



Transforming Systems for Safer Care

Suicide deaths for individuals at risk of suicide in health and behavioral health systems are preventable. For systems dedicated to improving patient care and outcomes, the Zero Suicide framework presents both an aspirational challenge and a way forward.

Zero Suicide Framework

People who die by suicide are often seen within the health care system before their death. Of those who die by suicide, 83% have seen a healthcare provider in the year before their death.¹ Only 19% of those who died in the past year were seen in outpatient behavioral health.²

Across healthcare disciplines and settings, there are many opportunities to identify and provide care to those at risk for suicide; however, suicide prevention must be seen as a core responsibility of healthcare.

The Zero Suicide framework is defined by a system-wide, organizational commitment to safer suicide care in health and behavioral health care systems.

It represents a culture shift from fragmented suicide care toward a holistic and comprehensive approach to patient safety and quality improvement—the most fundamental responsibility of health care— and to the safety and support of staff, who do the demanding work of caring for suicidal individuals.

Elements of Zero Suicide

- 1** Lead system-wide culture change committed to reducing suicides
- 2** Train a competent, confident, and caring workforce
- 3** Identify individuals with suicide risk via comprehensive screening and assessment
- 4** Engage all individuals at-risk of suicide using a suicide care management plan
- 5** Treat suicidal thoughts and behaviors using evidence-based treatments
- 6** Transition individuals through care with warm hand-offs and supportive contacts
- 7** Improve policies and procedures through continuous quality improvement

Zero Suicide Results

Zero Suicide fills the gaps that individuals at risk for suicide often fall through using evidence-based tools, systematic practices, training, and embedded workflows. Continuous process improvement drives this framework to ensure organizations deliver quality care, routinely examine outcomes, and remain committed to fidelity. The Zero Suicide approach builds on successes supported by data in healthcare organizations, including Henry Ford Health System and Centerstone.

With a focus on suicide care using such rigorous quality improvement processes, Henry Ford Health System saw a 75% reduction in the suicide rate among their health plan members.³ Centerstone, one of the nation's largest not-for-profit CMHCs, reduced suicide deaths from a baseline of 35 per 100,000 to 13 per 100,000 after implementing Zero Suicide for 3 years.

“ It is critically important to design for zero even when it may not be theoretically possible. When you design for zero, you surface different ideas and approaches that if you're only designing for 90 percent may not materialize. It is about purposefully aiming for a higher level of performance. ”

—Thomas Priselac, CEO
Cedars Sinai Medical Center

Visit the Zero Suicide Toolkit

To assist health and behavioral health agencies in their adoption of the Zero Suicide framework, the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC), federally funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers a free and publicly available evolving online toolkit that includes modules and resources to address each of the elements of Zero Suicide.

 zerosuicide.com



For more information, contact us at:

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Zero Suicide Institute

The Zero Suicide Institute at EDC provides expert consultation and guidance to health and behavioral healthcare organizations implementing the Zero Suicide framework for safer suicide care. Organizations contract with the Zero Suicide Institute for the experience and tools needed to accelerate Zero Suicide adoption.

ZeroSuicideInstitute.com