**Suicide Prevention**

10 October 2019 - Today is World Mental Health Day and this year’s theme is suicide prevention.

LawCare have provided some advice about suicide prevention in the legal profession which we believe could be beneficial to the wider community:

Preventing suicide:

Suicide remains something of a taboo, especially in professional circles. We need to encourage a more open culture where people talk about their feelings and ask for help. If you are worried about someone you work with, or a friend or family member you should always attempt to talk to them.

It is absolutely not the case that asking about suicide precipitates the action of suicide. Rather it shows the person you genuinely care, are interested in their welfare and want to help. Talking could make a real difference.

Signs to look out for in yourself or others

These are not exhaustive and some people will show no significant signs.

• Changes in behaviour e.g. mood swings, sleeping/eating patterns, becoming angry, negative, depressed

• Out of character reckless behaviour, e.g. giving away all possessions, increased use of drugs or alcohol, excessive spending

• Social withdrawal

• Lack of energy

• Neglecting grooming and personal hygiene

• Suddenly appearing very calm or relieved after a period of depression

• Settling affairs and saying goodbye

• Talking about suicide or dying

How to have a conversation with someone you believe to be suicidal

• Ask – have you thought about suicide? Be direct

• Use simple, direct questions in a non-judgmental, non-confrontational way

• Listen to the response

• Keep talking to the person telling them they are not alone and you want to help

• Follow your instinct

• Ask if you can assist them to access help and support by calling a family member, the emergency services, a helpline or their GP

• If you believe there is an immediate risk do not leave the person alone if you are in the same room, but do be mindful of your own personal safety

• If you are talking to them on the phone use another phone to let the police know

If you have thought of suicide

• Talk to someone – a friend, your GP, a helpline

• Be around other people

• Go to a safe place such as a friend's house or a Samaritans drop in centre

• Try not to think about the future – just focus on getting through today

• Remember drugs and alcohol are not a solution and may make you feel worse

• Do something you usually enjoy

Don't forget to look after your own wellbeing after having a difficult conversation. You can call Samaritans for free, at any time (24/7) on 116 123. They are there to listen to you. You can also email jo@samaritans.org

Seek help for yourself

If you yourself are feeling like ending your life, please call 999 or go to A&E and ask for the contact of the nearest crisis resolution team. These are teams of mental health care professionals who work with people in severe distress.

Other sources of help include:

Samaritans offer a 24-hours a day, 7 days a week support service. Call them FREE on 116 123. You can also email jo@samaritans.org

• Papyrus is a dedicated service for people up to the age of 35 who are worried about how they are feeling or anyone concerned about a young person. You can call the HOPElineUK number on 0800 068 4141, text 07786 209697 or email pat@papyrus-uk.org

• NHS Choices: 24-hour national helpline providing health advice and information. Call them free on 111.

• C.A.L.M.: National helpline for men to talk about any troubles they are feeling. Call 0800 58 58 58.

• Support After Suicide Partnership offers practical and emotional support on their website for people bereaved and affected by suicide.