Suicide is everyone’s problem - we all have a part to play

The size of the problem
- 1 million people die by suicide every year around the world
- More people die by suicide than all the wars and homicides in the world
- 3 times as many people die by suicide than all the RTA in the U.K

Exploring the myths and stigma around suicide

Reasons for self harming:
- childhood trauma and abuse
- desperation
- guilt
- isolation
- can’t cope with the pain

The importance of suicide mitigation - what can I do today to help this person not end their life today?

The importance of suicide mitigation
- Suicide mitigation is a paradigm shift from suicide risk management which puts staff under pressure to achieve almost the impossible, to engaging with a person in a compassionate way to help them not to act on their suicidal thoughts today, this week, this month.
- Risk assessment is an opportunity for therapeutic intervention

The importance of understanding human factor errors in trying to reduce errors

The relevance of human factor errors to suicide mitigation
‘The relationship between human beings and systems with which they interact with the goal of minimising errors’ - WHO.

It is the science of humans making mistakes
The best people sometimes make the worst mistakes. Stress and poor communication can be key factors in making errors.

How to reduce human factors errors
- Need to promote a culture of openness—are we creating the right conditions for people to speak up?
- It’s not who’s right but what’s right that counts
- Attention required for knowledge based performance - therefore need staff who are not stressed

Suicidal people are ambivalent - this gives us an opportunity to save a life

This is how ambivalent people are.
- 25/1500 people survived the jump from the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Out of those 25 people we know from research that 20 of them did not want to die when they let go - they wanted the pain to stop.
- When some routine maintenance work was being done on the Clifton Suspension Bridge a simple barrier was put up - it was enough to stop people from jumping and the suicide rate from other means did not increase.

The importance of red flag warning signs

Demographic risk factors which do not tell us about the risk to an individual only the risk in the population - a person with no risk factors can still be highly suicidal.

Red flag warning signs include:
- hopelessness
- a sense of entrapment
- distressing psychotic phenomena such as persecutory delusions
- pain and/or chronic medical illness
- perception of lack of social support

The impact of a compassionate approach and positive communication on suicide mitigation - how to talk to people in emotional distress and active listening.

The elements that make up compassion are:
- motivation
- distress tolerance
- sensitivity
- empathy
- sympathy
- non-judgement

A compassionate approach and authentic optimism are used to instil hope and contribute to an immediate and longer term suicide mitigation strategy.

The Cole-King Classification of Suicidal Thoughts

The C-K Classification of Suicidal Thoughts allows suicidal thoughts to be assessed on a continuum.
- It creates a common language
- Allows a more detailed and accurate assessment
- Helps prioritisation of clients

Creating a safety plan.

The importance of developing an immediate safety plan:
The need to co-create the plan with the patient
Reasons for living--building resilience
- The plan will describe actions or strategies that would help individual to resist suicidal thoughts.
- Will include own resources, close confidants, friends, third sector, NHS

Building a Bank of Hope to build resilience and reducing the power of negative thoughts

The importance of building a Bank of Hope

Hopelessness is the final common pathway to suicide--therefore there is a need to increase resilience. Build a Bank of Hope to include reasons for living e.g. photos of important people.
- Why the person is a good person, strengths etc.
- Reminder of past times when suicidal thoughts were not present
- Reminders of times when suicidal thoughts were resisted
- Share stories of hope about suicidal individuals who managed not to end their lives
- Suicidal thoughts don’t last forever/often are short lived

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Suicide Awareness and Response Training

Several staff across the Trust have been trained to deliver the Suicide Awareness and Response Training. This training is now being rolled out across the Trust. As well as introducing some new clinical tools, it also emphasises the importance of a number of psychological concepts for its success.