

British Standard on Suicide and the Workplace launched in Westminster

On 19 November, *BDJ* News Editor Kate Quinlan attended the parliamentary launch of the new British Standard, BS 30480 Suicide and the workplace – Intervention, prevention and support for people affected by suicide. The standard offers a framework for organisational action on suicide awareness.

Hosted by the British Standards Institution (BSI), the UK's National Standards Body (NSB), the event brought together committee members, charities, government stakeholders and end users to recognise the hard work behind the standard's development, its real-life impact and how organisations can use it to make a difference.

The event opened with speeches from Baroness Gillian Merron, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Women's Health and Mental Health; Liz Twist, MP for Blaydon and Consett and Chair of the APPG on Suicide and Self Harm Prevention; and Dr Neil Hudson, MP for Epping Forest. BSI's Chairman John Hirst CBE also spoke, and Ann John, Director for the National Centre for Suicide Prevention and Chair of BS 30480's committee. Highlights from the speeches included:

- The House of Commons committing to align with BS 30480 through its existing policies and processes
- BS 30480 has been included as best practice in the Department of Health and Social Care's newly published Men's Health Strategy
- The standard has already made a global impact, with more than 2,900 downloads in just a few weeks across 60 countries and territories
- The importance of bringing support into workplaces, rather than expecting individuals experiencing thoughts of suicide to seek help on their own.

In November 2024, Kate Quinlan interviewed Roz McMullan, retired Consultant Orthodontist and Past BDA President, about her involvement with developing suicide postvention guidelines.¹ Commenting on the launch of the new standard, Roz said:

'I am delighted to see the launch of a much-needed British Standard

for suicide and the workplace. For the first time there is now clear, practical, evidence-based guidance to all workplaces, big and small, on how to identify and manage suicide risk, strengthen workplace policies and culture around suicide awareness and how to compassionately support staff and families after suicide loss.

'The death by suicide of anyone is devastating. Loss of a dental team member grips those left with a whole additional layer of psychological and physical responses. As well as grief, colleagues can experience feelings of guilt, inadequacy, what ifs, and confusion. Physical signs are also common.

'People often don't know what to do and have such an understandable fear of not causing more upset, they do nothing. As a caring and empathetic profession, this reaction can result in moral injury for the individual, bewilderment of the team and community, as well as a sense of additional hurt for the family.

'Following a death by suicide, this new guidance gives a pathway for the team, guiding their interactions with the family and the wider community so they can recover well while remembering and memorialising their colleague.

'Please read this important BSI standard, download it, and discuss with your team how it can be embedded in your practice and workplace policies. Hopefully, you will never need the postvention guidance, but it is there if you do.'

To download the standard, visit <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/insights-and-media/insights/brochures/bs-30480-suicide-and-the-workplace/>.

Further support is available through Samaritans; call free on 116 123, email jo@samaritans.org or visit www.samaritans.org to find your nearest branch.

References

1. Quinlan K. Roz McMullan: 'By offering suicide awareness training to the whole dental team, lives of colleagues, friends and family will be saved.' *Br Dent J* 2024; **237**: 861–863.

Dr James Main publishes a book about his cure for hypersensitive gagging

Dentist Dr James Main has published a book 'offering an almost 100% cure' for a hypersensitive gag reflex, called *Gagging For It: Cut yourself free from gagging with The MAGIC Technique*.

MAGIC stands for Main Amelioration for Gagging Indoctrination by Communication. Dr Main outlined his technique in the *BDJ* in a clinical article in 2024.¹ The MAGIC technique can be practised by patients for free at home without any training or equipment.

The book will be reviewed in a future issue of the *BDJ*.

References

1. Main J. Main amelioration of gagging indoctrination by communication – a MAGIC technique. *Br Dent J* 2024; **236**: 611–614.

