



Non-profit Giving Kitchen Provides Suicide Prevention Resources to Food Service Industry Nationwide

ATLANTA. (August 30, 2022) – September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, and [Giving Kitchen \(GK\)](#), a nonprofit that helps food service workers, is once again stepping up to speak out. Anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts are not uncommon in the restaurant community. To reduce suicide in the food service industry, Giving Kitchen is offering [QPR Suicide Prevention](#) training for free to any food service worker in the United States.

QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer, which are the three steps identified in the suicide prevention “Gatekeeper Training,” hosted by the [QPR Institute](#). Giving Kitchen has been offering free access to this online course since 2019 when they announced their partnership with the QPR Institute while accepting the prestigious [James Beard Humanitarian of the Year Award](#).

This training (which usually costs \$30) has proven successful: in a survey of those who have completed the course through the QPR and Giving Kitchen partnership, 99% reported that they believe this training will help them in helping someone who is suicidal. A third of respondents reported that someone close to them has committed suicide, which further illustrates the necessity for this resource.

Bryan Schroeder, GK Executive Director, says, “QPR training helps a food service worker identify the warning signs of suicidal ideation, gives them the confidence to speak up, and provides the language that can encourage someone to get help. Since Giving Kitchen made this training available, we can confidently say food service workers across the county have helped prevent hundreds of suicides.”

Studies show that clinical depression in the food service industry is more prevalent than in the overall working population in the United States.* This prevalence is no secret; media representations of food service often depict high-stress and abusive environments, as seen on the hit FX show *The Bear*. The show has been lauded for how accurately it depicts restaurant life and the overwhelming stress, despair, and stigma that come with it.

“It takes a lot of courage to ask for help,” says Jen Hiding-Kendrick, GK Co-founder and Senior Director of Community Engagement. “QPR is a tool that can make it a little easier for someone who is struggling to ask for help and empowers more people to be the connection point between someone in need and a mental health professional. Our

food service community is only as strong as our will to take care of ourselves and each other.”

Giving Kitchen serves food service workers through two distinct programs: [financial assistance](#) and [Stability Network](#) referrals. Financial assistance is offered to help cover rent/mortgage and utilities for food service workers who have experienced an injury, illness, the death of an immediate family member, or a housing disaster such as a flood or fire. Stability Network referrals are connections to other resources such as housing support, mental health and addiction support, and myriad other social services.

Mental health resources are a crucial part of these services, including QPR, which is one of GK’s most ubiquitous Stability Network referrals. Mental Health + Substance Misuse is the second-highest referral category for the 1,135 Stability Network clients served so far in 2022.

Giving Kitchen’s annual [Mind Matters](#) campaign also focuses on mental health in the food service industry and reducing the stigma of talking about mental wellness and mental health challenges. Giving Kitchen recently served its 10,000th client and surpassed \$6.7 million dollars in financial assistance awarded.

About Giving Kitchen

Giving Kitchen (GK) is a nonprofit organization that provides emergency assistance to food service workers through financial support and a network of community resources. Their goal is to create a food service community where crisis is met with compassion and care. Since its inception, GK has served over 10,300 food service workers and awarded over \$6.7 million in financial assistance. For more about Giving Kitchen, visit givingkitchen.org and follow @givingkitchen on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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Media Contact

Rebecca Wagner, rebecca@thegivingkitchen.org

**Studies show that rates of clinically diagnosed depression are 10.3% in the food service industry, about 3-4% higher in the overall working population in the United States.^{i,ii,iii} It's worth noting that a clinical diagnosis requires visiting a clinician, something that food service workers are less likely to do due to low wages and low rates of insurance, so the rates of depression are likely even higher^{iv} (McLaughlin and Osipova, 2018).*

ⁱ Kuhl, E. A. (2019). Quantifying the cost of depression. American Psychiatric Association Center for Workplace Mental Health. Retrieved from: <http://www.workplacementalhealth.org/Mental-Health-Topics/Depression/Quantifying-the-Cost-of-Depression>.

ⁱⁱ Karatepe, O. M., & Ehsani, E. (2012). Work-related depression in frontline service jobs in the hospitality industry: Evidence from Iran. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 11, 16-35.

ⁱⁱⁱ Office of Applied Studies. (2007). Depression among adults employed full-time, by occupational category. The NSDUH Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

^{iv} McLaughlin, K., and Osipova, N. V. (November 12, 2018). A reckoning with the dark side of the restaurant industry. *The Wall Street Journal*.