# Suicide Prevention Strategies for Leaders

## EARLY ENGAGEMENT
- Know your team
- Talk to your people often
- Foster unit cohesion and a culture of: “We all need help sometimes”
- Encourage buddy care
- Help people get connected to support before a small issue turns into a big issue
- Educate on safely storing firearms, pills, & poisons
- Take care of yourself; it will teach others to take care of themselves also (e.g., sleep, nutrition, stress)

## RESPONDING TO SUICIDE IDEATION OR ATTEMPT
- Tell the person you are there to help
- Ensure immediate safety for everyone
- If time permits, seek consultation from behavioral health and chaplain teams
- Escort the person to emergency care
- Share details with only those who need to know
- Address rumors and gossip with information that can be shared
- Do not give up on the person or label them as “weak” or “a lost cause”

## RESPONDING TO A SUICIDE DEATH
- Lead by being PAV:
  - PRESENT in your unit — more than usual
  - ACTIVE — walk around in the unit and events talking to each member
  - VISIBLE — let members know you are there
- Check-in on others experiencing difficulties
- Acknowledge your own grief and loss to your unit, it enables them to do so also
- Provide information that is public about the suicide to unit members; avoid details about how the person died
- Create opportunities for unit members to be together and stay connected
- Reach out to people who are disconnected
- Consult with response teams including Casualty Affairs, Chaplains, and Behavioral Health

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EDUCATIONAL TOOL

[https://www.cstsonline.org/suicide-prevention-program/](https://www.cstsonline.org/suicide-prevention-program/)