

Increasing the Odds of Better Emergency Room Care for Suicidal Patients

What You Need to Know

How Important of a Role do Emergency Rooms Play in Suicide Prevention?

412,000

EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

are related to intentional self-harm or suicide attempts

EACH YEAR

across the United States



THOUSANDS OF PATIENTS

visit emergency rooms each year for

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

including anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts and ideations

➔ Many emergency room visits involve patients who are in a suicidal crisis but have not attempted suicide -

MAKING EMERGENCY ROOM CARE ESSENTIAL TO SUICIDE PREVENTION

What Can go Wrong at an Emergency Room?

Effective emergency room treatment rests upon the ER staff's ability to



DETECT



ASSESS



MANAGE

SUICIDE RISK

before an attempt to die by suicide is made

Many emergency room staff members are **POORLY TRAINED IN HANDLING SUICIDAL PERSONS**



According to Academic Emergency Medicine - the official journal for the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine -

NO UNIVERSAL GUIDELINES EXIST FOR EMERGENCY ROOM PERSONNEL DEALING WITH SUICIDAL PATIENTS

What Can You do to Get the Help You Need in an Emergency Room?



If you are suicidal, tell a family member or friend you are having suicidal thoughts and need help. Tell them you would like them **to take you to an emergency room.**



When you arrive at the ER, **tell the first person working at the ER you see that you are suicidal** and need help immediately.



If you are a family member or friend helping the suicidal patient, **make sure the ER staff knows your friend or loved one is suicidal** and needs help now.



Make sure the intake nurse writes in the records that the patient is suicidal. If they don't, ask them to do so. ER staff may prematurely discharge the patient if not.



Make sure the intake nurse knows the last time you or a loved one thought about suicide and any plans to die by suicide.



If possible, **do not let a suicidal patient leave the ER waiting room.** If they have to leave, don't hesitate to speak out loud and clear that a suicidal patient is leaving.



If the ER staff chooses to discharge a suicidal patient, ask questions. Have trained hospital staff members assessed your loved one for suicide?



Ask hospital staff if your loved one can safely be left alone. If not, ask why. Get the name of the ER staff member who says your loved one or friend is safe.



Request safety plans from ER staff members. If no plan is presented, demand an explanation from the ER physician.



If your friend or loved one is not admitted as an inpatient, find out the reasons why. Tell the staff to record in the patient's records your concerns.

IF YOU'VE LOST A LOVED ONE TO SUICIDE

you need a compassionate lawyer on your side who'll work tirelessly

to hold hospital staff responsible for their actions.

TAKE A STAND AGAINST NEGLIGENT HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Contact

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today at **214-618-8222**

for a free case consultation.

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Sources
"Preventing Suicide through Improved Training in Suicide Risk Assessment and Care: An American Association of Suicidology Task Force Report Addressing Serious Gaps in U.S. Mental Health Training." The American Association of Suicidology, June 2012

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