

Crisis Management Team Personnel

Appendix A

Crisis Management Team Matrix

Create a contact list for your Crisis Management Team for use during crisis preparation and mitigation.

Crisis Management Team	Office	Cell	Home
Director of Player Engagement			
General Manager			
Peer Support(s)			
Director of Security			
Director of Human Resources			
Vice President of Public Relations			
Head Trainer			
Team Physician			
Mental Health Professional			
Team Chaplain			

Responsibilities in Crisis Preparation and Response

Appendix B

Crisis Responsibilities Matrix

Assign responsibilities to your Crisis Management Team or other identified individuals to aid in crisis preparation and response.

Steps	Responsible Party	Relevant Resources	Target Date
Before a Crisis			
Build Organizational Resilience			
Develop relationships with local mental health professionals	Lead: Backup:		
Provide trainings on life skills and mental wellness	Lead: Backup:		
Review signs of mental health problems and resources	Lead: Lead: Lead: Lead: Lead:		
Cultivate peer supports	Lead: Backup:		

Steps	Responsible Party	Relevant Resources	Target Date
Develop and Maintain Crisis Management Team			
Create Crisis Management Team	Lead: Backup:		
Hold regular meetings and revise crisis plans	Lead: Backup:		
Practice crisis drills	Lead: Backup:		
Create and revise protocols for emotional crises	Lead: Backup:		
Form a self-care plan	All Members	Self-Care for Members of the Crisis Management Team	
Maintain lists of internal and external contacts	Lead: Backup:		
Adopt memorialization policies	Lead: Backup:		

Steps	Responsible Party	Relevant Resources	Target Date
After a Crisis			
Activate the Crisis Management Team			
Verify the death and/or facts of the case	Lead: Backup:		
Notify members of Crisis Management Team	Lead: Backup:		
Hold immediate Crisis Management Team meeting	Lead: Backup:	Sample Agenda for Activated Crisis Management Team Meeting	
Schedule crisis response services (e.g., counselors on scene, staff briefings)	Lead: Backup:		
Internal Communication			
Reach out to next of kin	Lead: Backup:	List of Grief and Bereavement Resources	
Notify players, former players, and staff	Lead: Backup:	Sample Talking Points for Notifying Players and Staff, in Person, of a Death Sample Internal Memo for Notifying Staff of a Suicide or Homicide	
Distribute printed resources	Lead: Backup:		

Steps	Responsible Party	Relevant Resources	Target Date
External Communication			
Notify NFL Player Engagement and NFL Life Line	Lead: Backup:		
Notify other teams, if necessary	Lead: Backup:		
Provide statement to the media	Lead: Backup:	<p>Sample News Release for Notifying the Media of a High-Profile Suicide</p> <p>Sample News Release for Notifying the Media of a High-Profile Death, Manner Undetermined</p> <p>Sample News Release for Notifying the Media of a High-Profile Death by Other Manner, Including Natural, Accident, Homicide</p> <p>Sample Talking Points for Working With the Media</p>	

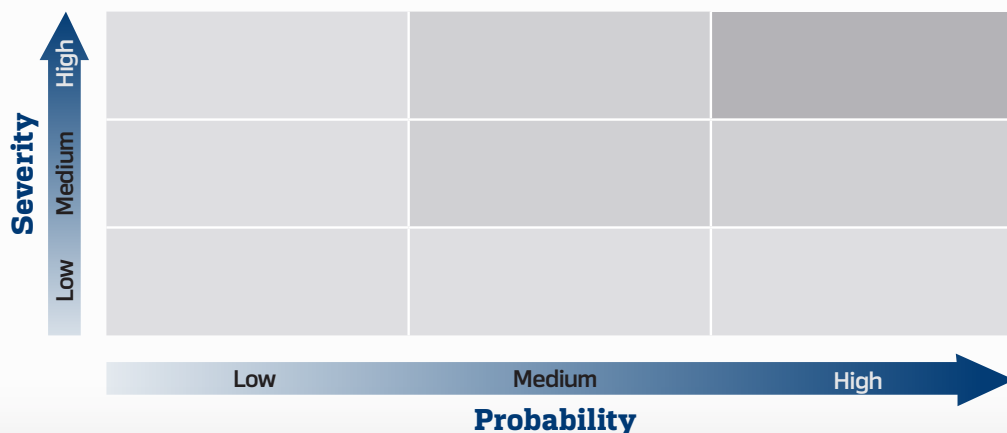
Steps	Responsible Party	Relevant Resources	Target Date
Ongoing Support and Follow-Up			
Identify high-risk individuals	Lead: Backup:	High-Risk Identification Form	
Hold end-of-season team meeting	Lead: Backup:	Sample Talking Points for End-of-Season Meeting Sample Internal Memo for End-of-Season Support	
Distribute printed resources	Lead: Backup:		
Conduct player survey	Lead: Backup:	Crisis Response Player Feedback Survey	
Conduct Crisis Response Review	Lead: Backup:		
Follow high-risk individuals through off-season	Lead: Backup:		

Risk Analysis Worksheets

Risk Analysis

Some potential risks to an NFL team might be:

- Unexpected death (by natural causes, suicide, or homicide) of a current player, former player, coach, or team staff
- Expected death of a current player, former player, coach, or team staff
- Serious injury of a current player, former player, coach, or team staff
- Accidents causing injury on team property
- Domestic violence involving a current player, former player, coach, or team staff
- Workplace violence involving a current player, former player, coach, or team staff
- Stalking/threats of violence against a current player, former player, coach, or team staff
- Aviation accident or incident involving team aircraft
- Natural disasters impacting the team facility or home of anyone within the organization
- Illegal activity by a current player, former player, coach, or team staff
- Acts of terrorism at a team facility



Mitigation

Key to preparation for a crisis is mitigation. Each risk must be examined individually to identify potential ways in which the probability or severity of the event might be reduced. Where applicable, strategies may be identified to reduce or eliminate the risk. Annually, the Crisis Management Team will review all identified risks and:

- Develop strategies to reduce or eliminate risk
- Identify responsible risk reduction staff
- Develop timelines for completion of each risk reduction task
- Identify needed resources to reduce risk
- Conduct training (when applicable) on changes to procedures and other risk reduction methods
- Implement mitigation strategies

Some strategies that assist in risk mitigation are:

- A process for the release of players, coaches, and team staff that is respectful and assistive
- A safety review of the team's physical locations
- A new-hire orientation and presentation for current players, former players, coaches, and team staff on the team's philosophy of seeking assistance and preparation/response to traumatic events
- Dissemination of the Crisis Management Plan throughout the organization (starting with leadership and the Crisis Management Team and then trickling down)
- Securing of identified necessary external resources
- A comprehensive training program within the organization on topics such as suicide prevention, conflict resolution/violence, preventing domestic violence, treating substance abuse, managing stress, maintaining general mental health and physical wellness, dealing with stalkers, etc.

Event	Probability (low, medium, high)	Severity (low, medium, high)	Mitigation
Unexpected death (accidental, natural causes, suicide, or homicide)			
Expected death			
Serious injury			
Accidents causing injuries on team property			
Domestic violence			
Workplace violence			
Stalking/threats of violence against team personnel			
Aviation accident or incident involving team aircraft			
Natural disasters impacting team facility or home of anyone within the organization			
Illegal activity committed by team personnel			
Acts of terrorism at a team facility			

Self-Care for Members of the Crisis Management Team

Appendix D

Stress and Self-Care Strategies

At one time or another, your important role on the Crisis Management Team may leave you feeling overwhelmed and pushed to your limit. As an important resource to your team, you may also feel vulnerable, especially when dealing with highly stressful or traumatic events. These feelings are normal responses to challenging situations, and it is important that you practice good self-care so that you can be your best for your team, your family, and yourself.

Causes of Increased Stress

- Increased demand for your time (often during significant events)
- Limited resources
- Juggling multiple tasks
- Lack of control over a situation
- High expectations placed on you
- Difficulties maintaining balance of team needs and self-care needs (e.g., not enough time in the day to be with family, eat well, sleep, or exercise)

Signs of Being Overwhelmed

- Anger
- Depression
- Mental/physical exhaustion
- Irritability
- Sleep and/or appetite disturbance
- Unreasonable personal expectations
- Reluctance to take time off
- Feelings of not being caught up/not having enough time
- Feeling there is more work than you are able to do
- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating

Self-Care Strategies

- **Rely on your support systems.** Spend time with supportive people in your life. Talk about your concerns; enjoy sharing common interests and conversation with them for a while.
- **Make time, several times a day, to take a break.** Leave work for lunch or a walk, find a quiet place to meditate, listen to relaxing music, or practice breathing exercises.
- **Get enough rest and nourishment.** Do your best to maintain regular, routine sleeping and eating habits. Put away work materials or highly stimulating reading, turn off the television, or stop other activities at least an hour before bedtime. Include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in your diet.
- **Take time to engage in activities you enjoy, even if only briefly.** Take part in personal creative pursuits, athletic activities, attending a show or event, or eating out with friends. Don't forget that play is an important balancing factor against work, even if it is in small doses during high-demand times.
- **Practice good stress management in your personal life.** Avoid increased use of alcohol or misuse of drugs. Schedule time to practice relaxation methods, engage in physical exercise, and spend time with friends or family.



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- **Set realistic goals and expectations.** Focus on what's important and keep perspective of the big picture. Determine the one or two most critical, achievable tasks for you to accomplish each day and focus on achieving those goals.
- **Delegate when you can.** When your stress or workload is high, it can be difficult to let go and rely on others to complete tasks. Whenever possible, assign tasks to others on your team so you can focus on those tasks that require your expertise.
- **Stay organized.** Arrange to-do lists and categorize tasks by high, medium, and low priorities. Keep a calendar of deadlines so that you can plan your schedule.
- **Set good boundaries.** Remember that saying “no” to some requests allows you to say “yes” to the things that are most important.
- **Ask for resources you need.** Some demands may be beyond your area of expertise or are more than you can handle alone. It is OK to recognize and acknowledge that you need additional assistance and support to responsibly meet your team's needs.

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed and struggling to cope, **support is here for you** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Members of the NFL family—current and former players, coaches, team and league staff, and their family members—can call the independent, confidential NFL Life Line at **(800) 506-0078**, or go to www.NFLLifeLine.org to chat online or take a self-check quiz. Members of the NFL family can also access counseling and mental health support through the NFL's Employee Assistance Program by calling Cigna at **(866) 421-8628**.

Sample Agenda for Activated Crisis Management Team Meeting

Appendix E

Sample Agenda

Use this sample agenda to structure meetings of the activated Crisis Management Team after a crisis.

Time	Item	Notes
	Introduce new members and/or outside individuals brought in to assist (e.g., NFL Life Line staff, local mental health professionals)	
	Share accurate information about the event	
	Review crisis response roles	See Responsibilities in Crisis Preparation and Response
	Review who is the designated media spokesperson and instruct members to refer all media inquiries to him or her	
	Explain plans for the day, including provision of crisis intervention services	
	Discuss how to identify potentially high-risk individuals and the referral process	Distribute High-Risk Identification Forms
	Schedule a follow-up meeting	



List of Grief and Bereavement Resources

Appendix F

Grief and Bereavement Resources

NFL Resources

NFL Life Line
(800) 506-0078
www.NFLLifeLine.org

The NFL Life Line is here for the entire NFL family—current and former NFL players, team and league staff, and their family members. Trained counselors are standing by 24/7 to listen and assist. You can also visit www.NFLLifeLine.org to chat online. Support is completely confidential. The NFL Life Line is independently operated by an outside organization, so no confidential information about individuals or their conversations is shared with the NFL, teams, or any other organization. What you say will stay between you and the counselor.

NFL Player Assistance and Counseling Service **(800) 635-4625**

Players and their family members can call to get access to the NFL Player Assistance and Counseling Service administered by Cigna through the NFL's Employee Assistance Program. Eligible current and former players can receive up to eight free counseling sessions and referrals for child care and elder care resources, financial and legal assistance, and other support.

The resources at right are provided as a courtesy, and their inclusion on this list should not be taken to imply endorsement or oversight of any kind by the NFL or its franchises.

General Grief and Bereavement Resources

Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC)
www.adec.org/Coping_With_Loss_New_/3469.htm

ADEC is an interdisciplinary organization in the fields of dying, death, and bereavement. Its website includes resource listings of organizations, books, and websites by loss relationships (e.g., parent, friend, spouse) and type of death.

Bereaved Parents of the USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Bereaved Parents of the USA offers support, understanding, encouragement, and hope to other bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents after the death of a loved one. The organization offers local chapters and a national newsletter.

The Compassionate Friends
www.compassionatefriends.org

A national nonprofit, The Compassionate Friends assists families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and provides information to help others be supportive.

The Dougy Center
www.dougy.org

Through its National Center for Grieving Children and Families, The Dougy Center provides support and training locally, nationally, and internationally to individuals and organizations seeking to assist children in grief.



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The Moyer Foundation

www.moyerfoundation.org

The Moyer Foundation's mission is to empower children in distress by providing education and support—helping them to live healthy and inspired lives. The foundation runs camps nationwide for children who are bereaved (Camp Erin) or affected by an addicted family member (Camp Mariposa).

National Bereavement Resource Guide

www.moyerfoundation.org/nbrg

This guide, sponsored by New York Life and The Moyer Foundation, compiles state and local resources for children and their families experiencing loss.

National Funeral Directors Association

nfda.org/grief-resources

The National Funeral Directors Association supports its members in providing families with meaningful end-of-life services. Its website also offers grief resources for individuals.

Suicide-Specific Grief and Bereavement Resources

Alliance of Hope for Suicide Survivors

www.allianceofhope.org

The Alliance of Hope for Suicide Survivors offers an online community forum and other resources designed by survivors for survivors.

American Association of Suicidology (AAS)

www.suicidology.org/suicide-survivors/suicide-loss-survivors

AAS is a membership organization for those involved in suicide prevention and research, or who have been touched by suicide. Its survivors division offers a support group directory, newsletter (for a fee), and free downloadable pocket guide titled “SOS: A Handbook for Survivors of Suicide.”

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

www.afsp.org/coping-with-suicide

AFSP brings together people across communities and backgrounds to understand and prevent suicide, and to help heal the pain it causes. Find personal stories, information about coping with suicide, and a support group directory on the AFSP website.

Fierce Goodbye: Living in the Shadow of Suicide

www.fiercegoodbye.com

The website and documentary “Fierce Goodbye” focus on stories from people who have experienced suicide in their families or among their loved ones, and how they have found hope amid terrible pain.

SAVE: Suicide Awareness Voices of Education

www.save.org

SAVE believes that suicide should no longer be considered a hidden or taboo topic. Its website includes a support group directory and information on coping with loss.

Suicide: Finding Hope

www.suicidefindinghope.com

The Suicide: Finding Hope website was created by two suicide loss survivors to help other survivors navigate their journey through grief.

The Link's National Resource Center (NRC) for Suicide Prevention and Aftercare

www.thelink.org

The Link's NRC is dedicated to reaching out to those whose lives have been impacted by suicide, and connecting them to available resources.

Sample In-Person Talking Points

Appendix G

Talking Points for Notifying Players and Staff, in Person, of a Death

These talking points offer general guidance to assist in the difficult task of notifying players, former players, and staff members of a death.

In relating facts about a death, keep the facts very general. If the death involved suicide, do not provide details about the method or location of death.

Take control of your mental well-being:

- Mental well-being is just as important as physical well-being.
- We all need support with difficult situations at times.
- Think about how you've coped with difficulties in the past and use those same coping skills now.

Know where to turn:

- Crisis response services
- The team, family members, friends, faith leaders, and health care professionals
- NFL Life Line: (800) 506-0078
- Cigna Employee Assistance Program: (866) 421-8628

Suicide is complex (when death is a suicide):

- It is not caused by a single event, but almost always has several contributing factors.
- An underlying mental disorder, like depression or substance abuse, often contributes to suicide.

Common reactions:

- Everyone reacts to news of a death differently, but there are some common reactions.
- Expressing grief is normal.
- Anger at the deceased is common; it doesn't mean you didn't care about [him/her].
- You may feel guilty or responsible in some way, but we cannot control the actions of others.
- Many people ask "why?" after a death, but we will never really know.

Funeral/memorial arrangements:

- Funeral/memorial arrangements will be arranged by/are being made _____.

Media inquiries:

- Our media spokesperson is _____.
- Do not speak to the media. This is to protect the privacy of the family and team.

Sample Internal Memo

Appendix H

Internal Memo for Notifying Staff of a Suicide or Homicide

Use this sample internal memo to notify staff of a suicide or homicide.

Date: [Date]
To: Staff
From: [Name of Owner]
Re: Death of [Name of Employee]

It is with great sadness that the [TEAM NAME] learned of the reported [accidental death/death/suicide/homicide] of [player/team staff]. [Player/team staff's] death and the circumstances that surround it may cause all of us to experience a range of reactions. We are sharing the facts as we know them and are offering support for those who might need it.

[Player/team staff] [played for/worked for] [TEAM NAME] for the last [number] years and will be remembered for [positive attribute]. On [Saturday night] [s/he] died around [11 p.m.] [DO NOT MENTION PLACE OR METHOD USED FOR SUICIDE]. We may never know all of the factors leading to this tragedy; however, [only use if a suicide and/or homicide] experts agree that there is no single cause or simple explanation for any [suicide/homicide] death.

[Player/team staff's] memorial service will be held on [Jan. 7 at 11 p.m.], and all employees who wish to attend may be excused. The family would like to welcome all of [his/her] friends and colleagues who wish to share in the celebration of [his/her] life.

Some of you may be having difficulty coping with this sudden loss. We have arranged for professionals from [the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and/or the NFL Life Line] to be on-site on [Jan. 8 and 9 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.] During this time, counselors will be on hand to support us and answer any questions we may have.

You can contact our EAP at any time by calling (866) 421-8628. The NFL Life Line [(800) 506-0078] also offers crisis support to every member of the NFL family. The NFL Life Line is a free and confidential service, answered 24/7 by professional counselors.

The family has requested that instead of flowers, those who wish to do so may donate to [charity as shared by the family] in [employee's] memory.

Sample Media News Releases

Appendix I

Sample News Releases After Death

Use these sample news releases to inform the media of different death scenarios.

Sample News Release for notifying the media of a high-profile suicide

The [TEAM NAME] are saddened to learn of the death by suicide of [player/team staff, title/position]. Our hearts and condolences go out to the family and friends at this difficult time. We have spoken with the family and will be sharing the facts as appropriate, and are offering support for those who might need it.

Suicide is a complex, multifaceted, and tragic event, and thus we will not speculate on the causal factors of this death. Rather, we will focus on pulling together and helping the [TEAM NAME] family find support and resources as necessary. For people outside of the [TEAM NAME] family who may be affected by this tragic loss or are struggling with thoughts of suicide, we encourage you to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). The Lifeline is answered 24/7 by trained counselors ready to provide support and resources in your area.

Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide

Research has shown that graphic, sensationalized, or romanticized descriptions of suicides in the news media can contribute to suicide contagion, also known as “copycat” suicides. The media are strongly encouraged to refer to the two-page document “Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide,” which is available at <http://reportingonsuicide.org/Recommendations2012.pdf>.

Sample News Release for notifying the media of a high-profile death, manner undetermined

The [TEAM NAME] are saddened to learn of the death of [player/team staff, title/position]. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends at this difficult time. At this time the manner of death is undetermined, and we will not speculate on the manner and cause of death, or any details that surround it.

We are in contact with the family and will be sharing the facts as appropriate, and are offering support for those who might need it. We will focus on pulling together and helping the [TEAM NAME] family find support and resources as necessary. For people outside of the [TEAM NAME] family who may be affected by this tragic loss, we encourage you to reach out to family, friends, faith leaders, and health care professionals for support.



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Communicating With the Media Sample News Release for notifying the media of a high-profile death by other manner, including natural, accident, homicide

The [TEAM NAME] are saddened to learn of the death of [player/team staff, title/position]. Our sympathies and condolences go out to the family and friends at this difficult time. We have spoken with the family and have offered to assist them in any way possible.

We will focus on pulling together and helping the [TEAM NAME] family find support and resources as necessary. For people outside of the [TEAM NAME] family who may be affected by this tragic loss, we encourage you to reach out to family, friends, faith leaders, and health care professionals for support.

Expert consultation on crisis messaging and communicating about suicide is available from the NFL Life Line Team.

For more information, contact NFL Life Line at **(800) 506-0078** and ask the crisis counselor to have a member of the NFL Life Line Crisis Communications Team connect with you for a consultation.

Sample Media Talking Points

Appendix J

Media Talking Points

These talking points are intended to provide general guidance to assist in fielding media inquiries.

Team response to the tragedy

- We are heartbroken over this death.
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to [his/her] family and friends, and the entire community.
- We are assisting the family in every way possible.
- We will remember [him/her] for [his/her] contributions to family, friends, and the team, rather than remembering [him/her] for the way in which [he/she] died.

Pulling together

- Everyone reacts to tragedy differently.
- Crisis response services are available to NFL players, former players, and staff members.
- We are a team, on and off the field, and will continue to support each other.

Suicide complexity

- It is not caused by a single event, but almost always has several contributing factors.
- An underlying mental disorder, like depression or substance abuse, often contributes to suicide.

Crisis resources

- There are places to turn if you or someone you know is in crisis.
- Family members, friends, faith leaders, and health care professionals can offer support in times of crisis.
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** is available for the general public. (The NFL Life Line is for members of the NFL family.)

Team response to the media

- Research has shown that graphic, sensationalized, or romanticized descriptions of suicides in the news media can contribute to suicide contagion, also known as “copycat” suicides.
- The media are strongly encouraged to refer to the two-page document “Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide,” available at <http://reportingonsuicide.org/Recommendations2012.pdf>.
- Media reports should include links to or information about helpful resources, such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

High-Risk Identification Form

Appendix K

Identification Form for High-Risk Individuals

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Please complete this form and return it to the appropriate Crisis Management Team member for following up with high-risk individuals. He or she may contact you with additional questions.

Who initiated the referral?

Name:

Title/Position/Department:

Contact Number:

Date:

Time:

About the individual

Name:

Title/Position/Department:

Contact Number (if known):

Please check all that apply, if known:

- ☐ Had a history of suicide attempts
- ☐ Had a history of mental health problems, emotional difficulties, or substance abuse, or is in treatment
- ☐ Had personal experience with the manner of death (e.g., recently lost a family member to homicide or suicide, was in a serious car crash himself)
- ☐ Is dealing with stressful life events such as a death or divorce
- ☐ Was an eyewitness to the death
- ☐ Was in a romantic relationship with the deceased
- ☐ Was a close friend or colleague of the deceased
- ☐ Received a phone call, text, or other communication from the deceased just prior to the death
- ☐ Fought or had a contentious relationship with the deceased

Shows:

- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Inappropriate emotional response
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Agitation
- ☐ Confusion
- ☐ Shortened attention span
- ☐ Preoccupation with the event
- ☐ Social withdrawal
- ☐ Emotional outbursts, loss of control
- ☐ Changes from typical behavior



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Additional reason(s) for concern (please describe in detail and provide any information relevant to checked boxes):

Actions taken, if any:

What:

When:

By whom:

Outcome:

Recommendations:

Follow-up

Actions taken:

What:

When:

By whom:

Outcome:

Sample Team Discussion Points

Appendix L

Sample Team Discussion Points for End-of-Season Team Meeting

These discussion points are intended to provide general guidance to assist in holding a team meeting at the end of a season in which a crisis occurred.

“During this season, our team has experienced an event that impacted us all in some way.”

- Provide a brief overview statement—from a personal perspective—about the event and how it affected the team, staff, and families.

“Our team, along with the NFL, helped hold us together and worked to provide support to players, former players, coaches, team personnel, and their families.”

- Talk about support to the team and affected people following the event (provide specific examples or model behaviors of support or assistance).

“Routines and togetherness play a big role in keeping us healthy through tough times.”

- Underscore how supporting one another—individually, as players, and as a team—has made a difference, and how the routines of our work—practices, meetings, drills, games, and travel—also keep us going and help us cope with stress.

“Stay connected in the off-season.”

- Say that even though team members are going in separate directions, they need to stay connected, maintain routines, and lean on one another. They need to check in with one another, and remember that they’re here for one another.

“During difficult times like these, relying on your support system [within the team and at home] is vital.”

- Point out who is available during the off-season to provide support (e.g., Director of Player Engagement and team mental health professional).

“Seek assistance or extra support if you or someone you know needs it.”

- Note that people may still be struggling to make sense of what has happened, and this can affect their personal lives and relationships.
- The NFL has resources available 24/7 that can provide assistance off the field:
 - The NFL Life Line offers information about emotional wellness, a self-check quiz, videos from former NFL players, and a confidential, independent help line and online chat service—all there for support with personal, relationship, or emotional issues. Members of the NFL family can call (800) 506-0078 or visit www.NFLLifeLine.org to chat online.
 - Cigna’s Total Wellness resources are available at (866) 421-8628.
 - Tell everyone to put these phone numbers in their phones now, before they leave.

“We have provided information on support and resources for you.”

- Leave information about team or NFL support resources at the lockers, pass them around to players, and/or email them.

“We do not have to go through our troubles alone.”

- Tell them, “We will get through this together.”



Internal End-of-Season Memo

Appendix M

Internal Memo for End-of-Season Support

Date: [Date]

To: Players

From: [Coach and/or Support Staff]

Re: Continuing support during the off-season

Earlier this season, our team experienced a great loss that has impacted all of us in some way. The team members, with the help of NFL resources, have held together and supported each other. Now that the season is ending, it is important to know where to get support during the off-season.

If you or someone you know needs extra assistance or support, there are several places to turn:

- Our Director of Player Engagement [insert name and number] and our team mental health professional [insert name and number] are here to help you take control of your mental well-being.
- The **NFL Life Line**—(800) 506-0078 and www.NFLLifeLine.org—offers information about emotional wellness, a self-check quiz, video testimonials from former NFL players, and a confidential, independent help line and online chat service—all here for you or someone you care about to offer support with personal, relationship, or emotional issues.
- Through Cigna's **Employee Assistance Program**, (866) 421-8628, you can access counseling and mental health support.

During the season, our practices, meetings, drills, games, and travel provided a very structured routine. Routines like these are crucial to staying healthy and active, and coping with stress. Make sure you find your own routine during the off-season.

The Director of Player Engagement or team mental health professional may ask to check in with you during the off-season to help us all stay connected.

Crisis Response Player Feedback Survey

Appendix N

Player Survey

Thank you for completing this evaluation. This survey is intended to obtain your feedback on the resources provided to you earlier this season after the passing of your teammate. It is important to us to evaluate those resources provided during that difficult time, and your feedback will help us improve them.

Survey responses will be used only for evaluation purposes and to improve resources for our players. Your survey response is anonymous; we will have no way to identify the person submitting the response unless you identify yourself. Please answer honestly and completely.

1. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (please choose only one response per statement):

a. The club informed players of the resources and services available to them after the passing of a teammate.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

b. The club provided the support players needed to address emotional health issues after the passing of a teammate.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

c. I know how to access the resources and services the club has to assist me and (if applicable) my family with emotional health issues when or if the need arises.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

d. When or if needed, I would be comfortable using the resources and services the club has in place to assist with emotional health issues.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

2. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (please choose only one response per statement):

a. I am aware of how to access the NFL Life Line.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

b. When or if needed, I would use the NFL Life Line.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

c. I believe my teammates are aware of how to access the NFL Lifeline.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

d. When or if needed, I believe my teammates would use the NFL Life Line.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

e. I am aware of how to access the resources provided by the League Office/NFL Player Engagement (NFLPE) to assist players with emotional health issues.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

f. When or if needed, I would use League Office/ NFLPE resources to assist me in addressing emotional health issues.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

g. I believe my teammates are aware of how to access the resources provided by the League Office/NFLPE to assist players with emotional health issues.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

h. When or if needed, I believe my teammates would use League Office/NFLPE resources to assist them in addressing emotional health issues.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. Who would you most likely reach out to if or when you were in need of emotional support? (Please check all that apply.)

- ☐ NFL Life Line
- ☐ Current teammate
- ☐ Current coach
- ☐ Former teammate
- ☐ Former coach
- ☐ Team physician
- ☐ Director of Player Engagement
- ☐ Team chaplain
- ☐ Personal chaplain
- ☐ Spouse or significant other
- ☐ Parent or other family member
- ☐ Non-NFL friend
- ☐ No one
- ☐ Other – please specify

4. What additional resources or services would you like to see the club provide when a teammate passes away?

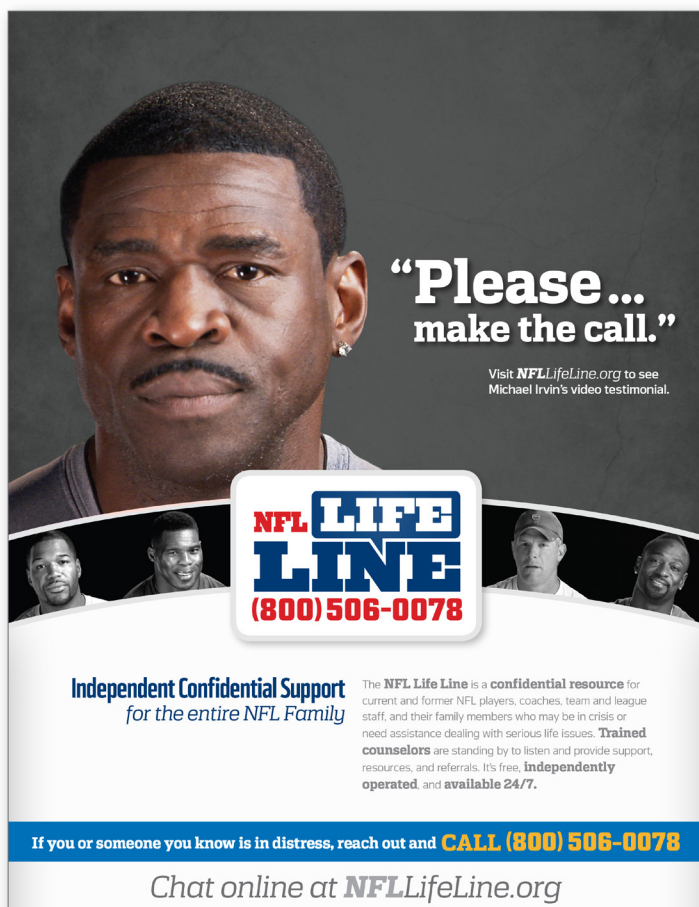
5. What additional resources or services would you like to see the League Office/NFLPE provide when a teammate passes away?

6. Please provide any additional feedback you have about how the club and League Office/NFLPE responded earlier this season, and how you think they should have responded differently.

NFL Life Line Resource Materials

NFL Life Line two-page information sheet

8.5" x 11"



“Please... make the call.”

Visit NFLLifeLine.org to see Michael Irvin's video testimonial.

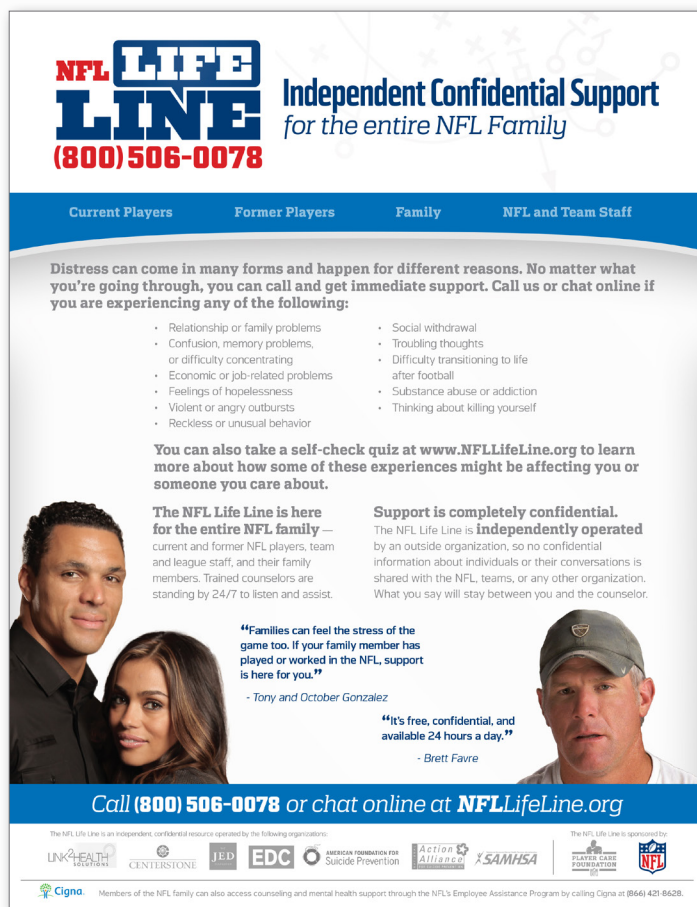
NFL LIFE LINE
(800) 506-0078

Independent Confidential Support
for the entire NFL Family

The **NFL Life Line** is a confidential resource for current and former NFL players, coaches, team and league staff, and their family members who may be in crisis or need assistance dealing with serious life issues. **Trained counselors** are standing by to listen and provide support, resources, and referrals. It's free, **independently operated**, and **available 24/7**.

If you or someone you know is in distress, reach out and **CALL (800) 506-0078**

Chat online at NFLLifeLine.org



NFL LIFE LINE
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Independent Confidential Support
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Current Players Former Players Family NFL and Team Staff

Distress can come in many forms and happen for different reasons. No matter what you're going through, you can call and get immediate support. Call us or chat online if you are experiencing any of the following:

- Relationship or family problems
- Confusion, memory problems, or difficulty concentrating
- Economic or job-related problems
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Violent or angry outbursts
- Reckless or unusual behavior
- Social withdrawal
- Troubling thoughts
- Difficulty transitioning to life after football
- Substance abuse or addiction
- Thinking about killing yourself

You can also take a self-check quiz at www.NFLLifeLine.org to learn more about how some of these experiences might be affecting you or someone you care about.

The NFL Life Line is here for the entire NFL family — current and former NFL players, team and league staff, and their family members. Trained counselors are standing by 24/7 to listen and assist.

Support is completely confidential. The NFL Life Line is **independently operated** by an outside organization, so no confidential information about individuals or their conversations is shared with the NFL, teams, or any other organization. What you say will stay between you and the counselor.

“Families can feel the stress of the game too. If your family member has played or worked in the NFL, support is here for you.”
- Tony and October Gonzalez

“It's free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day.”
- Brett Favre

Call (800) 506-0078 or chat online at NFLLifeLine.org

The NFL Life Line is an independent, confidential resource operated by the following organizations:

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN HEALTH SYSTEM CENTERSTONE JED EDC AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION ALLIANCE SAMHSA

The NFL Life Line is sponsored by:

PLAYER CARE PRODUCTION NFL

Cigna Members of the NFL family can also access counseling and mental health support through the NFL's Employee Assistance Program by calling Cigna at (866) 421-8628.



Independent Confidential Support
for the entire NFL Family

NFL Life Line wallet card

3.375" x 2.125"



Independent Confidential Support **CALL (800) 506-0078**

**Distress can come in many forms and happen for different reasons.
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*Call (800) 506-0078 or chat online at **NFLLifeLine.org***

Coping With a Traumatic Event

Information about Coping With a Traumatic Event

Exposure to a traumatic event can have a strong impact on an individual's well-being, and the road to recovery can involve many intense, complicated feelings and emotions. It's a process that takes time, and you may not be totally back on track after a day, a week, or a month. Understanding how people typically react to trauma can be helpful in the recovery process.

What might I experience after a traumatic event?

A traumatic event can affect people emotionally, physically, and mentally. These experiences are considered "normal reactions to abnormal events," and will usually decrease with time. Below are some common feelings you may experience:

- Continued thoughts and images of the event
- Wanting to stay away from the scene of the event and/or fear of returning to work
- Difficulty concentrating, or feeling "dazed" or confused
- Difficulty handling tasks or making decisions
- Increased agitation, restlessness, or frequent sitting and staring into space
- Feelings of guilt or wishing you could have done something differently
- Wanting to separate yourself from family members, co-workers, and friends
- Nightmares or trouble sleeping
- Headaches or other physical reactions such as stomachaches or feeling tired all the time
- A desire to use alcohol or drugs to numb your feelings

What can I do to feel better after a traumatic event?

If you have seen or been touched by a traumatic event, the following actions may help you deal with what you're feeling:

- **Talk to someone; stay connected.** Use your support system. Talk to friends, your spouse, family members, or a counselor—people who are likely to be supportive and understanding. Talking about the event seems to help many people, even though you may feel uncomfortable discussing it. Staying connected with others during this stressful period is one of the best things you can do to help you feel better sooner.
- **Exercise and relax.** Physical exercise can be physically grounding, mentally distracting, and helpful in reducing the tension related to the traumatic event. Relaxation methods (meditating, praying, practicing breathing exercises, spending time in nature, listening to quiet music, etc.) can also be helpful.
- **Keep active and retain your everyday routines when possible.** Try to keep to your normal schedule of working, eating, sleeping, bathing, exercising, etc.
- **Eat well and try to get a good night's sleep.** These may not be easy to do, but it's important to stay focused on your health during times of intense stress.



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- **Avoid using alcohol or drugs to change your mood.**
Using alcohol or drugs can delay your healing process by affecting your judgment and behavior in ways that can interfere with your ability to cope with the traumatic event in a safe and healthy way.

If concentration problems, nightmares or flashbacks, sleeping problems, feelings of depression, shock and numbness, confusion, guilt, or anger do not begin to subside over two weeks, or if these feelings seem unbearable, **it is important to seek professional support, including medical care**, to assist with coping and recovery.

If you or someone you know is going through a difficult time or struggling to cope with a traumatic event, **support is here for you** 24 hours a day. Members of the NFL family—current and former players, coaches, team and league staff, and their family members—can call the independent, confidential NFL Life Line at **(800) 506-0078**, or go to www.NFLLifeLine.org to chat online or take a self-check quiz. Members of the NFL family can also access counseling and mental health support through the NFL Player Engagement Transition Assistance Program by calling Cigna at **(866) 421-8628**.

Coping With Having Witnessed a Traumatic Event or Suicide

FAQs About Witnessing a Traumatic Event or Suicide

Frequently Asked Questions

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Dealing With Suicide

The suicide of a friend, family member, co-worker, or fellow player can be an especially traumatic event. After a suicide, it is common to experience very complex thoughts and feelings related to the deceased and the many factors related to his or her suicide.

What will I feel while coping with suicide?

In the wake of a suicide, it is normal to feel a range of complicated emotions. Professional support can help you deal with these difficult reactions, especially if they persist over time or feel unbearable. Common reactions to suicide include:

- **Shock** – This is usually the first reaction to a suicide and can be accompanied by a feeling of physical and emotional “numbness,” which is the mind’s way of protecting you from feelings that are too overwhelming to process all at once. This numbness allows you to deal with your pain more gradually.
- **Confusion** – Many who die by suicide do not leave behind an explanation for their actions, and it is natural for you to have questions. Even when a suicide note is present, it may be difficult to accept that you may never know all of the reasons why someone took his or her own life.
- **Guilt** – You may have repetitive thoughts of “what if/only” scenarios following a suicide. “What if I had done [this]?” “If only I hadn’t said [that]?” “Why didn’t I notice the warning signs?” In time, many people bereaved by suicide learn that they did not have control over the person’s choices and behaviors, no matter how much they wished they could have prevented this tragedy from occurring.
- **Anger** – Reaction to suicide is further complicated by the fact that it’s common to feel intense anger at the person for taking his or her own life. You may also feel anger toward doctors, therapists, family members, or yourself. Understand that these feelings can be a normal part of the grieving process. Over time, these feelings usually diminish, as those losing someone to suicide often learn that blaming behaviors prolong the experience of the painful loss in all who are affected, and can interfere with more comforting connections with others that can promote healing.
- **Despair and Depression** – Feelings of sadness and despair following a catastrophic loss can affect your sleep, appetite, concentration, and hope for the future. These feelings may hamper your day-to-day functioning for a while, but use of your social supports and keeping a regular routine may help lessen the intensity of these feelings over time.
- **Nightmares and Flashbacks** – If you have witnessed or been exposed in some way to a suicide or its aftermath, you may relive the memories of the distressing event. These memories can come in the form of nightmares or sudden flashbacks sparked by reminders of the people,

places, or things associated with the suicide. In these cases, you might feel as if you are re-experiencing the event. The frequency, intensity, and length of these experiences diminish over a few weeks for most people.

- **Relief** – In many cases, a suicide occurs after years of coping with emotional pain and suffering. A feeling of relief on behalf of the bereaved is very normal in these situations. You may feel relieved that the individual's suffering is over or that you no longer have to worry about the person's well-being.
- **Stigma and Shame** – Societal, religious, and personal beliefs can all contribute to your reactions, including feeling uncomfortable about acknowledging or talking about the cause of death. While these reactions are common, they can delay or complicate your long-term recovery as you cope with this traumatic loss.

How can I cope with the suicide of a member of the NFL family?

Following the death of an NFL family member by suicide, other family members can be a natural support system for each other, a critical piece of the long-term healing process. While in mourning, consider these points to help deal with your loss:

- Know that while many of you may have similar reactions, the range and intensity of reactions can vary. It is important to make room for each person's different ways of reacting and coping with the event.
- Try to be both patient with and supportive of one another, and recognize that suicide may add more layers to the grieving process and can intensify all of the normal grief reactions.
- Remember the life of the NFL family member who

died rather than dwelling on the circumstances of his or her death.

- Remind each other that you can best honor the person's life by the way you carry on with your own.
- Although people will heal in their own ways, recognize when a friend, loved one, staff member, or teammate might need professional help. Pay attention to whether their grief is severely affecting their relationships, work performance, or other aspects of their life after two weeks, or if they say their pain is unbearable. If you notice these issues, offer to assist them in getting professional help or let someone else know of your concerns about them.

How can I help someone who is grieving a loss by suicide?

It can be difficult to know how to help someone who is mourning a loss by suicide. One of the best ways to help someone coping with a suicide is to simply pay attention to the grieving person and acknowledge the pain that he or she is feeling. Other ways to help include:

- Letting the person know you are available to listen and provide support. This is especially important after the first few weeks, when things "get back to normal" for everyone except the bereaved. If you don't know what you can do, just ask.
- Avoiding unconditional support without making judgmental statements about what could or should have been done differently. Listening without judgment is the best resource you can offer; a nonjudgmental listener can help the individual process and move past his or her feelings of guilt.



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- Being patient, compassionate, and understanding. Accept that people who are grieving a loss by suicide will be struggling with intense emotions that can be different from reactions to other types of death. The stigma, guilt, and blame that survivors can feel often isolate them from others and cause them to be uncomfortable discussing their loss.
- Avoiding cliches that provide a simple explanation for their loss. It is not your responsibility to answer questions such as why a person died by suicide or whether there is anything more that the grieving individuals could have done. Although these intensely painful and complicated questions may never find a satisfactory answer for those grieving a suicide loss, over time these questions often become less intense and preoccupying.

If you or someone you know is going through a difficult time or struggling to cope with a traumatic event, **support is here for you** 24 hours a day. Members of the NFL family—current and former players, coaches, team and league staff, and their family members—can call the independent, confidential NFL Life Line at **(800) 506-0078**, or go to www.NFLLifeLine.org to chat online or take a self-check quiz. Members of the NFL family can also access counseling and mental health support through the NFL Player Engagement Transition Assistance Program by calling Cigna at **(866) 421-8628**.

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