Financial Stress and Suicide

Risk Associated with Employment Loss, Economic Insecurity, Financial Exploitation

For Veteran’s Crisis Line Press [1]

SE PA Crisis Services (24/7)

**Bucks County**
Lenape Valley Fdn 800-499-7455

**Chester County**
Valley Creek Crisis Ctr 877-918-2100

**Delaware County**
CCMC Crisis Ctr 610-447-7600
Crisis Connections 855-889-7827

**Montgomery County**
MCES 610-279-6100

**Philadelphia County**
Northeast 215-831-2600
Northwest 215-951-8300
North 215-707-2577
Center City/South 215-829-5249
West/Southwest 215-748-8525

Protective Factors

Buffers that can deter suicidal thoughts:

- Having reasons for living
- Strong social connections and supports
- Hope for one’s financial future
- Feeling of personal control
- Sense of self-worth and self-esteem
- Use of available financial resources

High Risk Persons

- Men having repeated downward job loss over a short timeframe
- Men feeling financial shame, seeing financial struggles as personal failures
- Elders/others with poor prospects of recovering financial wellbeing
- Men losing connection to dependents as the result of economic loss

Others at risk are women who are main household wage earners; developmentally disabled persons dependent on employment for social as well as financial support.

This information is educational and not to take the place of advice and help from qualified behavioral healthcare sources.
Background
Financial stress comes from economic hardships such as being unemployed, in debt, or financially victimized. It can produce financial shame, hopelessness, and anxiety or panic. Diminished self-worth and feeling defeated or inadequate may produce thoughts of suicide. These may worsen with the growing inability to support oneself and dependents.

How a Suicide Happens
A suicide attempt may occur when a strong intent to die and the ability for lethal self-harm come together.

An intense desire to die may result from a person’s belief that he or she is a burden to those close to them or they would be better off without him or her.

An ability for lethal self-harm may arise from mentally practicing a suicide plan, access to guns, and pain or trauma.

Possible Triggers
- Layoffs, furloughs, terminations
- Financial loss/insecurity/debt
- Inability to regain self-sufficiency
- Foreclosure, pending eviction
- Problem gambling
- Interpersonal “money problems “

Some Warning Signs
- Feeling trapped, losing control
- Alcohol/medication misuse
- Withdrawal from family/friends
- Anxiety/agitation/sleep problems
- Mood changes, growing pessimism
- Onset of self-neglect
- All or nothing, black/white thinking

Some Danger Signs
- Talking about final arrangements
- Giving away pets, favored items
- Sleep disturbances, nightmares
- Acquiring gun/hoarding medications

Dealing with Warning Signs
- Clearly and directly ask about suicidal intent (e.g., Are you thinking of taking your life?)
- Call one of the numbers on the back panel of this brochure ASAP
- Stay with person or get someone else to do so. Maintain contact as much as possible if not with person
- Don’t believe that the person will get help on their own or if he/she says that they are alright or feeling better
- Remove guns/other means mentioned only if safe to do so

When to Get Emergency Help
Someone needs immediate help when:
- Voicing clear thoughts of suicide
- Citing a specific suicide plan giving when and how
- Seeking a means of suicide

Any of these signal imminent dangerousness and the local crisis center or 911 should be called immediately.