

# L. E. A. D. Suicide Awareness Training

After this training, learners will be able to:

1. Recall the L.E.A.D. Action Plan
2. Practice Asking about Suicide





L

E

A

D

Look & Listen

Explore Reasons

Ask  
about  
Suicide

Don't Hesitate and  
Develop a Plan

Have you helped someone  
who was thinking about  
suicide?

Have you  
known anyone  
who died by  
suicide?

## What Do You Know about Suicide?

Have you had thoughts of suicide?

Who would you  
tell if you had  
thoughts?

# Statistics On Suicide

- More people in the US died by suicide than homicide in 2021 (almost double).
- 49,476 suicide deaths were reported in 2022, about 2.6% more than the previous year.
- Approximately 13.2 million adults seriously thought about suicide in 2022.
- It's estimated that 3.8 million made a plan, and 1.6 million attempted suicide that year.
- Suicide is the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death overall.
- In 2022, men died by suicide 3.85 times more than women.

# Statistics On Suicide

- In 2021, 46% of those who died by suicide had a diagnosed mental health condition.
- Available data suggests that suicides in individuals without psychiatric disorders are related to life stressors, lack of social support, and certain personality traits such as impulsivity.
- Populations disproportionately impacted include Veterans, racial and ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ populations, youth, middle-aged, and older adults, individuals with serious mental illness, and certain occupational groups, among others.

# Myths About Suicide

Talking about suicide increases the chance a person will act on it.

People who talk about suicide are just seeking attention.

Suicide always occurs without warning.

People who take their own lives are selfish, cowards or weak.



# Additional Myths

Someone who has their act together isn't at risk of suicide.

Most suicides happen around the winter holiday season.

The only effective intervention for suicide comes from professional psychotherapists with extensive experience in the area.



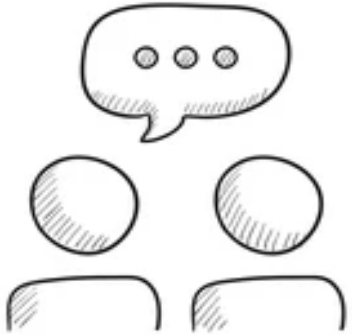
# L

## Look and **L**isten for Warning Signs

- Some people may have many
- Others may have a few



# Warning Signs



## Talking

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- Being hopeless
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
  - Life not worth living
  - No purpose in life
- Talking about being alone
  - Revenge seeking
- Long term care for pets

# Warning Signs

## Behaviors

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- Change in use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting recklessly, anxious, agitated
  - Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing from family and friends
  - Giving away prized possessions
- Looking for a way to kill themselves
  - Saying goodbye
  - Aggression
  - Any major change in behavior
- Not finding pleasure in things one previously found pleasure in
  - Writing about death

# Warning Signs

## Life Issues

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- Financial issues
  - Legal issues
  - Health issues
- Any type of loss-death, divorce, job etc
  - Relationship issues
  - Coming out and not being accepted
- Any type of abuse, (physical, emotional, sexual)



# E

## Explore Reasons

You've seen the WARNING SIGNS; talk to the person. Connect with them and explore their story and reasons for their pain

- "I'm concerned for you, I've noticed this and this going on with you, please tell me more."
- "You just don't seem like yourself lately and I'm very worried, can you share more of what's going on?"



# E

## Explore Reasons

- Allow the person to talk and share their story
- Caring and non-judgmental approach
- You may be the only person who has ever taken the time to listen to their story
- Continue to listen and look for warning signs and life signs



# A

## Ask About Suicide

If you're not sure, the best thing to do is ASK the question...

ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE/KILLING YOURSELF?

How else could you ask?

Chances are if you don't ask it, nobody else will.

And if you can't ask, find someone who can...



- What if they say NO and you believe them?
- Be there to support them, they still need you to be there for them.
- What if they say NO but you aren't comfortable with that answer?
- Keep talking to the person and ask again a little later

# When Asking the Question

Remember, people want us to ask them.

They also want to make sure they can trust you with their deepest, darkest secret.

What if they say YES?

YOU DO NOT have to solve all this person's problems.



Acknowledge them telling you.

"Thank you for telling me, I want you to live."

"That took a lot of courage for you to tell me; you must be in a lot of pain."

"I am so glad you told me; it must be so scary for you."

# When someone answers “YES” to the “suicide question”

- How would that stir feelings in us, who ask the question?
- How will the way we respond make a difference?
- It's OK to feel some fear.
- Never let that stop you from asking the question.
- Ask about how soon and what means they plan to use. (Safety Planning)



# Things NOT to Say



- "You're not going to do something stupid are you?"
- "You don't want to kill yourself, do you?"
- "You have so much to live for."
- "That's a permanent solution to a temporary problem."

# A Note of Caution...

- If there is ever a gun or weapon involved, don't try to take it away. If necessary, CALL 911 to ensure everyone's safety.
- If the person continues to say NO but your intuition tells you different, err on the side of caution and call the Crisis Hotline and/or Law Enforcement for a Welfare Check
- If possible, find out if there are firearms, medications, or other means of suicide within the person's access
- If it can be done, remove all means. This could save a life!

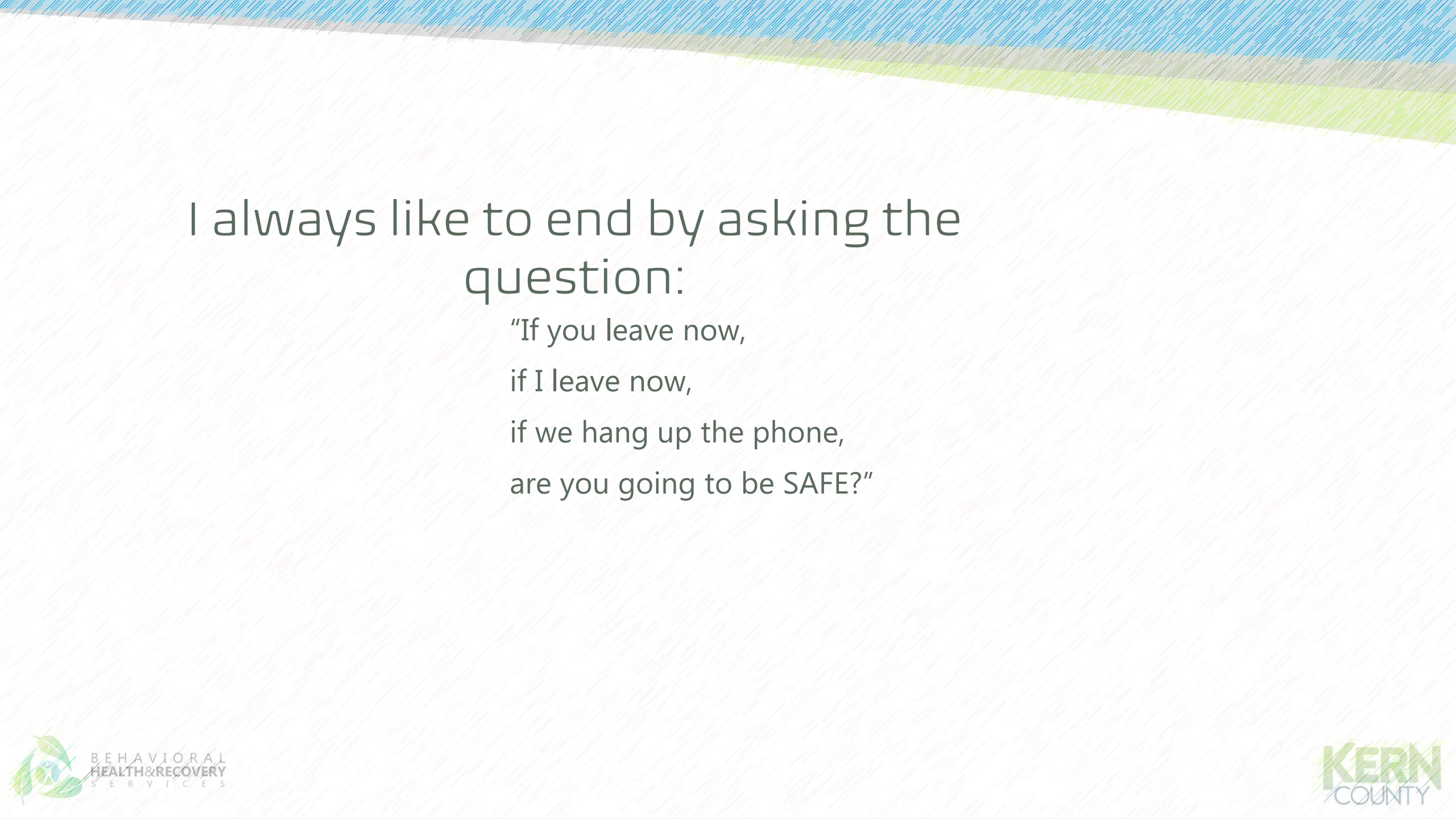


What is the worst that can  
happen if you ask the  
"question?"

# D

## Don't Hesitate and Develop a Plan

- Ask the person if they'd like to get help
- Reassure them you want to help and support them
- Don't leave them alone
- Ask about a plan
- You can call the hotline at 988 (available 24 hours a day-7 days a week)
- The hotline will talk to the person with suicide thoughts, or you can talk to the hotline to find out what to do next
- If necessary and possible, contact others who are important to that person to assist
- You can't force someone to get help, but being supportive, nonjudgmental, and being helpful goes a long way.
- Give referrals



I always like to end by asking the  
question:

"If you leave now,  
if I leave now,  
if we hang up the phone,  
are you going to be SAFE?"

# Remember

People who are thinking about suicide don't necessarily want to die; they want out of their unbearable pain.

Their coping skills aren't working, and many feel they don't have other options





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# Resources

- <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/suicide.htm>
- <https://afsp.org/suicide-statistics/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/about/index.html>
- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>
- <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/national-strategy-suicide-prevention.pdf>
- <https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/mental-health-by-the-numbers/>

# Resources continued...

- [10.1093/qjmed/hcad279](#)
- <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/8-common-myths-about-suicide>
- <https://www.aetna.com/health-guide/suicide-myths-and-facts.html>
- <https://suicideprevention.nv.gov/Youth/Myths/>