

NCFE

CACHE



Purpose statement

**NCFE Level 3 Award in STEPS Towards Suicide
Reduction
QN: 603/6064/1**

Overview

Statistics show that suicide accounts for 3 times more deaths than road traffic accidents in the United Kingdom,¹ and Samaritans' Suicide Statistics Report states that suicide is the biggest killer of young people aged 16–24.²

Suicide is preventable. However, stigma around suicide at a societal level is a risk factor which prevents people from seeking help.³ The stigma of talking about suicide is widespread and is an area this qualification aims to address.

This qualification has been developed in collaboration with Big Dog Little Dog (BDLD), to provide learners with the skills to recognise individuals at suicide risk and have a conversation with the individual. Mental health charity Mind explains that having a conversation with someone who feels suicidal may be their first step towards getting help and support.⁴ This qualification will provide learners with the skills to approach a conversation with an individual at suicide risk, following the STEPS approach developed by BDLD. Learners will also be able to understand an individual's circumstances and support preferences, and signpost them to appropriate support services.

Purpose

The qualification will provide learners with skills and understanding to support those at risk of suicide. The learner will identify potential triggers, recognise signs displayed by an individual who may be struggling to cope and know how to approach a conversation with the individual about their mental health including their level of suicidal intent.

The learner will develop skills to support their understanding of this specific area of mental health in a frontline work setting. They will be able to apply these skills by following the STEPS approach to a conversation with an individual at suicide risk, including knowing how to approach the conversation, offer support and signpost to professional support services. The learner will also understand support strategies and referral processes.

¹ Department for Transport, [Reported road casualties in Great Britain](#): Main results 2018 (25 July 2019) and Office for National Statistics, [Suicides in the UK: 2018 registrations](#) (3 September 2019)

² Samaritans, [Suicide statistics report](#) (December 2019)

³ Mental Health Foundation, [Suicide](#)

⁴ Mind, [Supporting someone who feels suicidal](#)

Who is the qualification for?

This qualification is aimed at learners in a frontline care or support role who may need to have a conversation with individuals at suicide risk. It will enable the learner to follow the STEPS approach to the conversation so that individuals at suicide risk are listened to, supported and signposted to professional support services.

Learners may have an interest in suicide awareness or be in a role contributing to suicide prevention in the workplace or a variety of settings. The qualification will provide an understanding of suicide risk factors that may impact an individual. It will also give learners a framework with which they can structure a conversation with an individual at risk of suicide.

What will the qualification cover?

The qualification will provide learners with the 7 stages of the STEPS approach to supporting individuals who may be at suicidal risk through conversation. They will understand how to identify risk, consider challenges an individual may face and how their emotional response to the situation might lead to suicidal thoughts. The learner will understand how to facilitate a conversation where the individual is encouraged to discuss the underlying issues, their thoughts and feelings. The learner will gain skills in how to approach direct questioning about the individual's level of intent to attempt suicide through simulated conversations following the STEPS approach.

The learner will know how to encourage the individual to take control of their situation by involving them in a positive solution-focused response. They will learn how to signpost the individual to professional support where appropriate. The learner will evaluate and reflect upon their approach to the conversation and observe others leading a similar conversation. Learners will be encouraged to explore techniques for looking after their own mental health and wellbeing as part of this qualification.

Knowledge and skills

The learner will acquire key skills in:

- identifying stressors and risk factors
- recognising tolerance levels
- understanding the impact of coping strategies
- recognising different thoughts and behaviours
- listening and empathy
- having a conversation with an individual at suicide risk
- reflection and evaluation techniques

This qualification would complement:

- NCFE CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Awareness of Mental Health Problems (601/3438/0)
- NCFE CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Mental Health Awareness (600/6134/0)
- NCFE CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Working with People with Mental Health Needs (601/3434/3)
- NCFE CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Children and Young People's Mental Health (603/2813/7)
- NCFE CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Advocacy in the Workplace (603/5148/2)

Letters of support have been provided by:

- Academy Transformation Trust
- New College Durham
- Newcastle College
- Top Tier Training

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