

## ELDER ADULT SUICIDE HAPPENS...

Elder adults age 65 and older commit or attempt suicide more often than any other segment of our population.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AND DO IF IT HAPPENS IN YOUR FACILITY

1. Upon discovering the resident who has committed or attempted suicide, immediately call loudly for help.
2. Assign someone to notify the supervisor, director of nursing, and administrator.
3. Immediately determine if the resident is breathing and has a heartbeat.
4. Immediately confirm the code status of the resident/patient. **Staff Must Know Every Resident Who Has a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Code Status**
5. Immediately check for signs of life.
  - If resident is breathing with a —
    - Code Status – Full Code
      - Place the resident in a position to begin CPR if necessary, have someone Call 911 and the Police.
      - Implement any actions as appropriate, such as applying pressure to bleeding, removing instruments that are contributing to the suicide attempt, etc.
    - Code Status – DNR
      - Depending on the specific suicide attempt method, move or leave the resident where they are positioned and take actions to support life. Call 911, the attending physician, and the police.
  - If the resident has no vital signs with a —
    - Code Status – Full Code
      - Place the resident in a position to begin CPR, have someone Call 911 and the Police.
    - Code Status – DNR
      - Preserve the scene and call the police.
  - Respect the resident's privacy by preventing unnecessary viewing by other residents and non-essential staff.
    - Pull cubicle curtains, close doors, set up privacy screens.
    - Keep visual exposure by staff and residents to a minimum to lessen their personal traumatic reaction.
6. Notify the attending physician and receive orders as appropriate.
7. Administrator or Designee should:
  - Notify the resident's family and/or responsible party.
  - Notify the Department of Health.
  - Notify Med-Net Compliance about the incident if a Med-Net client.
  - Arrange crisis counseling for staff that will include group, individual, and continuing counseling as needed.
  - Ensure that thorough and accurate documentation of the details of the event are recorded, including witness statements and all investigation activities and findings.
8. The Compliance and Ethics Officer should:
  - With the Director of Nursing and the Administrator, conduct an investigation of the incident to determine if the resident's recent behavior might have indicated a suicide ideation or suicide plan.
  - With the Director of Nursing and the Administrator review the policies and procedures for responding to a suicide or suicide attempt to determine if changes are needed.
  - With every department head, ensure that staff are trained to respond to a suicide or suicide attempt as the policies and procedures require.
  - With the Social Worker, personally conduct an interview audit of other residents, using an approved risk assessment tool, to determine if there are other residents who may be having suicidal ideations.
  - Ensure that all staff are trained in identifying and reporting potential signs of suicide risk behaviors and statements, and in how to respond should a suicide attempt occur.