

Last updated: 16:00 (GMT+04) Wednesday, July 23, 2008. Rajab 20, 1429.

gulfnews.com

THREE PROGRESSIVE

Search

Mobile edition

ePaper

Live weather

Shortcuts

Go

GNAds4U

JOBS4U

WHEELS4U

PROPERTIES4U

CLASSIFIEDS4U

THE NATION

THE GULF

THE REGION

THE WORLD

BUSINESS

SPORT

TECHNOLOGY

IN DEPTH

GALLERIES

YOUR PICTURES

VIDEO

FEATURES

TABLOID

FRIDAY

E+

EXPLORE

UNWIND

NOTES

SPORT EXTRA

ASK THE LAW

RESIDENTS GUIDE

ABOUT THE UAE

SPECIAL COVERAGE



Pictures from the past

YOUR SAY

LETTERS

POLLS

EMAIL US

OPINION

EDITORIALS

COLUMNS

WEEKEND REVIEW

GN FOCUS

ABOUT GULF NEWS

SEARCH

PAST EDITIONS

FRONT PAGE PDF

EPAPER

MOBILE EDITION

SUBSCRIPTIONS

GN REWARDS

RSS FEEDS

JOBS AT GN

BUSINESS

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

The shock of a workplace suicide

By Carole Spiers, Special to Gulf News
Published: March 11, 2008, 00:41

A suicide in the workplace is fortunately a very rare occurrence. But when it does happen, it sets up uncomfortable guilt-feelings among the suicide's colleagues, employers, friends and family, who all may wonder whether they could have done more, or anything, to prevent it.

This kind of agonising is a reaction that is very usual in such sad circumstances - but such guilty feelings are certainly inappropriate.

The 'final straw' that led to the irrevocable decision to take his or her own life, in most cases is never known. The suicide may have been triggered by events unconnected with work.

In all organisations, the most constructive course is to make a formal study of suicide intervention as part of routine stress-management training. Managers can be taught how to identify possible signs of a potential suicide; how to arrange counselling for any such vulnerable person; know what to say to the rest of the workforce in the event of such an incident; train your HR personnel to be aware and source specialist expertise from outside, when necessary.

An individual at risk of suicide may be depressed and withdrawn, unable to relate to those around them and increasingly liable to be absent from work. The risk is obviously greater in the wake of a traumatic event such as illness, bereavement, redundancy or when diagnosed as clinically depressed.

Unfortunately, a confusing factor is that a suicidal person can sometimes appear to be recovering from a desperate and depressed state of mind, when completely unexpectedly, they suddenly take their own life.

What, then, is the best kind of intervention? In principle, an acutely depressed and/or suicidal person, needs someone to be there for them, ready to listen patiently to what may or may not be a complex story, and to accept them as someone who is normal but who needs to be helped over what seems, to them, to be an unlivable-with position.

What they don't need is a brisk pep-talk, a sermon, an appeal to 'snap out of it', or equally the too-easy reassurance that everything will be all right.

Sympathetic and attentive listening is essential - making the person feel they are being taken seriously. Experience shows that, in many instances, it is important to have access to the best

RSS RSS FEED

>> Get Business as a news feed

YOUR MONEY

>> Latest Forex rates

LATEST STORIES FROM BUSINESS



BUSINESS
Mercedes-Benz launches new generation cars



BUSINESS
Oman plans makeover of ancient forts and caves

AUTOMOBILES

>> GM unveils 2010 Camaro

AVIATION

>> Etihad flights to Almaty in Kazakhstan start in December

BANKING AND FINANCE

>> Emirates NBD profit soars 45%

>> AUB net profit touches \$211.7 million in midway 2008

>> UNB earnings soar 41% to Dh764.6m

>> Emirates NBD plans Saudi operations

>> Noor in venture to open Islamic bank in Maldives

>> Darling hints at 'profound' effects of global credit crisis

>> Sukuk issuance in Gulf rises 17% to \$17b

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

>> IT industry holds much potential for future growth

>> Winners of oil prices aren't only international majors

>> Going through a transformation

>> Chinese banks could see shrinking profits in coming days

COMMODITIES

>> Apple posts \$7.46 billion third-quarter revenues

>> Costly food and fuel drive Italy's consumer morale to 15-year low

>> Vietnam to tax rice and fertiliser exports

CONSTRUCTION

>> Housing quality in Dubai has a 'long way to go'

DEVELOPMENT

>> Mubadala forms \$8b GE venture

>> IFA launches \$200m project in Thailand

>> Lifestyle City raises budget to Dh4b

>> Depa venture wins Singapore contract

>> Work begins on tallest building in Jordan

ECONOMY

>> Inflation in Kuwait accelerates to 11.4%

GENERAL

>> e-governance gains ground in Abu Dhabi

>> Russian firm wins \$418m Dolphin deal

HOTEL & TOURISM

RADIO 1



Listen now

RADIO 2



Listen now

» Streaming FAQs
» Radio schedules

SPECIAL COVERAGE



Olympics 2008

professional back-up you can source.





The other day I was presented with the case of a van-driver who had tried to hang himself in his van - which, had he succeeded, would have involved his employers in a full inquest. By moving immediately into our emergency procedure, we were able to minimise the chance of another attempt. We provided immediate crisis intervention support, including access to a 24-hour counselling hotline. We also briefed his line-manager on how best to handle this particular situation, which had, in fact, been sparked by the recent suicide of the driver's own son, for which he blamed himself.

Key points: Caring for lives

- Identifying suicidal symptoms in advance can be formally taught.
- Sympathetic and attentive listening is essential.
- Expert professional backup should be ready to deploy, without delay, when necessary.

- The writer is a BBC broadcaster and motivational speaker, with 20 years' experience as CEO of Carole Spiers Group, an international stress consultancy based in London.

More from **Business**

Email this article 	Printer- Friendly version 	Email the Editor 	Bookmark this article 
---	--	---	--

Post this story to:

[Del.icio.us](#) | [Digg](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Reddit](#)

>> [Travelodge plans to boost UK seaside holiday market](#)

INDUSTRY

- >> [Swatch, Rivoli tie up to boost market share in Saudi and India](#)
- >> [Caterpillar's earnings climb 34% on Asia sales](#)

MARKETS

- >> [Dubai market advances for third straight day as Arabtec gains 7.61%](#)
- >> [Wachovia reports record quarterly loss of \\$8.9b](#)
- >> [DuPont earnings up 11% as sales gain](#)

OIL & GAS

- >> [Fuel price rise boosts Chinese demand](#)
- >> [Iran not to press for output cuts at Opec's next meeting](#)
- >> [Demand for oil products hits two-year low in Korea](#)

TELECOM

- >> [etisalat leads global mobile operators posting fastest first-quarter growth](#)

TOURISM & TRAVEL

- >> [Oman takes a 'different approach'](#)

TRADE

- >> [Strong currency forces Dubai to import less from euro zone](#)

MORE STORIES FROM BUSINESS

AUTOMOBILES

- >> [Mercedes-Benz launches new generation cars](#)

AVIATION

- >> [BA to transfer to Dubai Terminal 5](#)

BANKING AND FINANCE

- >> [Doha Bank Q2 net profit increases 25%](#)
- >> [Noor Islamic Bank expands in Maldives](#)
- >> [Emirates NBD expands in Saudi Arabia](#)

- >> [Emirates NBD profit up in Q2 2008](#)

- >> [UNB records Dh764.6 million profit](#)

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

- >> [Do you really fly economy class?](#)

COMMODITIES

- >> [GCC-based jeweller posts 55% growth](#)

ECONOMY

- >> [Map of the global food crisis](#)

INDUSTRY

- >> [GE, Mubadala tie up for global venture](#)

INTERNET

- >> [Web threatens MidEast business growth](#)

OIL & GAS

- >> [Dolphin Energy taps Russian contractor](#)

REAL ESTATE PROPERTY

- >> [Limitless to build Jordan's twin towers](#)

TECHNOLOGY

- >> [BlackBerry or Apple?](#)
- >> [Joining the competition](#)
- >> [Wearable gadgets are in](#)
- >> [The degeneration of online debates](#)

[Business](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Features](#) | [Pictures](#) | [Site Map](#)
[About Gulf News](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Jobs at Gulf News](#) | [Advertising Guide](#)

[gulfnews.com](#) | [XPRESS4me.com](#) | [GNAds4U.com](#)

© Al Nisr Publishing LLC 2007. All rights reserved.