

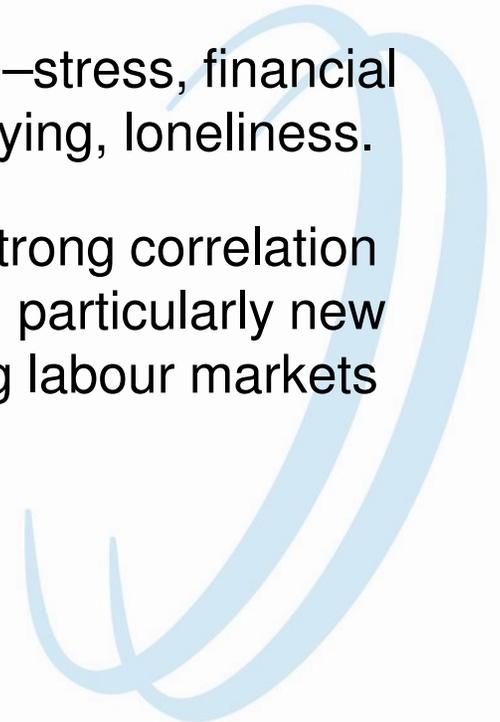
Suicide – a quiet killer

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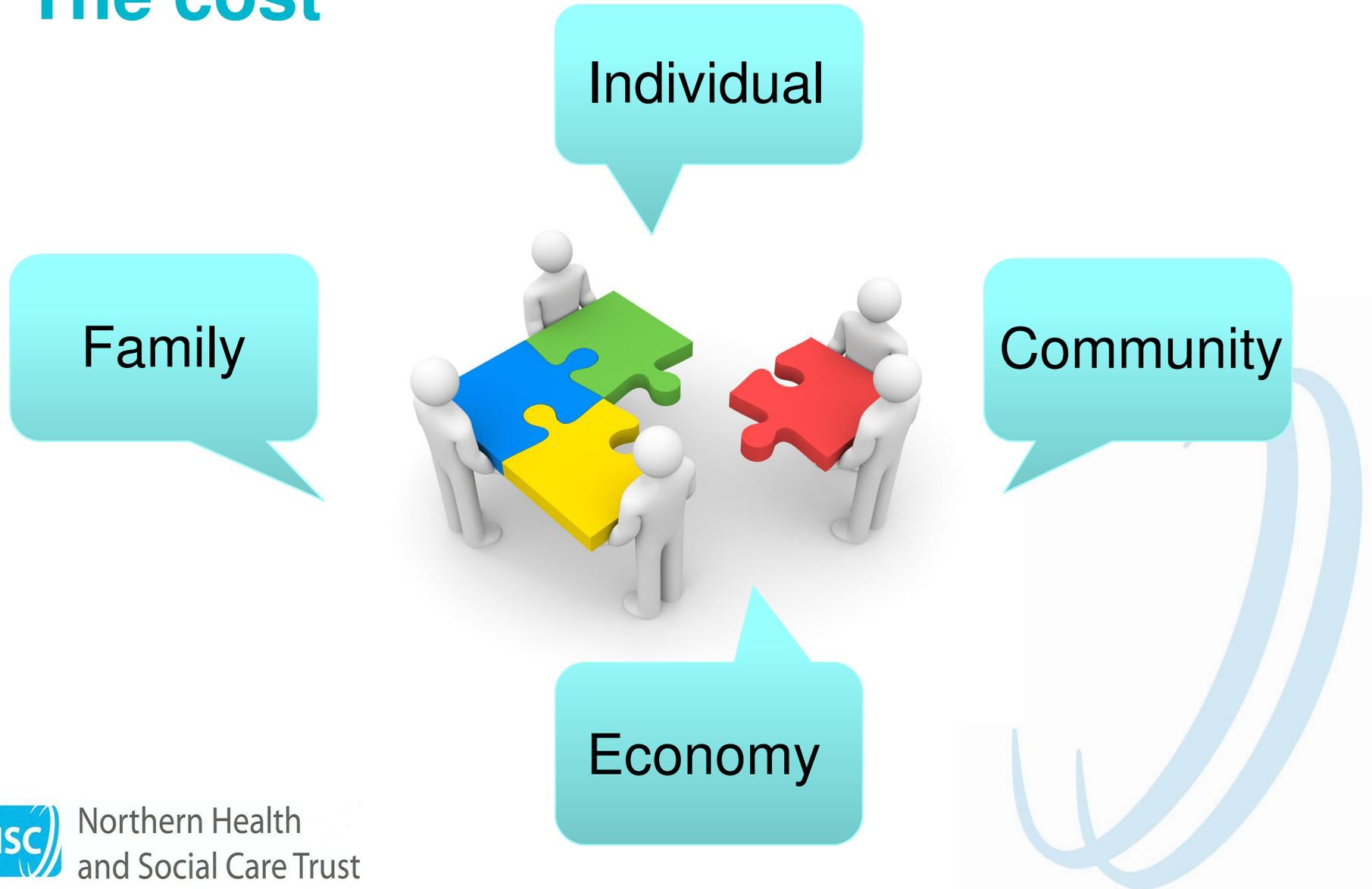
Is suicide an issue for employers?

289 recorded suicide deaths in NI in 2011

- Mental Health disorders are one of the most prominent and treatable causes of suicide (WHO 2011)
 - 39.1% of the population has had at least one mental health disorder in their lifetime, with 23.1% of the adult population experiencing a mental health disorder in the last year (Bunting, 2011)
- Other causes of suicide directly linked to workplace –stress, financial hardship; fear of redundancy or unemployment, bullying, loneliness.
- Studies in England, Ireland and Greece indicate a strong correlation between suicide, recession and austerity measures, particularly new workforce supply side policies aimed at deregulating labour markets (Barr et al. 2012) - “econocide”

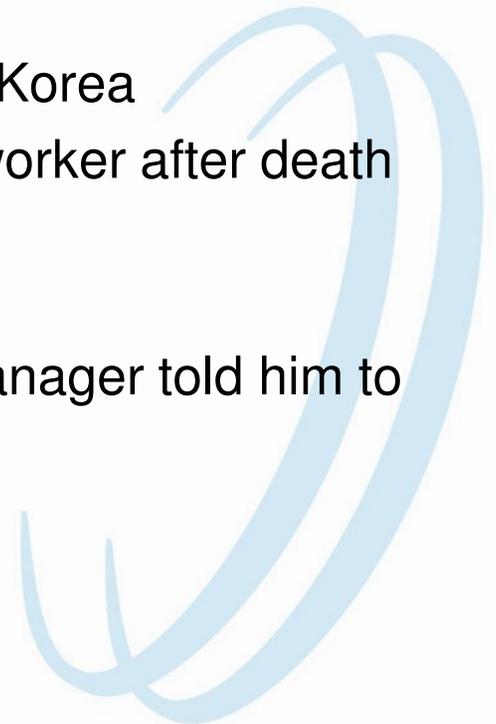


The cost



The reality.....

- Hampshire firefighter – took on too much work
- Suffolk council worker died – unable to cope with increasing workload and implementing contentious cuts
- 25 businessmen, Bologna, Italy – work & finance pressures
- Japans supreme court upheld \$5m payout by NIKON to family of suicide victim – overwork induced depression.
- Samsung currently blocking suicide investigation in Korea
- Mazda 110 million yen payout to parents of young worker after death from overwork related depression
- 71 french postal workers in 2010/11
- Suicide of Australian ambulance crew member – manager told him to toughen up after reports of bullying.
- Eurodisney – 3 workers in 8 weeks



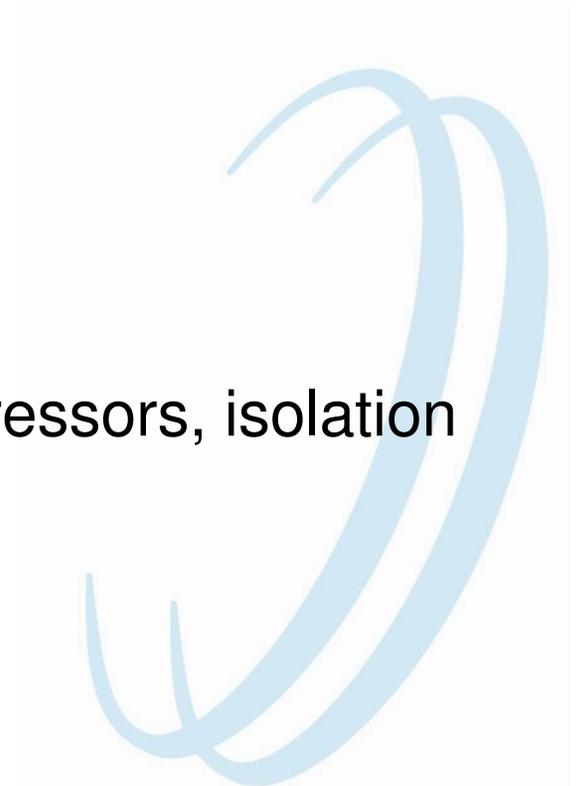
Risk factors

Occupations

- Medical staff – Doctors & anesthetists,
- Vets
- Isolating occupations – farmers, artists, shift workers
- Law enforcement & military
- Temporary staff

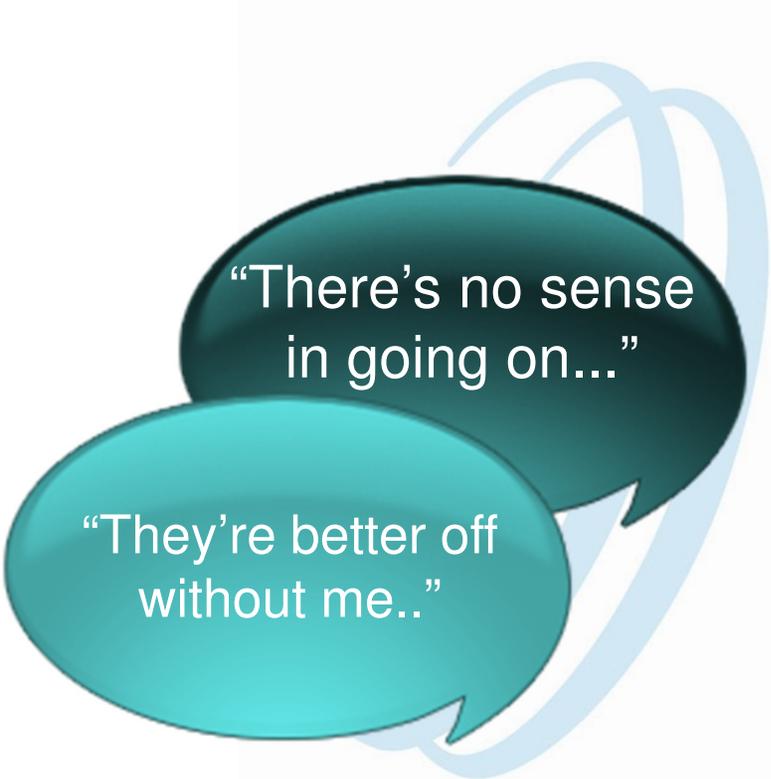
Other

- Health status – Mental & physical
- Environment – financial & relationship stressors, isolation
- Events – failure, loss, trauma



Warning signs

- Purposeless, loss of interest
- Hopelessness/helplessness
- Loss, relationship breakdown
- Substance abuse
- Withdrawal
- Anger/recklessness
- Not planning ahead



“There’s no sense
in going on...”

“They’re better off
without me..”



Challenges to Help-seeking

- Stigma
- Fear of demotion, or no future promotions
- Fear of being treated differently
- Fear of judgement on competency or being treated differently by co-workers
- Difficulty attending daytime appointments
- Avoidance

BUT.....

- Co-workers can notice early signs
- Workplace Occ Health & Employee Assistance Programmes
- Strong connections/relationships
- Supportive & safe environment



When suicide happens.....

- ▶ Grief across work community
- ▶ Guilt – management & co-workers
- ▶ Blame
- ▶ Fear & confusion

What needs to happen....

- ▶ Early communication & time to absorb
- ▶ Caring atmosphere
- ▶ Offer of Support – to *all*
- ▶ Moments of dignity (locker/desk clear out, remembrance service/minute)

- Refer: Breaking the Silence in the workplace, Irish Hospice Foundation publication



Taking on the issue....

“Few managers currently have sufficient knowledge and skills to recognise and manage mental health problems at work or deal with a suicidal worker” (WHO, 2006)

What works?

- Training including instruction on risk factors, protective factors, steps to take when risk is identified, as a key element in suicide prevention programmes (Paul & Jones, 2009)
- Supported employee counselling programmes &/or efficient referral pathways for all staff
- Restricting or eliminating access to lethal means
- Active wellness programmes, including exercise incentives
- Strong management- worker communications – particularly during times of uncertainty.

Supporting you.....

Workforce training

- Applied Suicide Interventions Skills Training (ASIST) 2-day course delivered by HSCTs free of charge to range of sectors. Explores attitudes towards Suicide, signs & risks, and teaches skills aimed at intervening when someone is in a suicide crisis.
- Mental Health First Aid – 2 day course delivered by HSCTs free of charge to range of sectors. Aiming to increase knowledge around main mental health disorders and how to respond to mental health issues & crises
- SafeTALK – 3 hour course aimed at basic introduction to suicide issue and how to help someone in difficulty.

Support Options

- Employee Assisted Support Programme (EAP)
- LIFELINE – 24hr Helpline for anyone in emotional or mental health crisis. 1-1 counselling follow-up available. 0808 808 8000
- The Samaritans – Listening Ear to those in Distress- 08457 90 90 90
- Aware Defeat Depression – provide mental health support and self-help groups



Contacts for training;

Health Improvement Service within each Health & Social Care Trust have responsibility for co-ordinating mental health & suicide prevention training across sectors

Or

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