Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm Risk Management Policy

PRN-178: Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm Risk Management Policy

CAREHOPES™

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1. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES™ is committed to protecting life, promoting wellbeing, and supporting individuals who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts, suicidal behaviours, self-harm risks, emotional distress, mental health crises, or psychological vulnerability.

CAREHOPES™ recognises that suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility and that early recognition, compassionate communication, timely intervention, safeguarding, and appropriate escalation can save lives.

The organisation adopts a proactive, safeguarding-led, trauma-informed, person-centred approach to suicide prevention and self-harm risk management.

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2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote suicide prevention awareness.
- Protect life and wellbeing.
- Support early intervention.
- Strengthen safeguarding practices.
- Improve employee confidence.
- Establish clear escalation procedures.
- Promote compassionate engagement.
- Support employees affected by suicide-related incidents.

- Reduce the risk of harm.

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3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Managers
- Supervisors
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency workers
- Third-party providers

It applies in:

- Client homes
- Community settings
- Supported living environments
- Travel and holiday assignments
- Airport companionship services
- Healthcare environments
- Remote support services
- Telephone companionship services
- Digital support services

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4. Definitions

Suicidal Ideation

Thoughts, expressions, wishes, plans, or intentions relating to ending one's own life.

Self-Harm

The intentional harming of oneself irrespective of suicidal intent.

Suicide Risk

The likelihood that a person may attempt to end their life.

Protective Factors

Factors that reduce suicide risk, including:

- Family support
- Social connections
- Community involvement
- Positive coping skills
- Access to support services

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5. CAREHOPES™ Principles

CAREHOPES™ adopts the following principles:

- Every expression of suicide risk must be taken seriously.
- Every concern must be explored respectfully.
- Every identified risk must be escalated appropriately.
- Human dignity must be maintained.
- Safeguarding responsibilities must be prioritised.
- Employees must remain within their competence.
- Professional support must be sought when required.

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6. Employee Responsibilities

Employees must:

- Remain alert to signs of distress.
- Listen without judgement.
- Take concerns seriously.
- Remain calm and supportive.
- Escalate concerns immediately.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Document concerns accurately.

- Seek supervisory support where required.

Employees must never:

- Dismiss suicidal statements.
- Promise absolute secrecy.
- Minimise concerns.
- Diagnose mental illness.
- Conduct clinical risk assessments except your job role specifies that you will be trained to do so.
- Provide psychological therapy except your job role specifies that you will be trained to do so.
- Modify healthcare treatment plans except your job role specifies that you will be trained to do so.

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7. Possible Warning Signs

Employees should remain alert to indicators such as:

- Expressions of hopelessness
- Talking about death or suicide
- Giving away possessions
- Sudden withdrawal
- Significant mood changes
- Increased isolation
- Declining self-care
- Self-harm behaviour
- Expressions of being a burden
- Sudden calmness after distress
- Increased substance misuse
- Saying goodbye unexpectedly

The presence or absence of these signs does not confirm or exclude risk.

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8. Responding to Suicide Concerns

Where a concern is identified, employees should:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Show empathy.
- Encourage communication.
- Reassure the individual they are not alone.
- Prioritise immediate safety.
- Escalate concerns promptly.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Seek emergency assistance where necessary.

Employees should avoid:

- Arguing
- Judging
- Lecturing
- Dismissing concerns
- Making assumptions

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9. Emergency Situations

Where there is immediate risk to life:

Employees must:

- Contact emergency services immediately.
- Remain with the individual where safe and appropriate.
- Notify management.
- Follow emergency procedures.
- Record actions taken.

Immediate risk may include:

- Active suicide attempts

- Access to lethal means and stated intent
- Serious self-harm incidents
- Immediate threats to life

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10. Therapeutic Observation and Monitoring

Where suicide concerns are present:

Employees must follow:

- Therapeutic Observation Policy
- Safeguarding procedures
- Supervisor instructions
- Individual support plans

Observation levels may be increased where appropriate and authorised.

Observation should always promote:

- Safety
- Dignity
- Engagement
- Reassurance

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11. Restrictive Practice and Suicide Prevention

CAREHOPES™ promotes:

- De-escalation
- Reassurance
- Positive communication
- Emotional support
- Therapeutic engagement

Employees must never:

- Use physical restraint.
- Use mechanical restraint.

- Use chemical restraint.
- Use seclusion.
- Restrict liberty.

Except where:

- The employee's role specifically requires such interventions.
- CAREHOPES™ Academy training has been completed.
- Competency has been assessed.
- Written authorisation has been granted by CAREHOPES™.

Training from another organisation does not automatically authorise restrictive practices while representing CAREHOPES™.

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12. Safeguarding Considerations

Suicide and self-harm concerns may be associated with:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Self-neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Financial exploitation
- Bullying
- Social isolation
- Discrimination
- Trauma
- Mental health deterioration

All safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately.

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13. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Employees must:

- Respect confidentiality.

- Record concerns appropriately.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis.
- Follow information governance procedures.

Confidentiality may be overridden where there is a serious risk to life, safety, or wellbeing.

Employees must never promise complete secrecy regarding suicide concerns.

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14. Employee Wellbeing

Exposure to suicide-related incidents can affect employees emotionally.

CAREHOPES™ will seek to provide:

- Supervision
- Reflective practice
- Managerial support
- Wellbeing support
- Debrief opportunities

Employees are encouraged to seek support following distressing incidents.

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15. Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors must:

- Respond promptly to concerns.
- Support employees.
- Ensure safeguarding action is taken.
- Monitor risk escalation.
- Facilitate access to support.
- Review documentation.
- Promote employee wellbeing.

Supervisors must never ignore reports relating to suicidal ideation or self-harm.

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16. Third-Party Provider Responsibilities

Third-party providers must:

- Escalate concerns immediately.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Work within their competence.
- Cooperate with investigations.
- Support safety planning where appropriate.

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17. Training Requirements

Employees may be required to complete:

- Suicide Prevention Awareness Training
- Self-Harm Awareness Training
- Safeguarding Training
- Mental Health Awareness Training
- Therapeutic Observation Training
- Conflict Resolution and De-escalation Training
- Mental Capacity Awareness Training

Additional training may be required depending on role responsibilities.

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18. Monitoring and Compliance

CAREHOPES™ will monitor compliance through:

- Supervision
- Safeguarding reviews
- Incident reviews
- Audits
- Appraisals
- Quality assurance activities
- Training records

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19. Breach of Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Additional training
- Corrective action plans
- Performance management
- Formal disciplinary action
- Suspension
- Termination of engagement
- Referral to safeguarding, regulatory, or professional bodies where appropriate

Serious failures may constitute gross misconduct.

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20. Related Policies

- Duty of Care Policy
- Mental Capacity and Deprivation of Liberty Policy
- Therapeutic Observation Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Conflict Resolution and De-escalation Policy
- Wellbeing Monitoring Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Employee Wellbeing Policy
- Incident Reporting Policy

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21. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following significant incidents

- Following safeguarding reviews
- Following legislative changes
- Following organisational changes