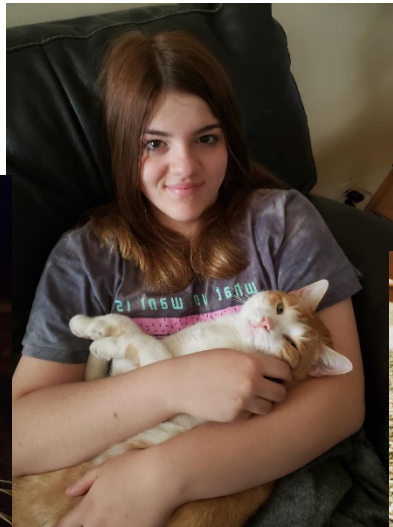


# QPR: Question, Persuade, and Refer: Three Steps Anyone Can Learn To Help Prevent Suicide

Megan E. Williams: GBA, CCFP  
MedVet

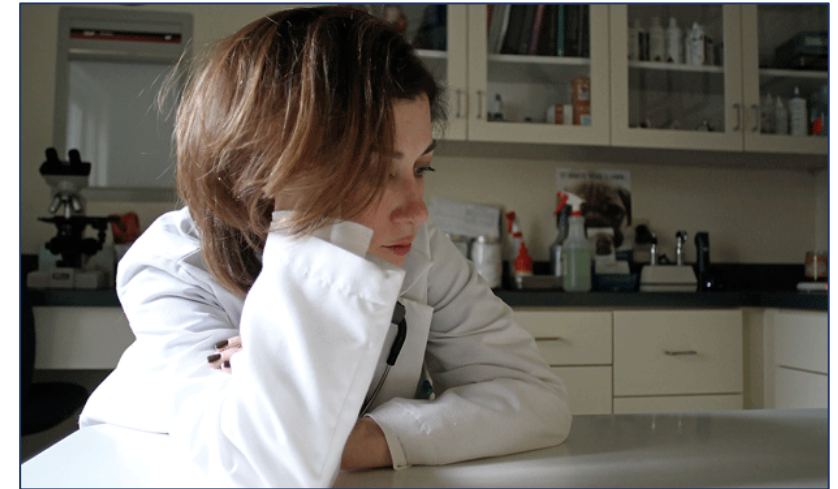
# About Me

- I am not a mental health professional (and I don't play one on TV)
- 25 years experience in the veterinary profession
- 10 years with MedVet
- Certified Compassion Fatigue Professional
- QPR Trained
- I now have and have always had too many pets



# Suicide: Let's Talk About It

- Suicide is a global epidemic
  - 1 million people worldwide die by suicide each year
  - Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US.
  - In 2019 47,511 Americans died by suicide
- Studies have identified a link between suicide and occupation
- Veterinary profession rate of suicide:
  - 2X more than the medical profession
  - 3X more than the general population



Many adults **think about** suicide or **attempt** suicide.

Seriously thought about suicide:

**12 million**

Made a plan for suicide:

**3.5 million**

Attempted suicide:

**1.4 million**

# A Day in the Life of a Veterinary Professional



# Additional Risk Factors

- Personality
- Professional Isolation
- Work-related stressors
- Exposure to death
- Other mental illness\*/Outside Stressors
- Compassion Fatigue
- Access to and knowledge of means

\*90% of suicides have underlying mental health disorder

- 2018 NCBI study/US National Library of Medicine





# Warning Signs

## Talk

- Being a burden to others
- Experiencing unbearable pain
- Direct threats of killing themselves
- Feeling trapped
- Having no reason to live/go on

## Behavior

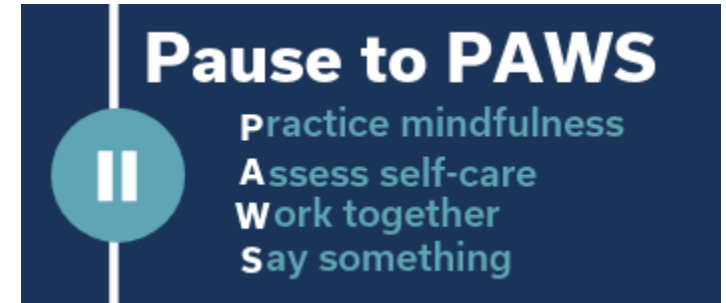
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawing from activities
- Giving away prized possessions
- Isolating from friends and family
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online for materials/means
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Acting recklessly
- Aggression

## Mood

- Depression
- Loss of interest
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Humiliation
- Rage

# What can you do?

- Be kind
- Take care of yourself
- Ask if your coworkers are ok
- Implement workplace wellbeing initiatives:
  - Wellbeing/Quiet Rooms
  - Outdoor eating space
  - Lunch & Learns
  - Healthier snack options
  - Art Corner/Art Shows
  - Debrief as a group
- Post Suicide Prevention Resources on your Controlled Lock Box



# What can you do?

- Know the signs that someone may be considering suicide
  - Acting depressed
  - Direct threats
  - Indirect verbal clues
    - “I can’t go on” or “I just want out”
    - Saying goodbye or giving away possessions
    - Alcohol or drug abuse
- Learn and Use QPR

The Lifeline  
is **FREE**,  
confidential, and  
always available.

**HELP**  
a loved one,  
a friend,  
or yourself.

Community crisis centers  
answer Lifeline calls.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
www.samhsa.gov

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# Ask a Question, Save a Life!

**QPR=**

**1 Question    2 Persuade    3 Refer**

**3 simple steps that anyone can learn to  
help save a life from suicide!**



# QPR: How to Use It

## Question:

- (Indirect) Are you happy? (Direct) Are you thinking of killing yourself?
- LISTEN to what they say. Don't jump to respond.



# QPR: How to Use It

## Persuade:

Again, LISTEN to what they say. Give them your full attention and don't rush to judgement.

- OFFER THEM HOPE. The feeling of hopelessness, not depression is the main driver in suicidal thoughts.
- “We will get through this. Will you let me get you some help?”



# QPR: How to Use It

## Refer:

Taking them directly to a treatment facility is the best option but you can also call and schedule an appointment or provide a suicide prevention hotline #.

- Give them the info and get a commitment from them to get help.



# Now What?

- Recognize your own feelings
  - Stress/Sadness
  - Anger
  - Regret
- Seek help and/or talk about it with someone you trust
- Call the Suicide Prevention Hotline when you just aren't sure
- It's ok to ask for help





# Practice



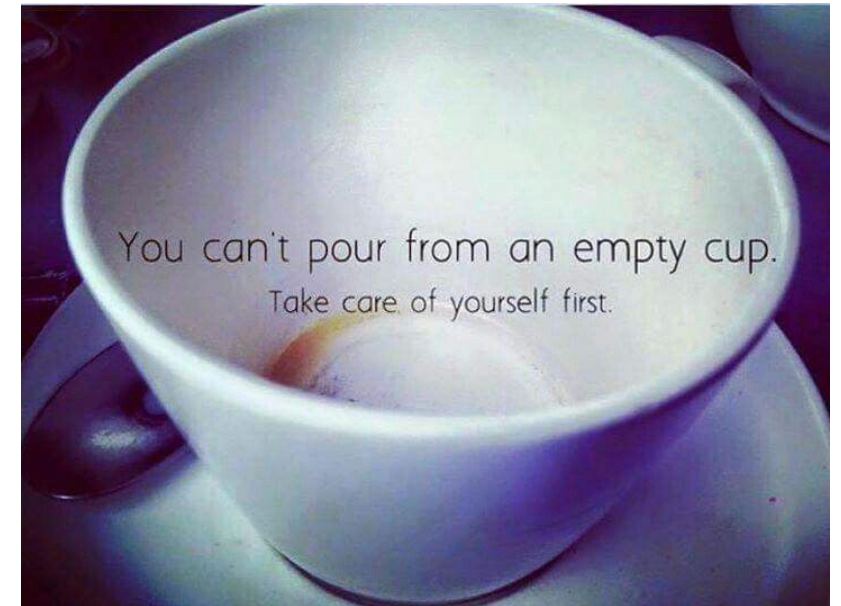
To become comfortable helping someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice QPR at least once with a friend, family member, colleague or co-worker.

The goal of this practice is to give you the opportunity to practice listening to the problems that cause people to think about suicide and to ask about directly about suicide in a frank and compassionate manner. The more natural the act of asking the suicide question is, the easier it will be to ask it in future when and if you need to.

# Now what?

- Continue to care for your own wellbeing
- Practice QPR

You could save a life.....



*Contact your medical provider if you have signs or symptoms of a serious medical condition including depression, anxiety or other mental health issues. If you have an emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.*



# Questions?