. Am I cultivating a
compassionate culture in which
people feel safe to talk about their
personal experiences and
concerns?



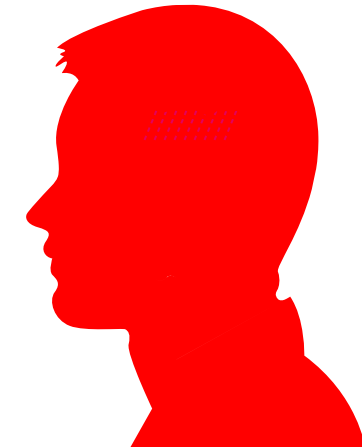
**The best tool we
have is to talk
- and respond well**

Enablers and Barriers



enablers

- Asking directly about suicide
- People and systems being proactive and reaching out
- Include talking about mental health & suicide within routine activities
- Compassionate response



barriers

- Trying to predict suicide with 'screening' tools
- Staff not comfortable talking about suicide [themselves or to others]
- Workplace response after disclosure or suicide attempt.


Fire and Rescue Service

- identification as 'rescuer' can be a barrier

+ tight community can be protective



When and how
often do
conversations about
suicide happen?



3. Where can I refer people to access support?

What does support mean?

The workplace facilitates access across the pathway:

- Crisis support
- Health and Wellbeing
- Life experiences and challenges
- Changing perceptions

and is:

...appropriate to the need

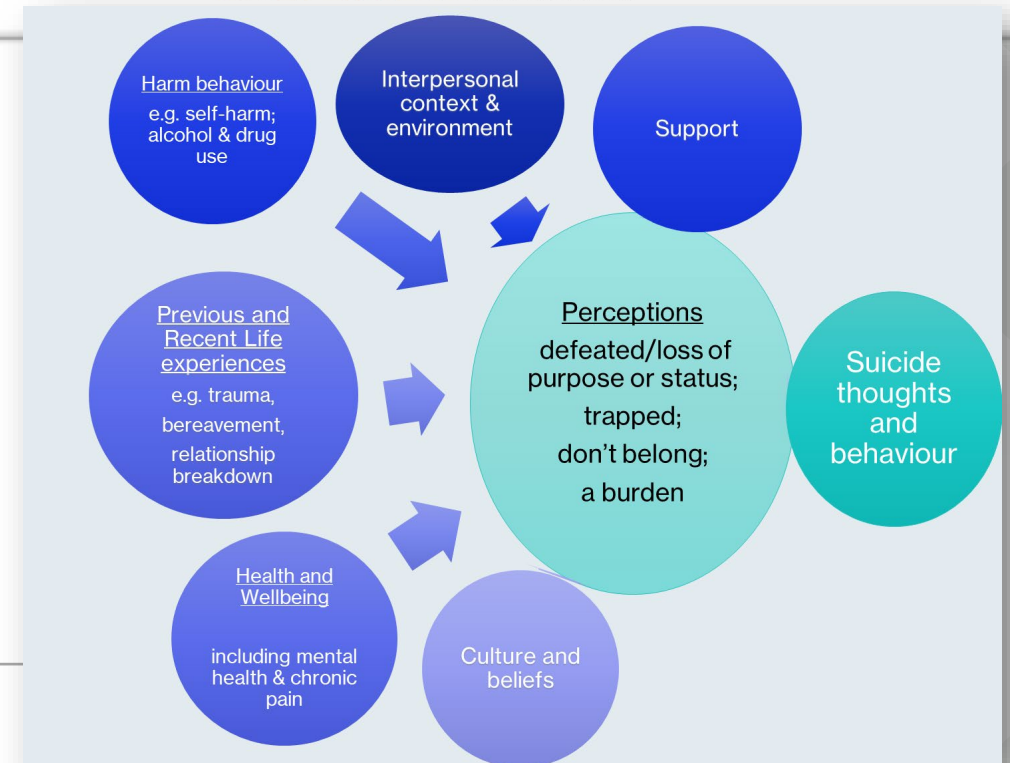
...truly accessible, flexible and choices

.....thinking opt-out as well than opt-in

...informal and formal

...includes local policies and workplace adjustments

The screenshot shows the Fire Fighters Charity website. At the top left is the logo. The main heading is "Suicide prevention". Below it is a paragraph: "Suicide can affect anyone, and anyone might have thoughts about taking their own life. This means it can appear unpredictable and difficult to understand - it isn't caused by any one thing, and there's no 'one size fits all' approach to prevention. But there are things you can do to help." To the right is a photo of two men in conversation. Below the text is a red banner for the "Fire Fighters Charity Crisis Line" with the phone number "0300 373 0896" and a "CALL NOW" button. Below the banner is a section titled "Everyone can help to prevent suicide" with a small photo of a group of people.



Flexible responses to disclosure – I needed to stay connected but they took me ‘off the run’

Manager training as they didn’t understand what I needed & just gave me a phone number

*I knew I needed help, but I felt alone and **wasn't sure where to get it**—for me, the EAP and the GP weren’t very helpful.*

Routine wellbeing checks which understand suicide – I didn’t know how to say...


*I knew he was going through some tough times, but he never said he was struggling & **I wish I’d known to ask.***

Communications which do not sound ‘clinical’– like its my colleague talking to me.



What support pathways exist for employees on the path to suicide?

Are these pathways clearly communicated and easily accessible?



4. How am I facilitating staff engagement in appropriate training and awareness opportunities?

Welcome to My Learning



Active Listening Skills
 COURSE
 This course gives an overview of how to improve your active listening skills and why this is important. It introduces the

Wellbeing in the Workplace
 COURSE
 The Wellbeing in the Workplace Learning Tool combines drama with real life experiences and expert advice - creating a

Not started ★★★★★ 4.57 (7) In progress ★★★★★ 4.56 (27)

Find out more about our courses

Donate >

[Free online training from Zero Suicide Alliance](#)



Suicide Awareness Training – full version (20 minutes)



Suicide Awareness Training – gateway module (5 to 10 minutes)



Social Isolation Training – step-up module



Suicide Awareness Training – Welsh edition



Suicide Awareness Training – university student edition



Suicide Awareness Training – veteran edition

Free introductory & accessible training and guidance is available

About this guide

About this guide

This guide, which has been developed by The Fire Fighters Charity in conjunction with Nottingham Trent University, is designed for managers and people professionals. It is designed to provide an overview of good practice in regard to suicide prevention in the workplace, as well as information on how to respond and work to both suicide risk and events after a suicide (known as postvention).

It is aimed at anyone with supervisory or leadership responsibilities, and it reflects, where evidence is available, on the fire and rescue service (FRS) context. This guide begins by setting the context and importance of these roles in managing suicide prevention and postvention within your organisation.

Would you know how to develop suicide prevention and postvention in the workplace? An essential list of *General Questions for your Organisation* will guide you in shaping the workplace and facilitate appropriate courses of action.

Two detailed checklists for prevention and postvention follow, outlining what to look out for and how to ensure that there is effective leadership and procedures in place. Additional resources for accessing immediate and longer-term support are provided, and reference to additional information, including through The Fire Fighters Charity, to suit your needs.

The Guide's purpose is to provide both managers and people professionals with quick and easy access to information about:

- understanding suicidal thoughts and suicide;
- identifying suicide risk factors and warning signs;
- strengthening protective factors;
- talking about suicide, responding and signposting support;
- building healthy and constructive organisational cultures;
- eliminating stigma;
- using language surrounding suicide responsibly;
- managing after a suicide (postvention); and
- recognising the importance of self-care when supporting others.

This guidance may also be helpful after an attempted suicide.

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How confident are staff in identifying and responding to concerns about suicide?



5. Do I understand how to respond after a death by suicide (postvention)?



After exposure: Personal and Professional

Increased risk of own suicidal behaviour – including on-duty exposure.

Adults bereaved by suicide (family, friend or colleague) were 65% more likely than other sudden death.

One-quarter of people who lost a colleague to suicide report health impacts.

- Anxiety
- Sense of responsibility or guilt - questioning
- Not sure what to do
- Making sense or meaning
- Make assumptions
- Complex grief

Someone I know has died by suicide

Losing a friend, colleague or loved one to suicide can be difficult, and it can bring complicated emotions. This page may help you during this time. It explains what support is available to you or others who've experienced a loss by suicide.



Witnessing or being present at a suicide

Some people, in the course of their lives or job roles, may encounter suicide in action - known as witnessing a suicide. This might involve being present during the suicide, being the first person on the scene after it's happened, or taking a call from someone who's about to attempt suicide.



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Suicide Prevention and Postvention Organisational Culture



Plan

Co-ordinator
Policies
Templates
Guidance
Training/Awareness



Compassion

People-centred
Communication plan
Available support
Safe & Inclusive
Minimise stress
Role-model



Learn

Non-blaming
Collate data
Review: experience,
systems & response
Ask and listen
Embed



Protect

Resources

Suicide Prevention Guidance

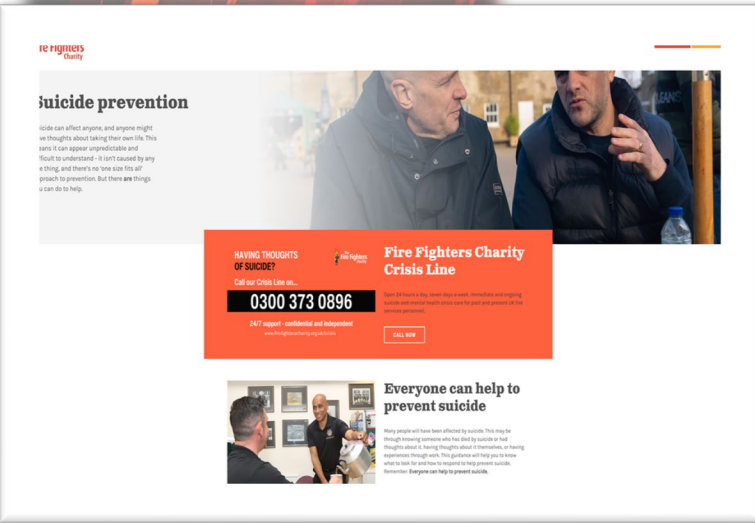


Suicide Postvention Guidance



Fire Fighters Charity

- Crisis Line
- Series of webpages with detailed step-by-step guidance, including four films/ animations covering a range of scenarios.
- Managers and people professionals guide
- Senior Leaders guide in the event of a suicide [postvention]



reigniers
Charity

suicide prevention

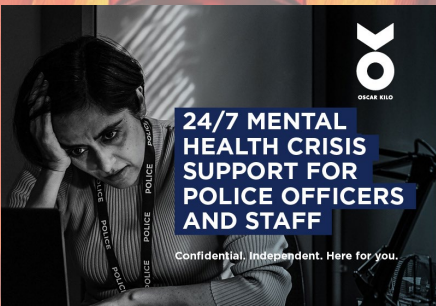
suicide can affect anyone, and anyone might be thinking about taking their own life. This isn't always predictable and it isn't caused by any one thing, and there's no one size fits all approach to prevention. But there are things you can do to help.

Fire Fighters Charity Crisis Line

Call our Crisis Line on...
0300 373 0896

24/7 support - confidential and independent

Everyone can help to prevent suicide



OSCAR KILO

24/7 MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SUPPORT FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND STAFF

Confidential. Independent. Here for you.

[Suicide postvention toolkit section 1 | Oscar Kilo](#)
[Responding to suicide risk in the workplace | CIPD](#)
Suicide Postvention in the workplace (NHS): [Suicide Postvention August 2024.pdf](#)

[Help is at Hand booklet](#) is a resource for people who have been bereaved through suicide or other unexplained death, and for those helping them.
[First Hand](#) is there for anyone affected by witnessing the suicide of a person they did not know.

Thank you

For further information contact:
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[References from this talk are available]

