Next Safety Frontier: Mental Wellness and Suicide Prevention in Construction

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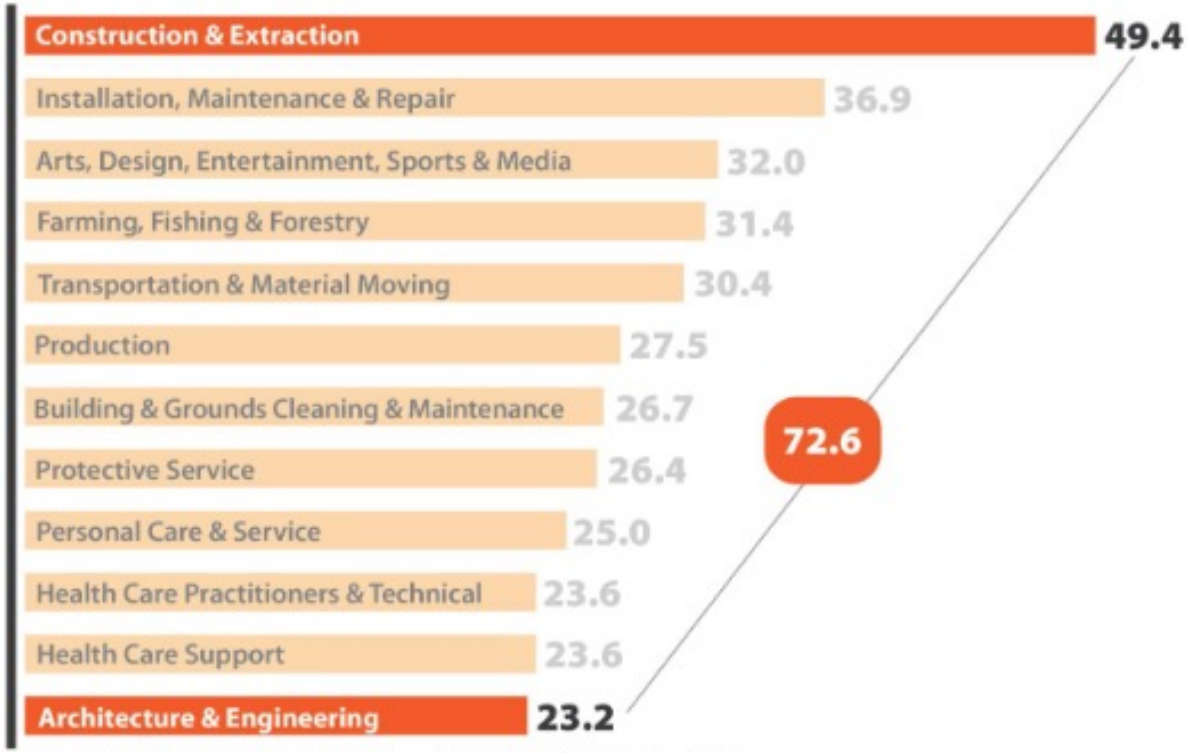
CFMA

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ALLIANCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Agenda

- Stats
- Why Construction?
- Who are the game changers?
- Integration into your companies/resources

TOP 12 OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS WITH THE HIGHEST RATES OF SUICIDE



Source: "Suicide Rates by Industry and Occupation — National Violent Death Reporting System, 32 States, 2016 " https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6903a1-H.pdf, January 24, 2020.

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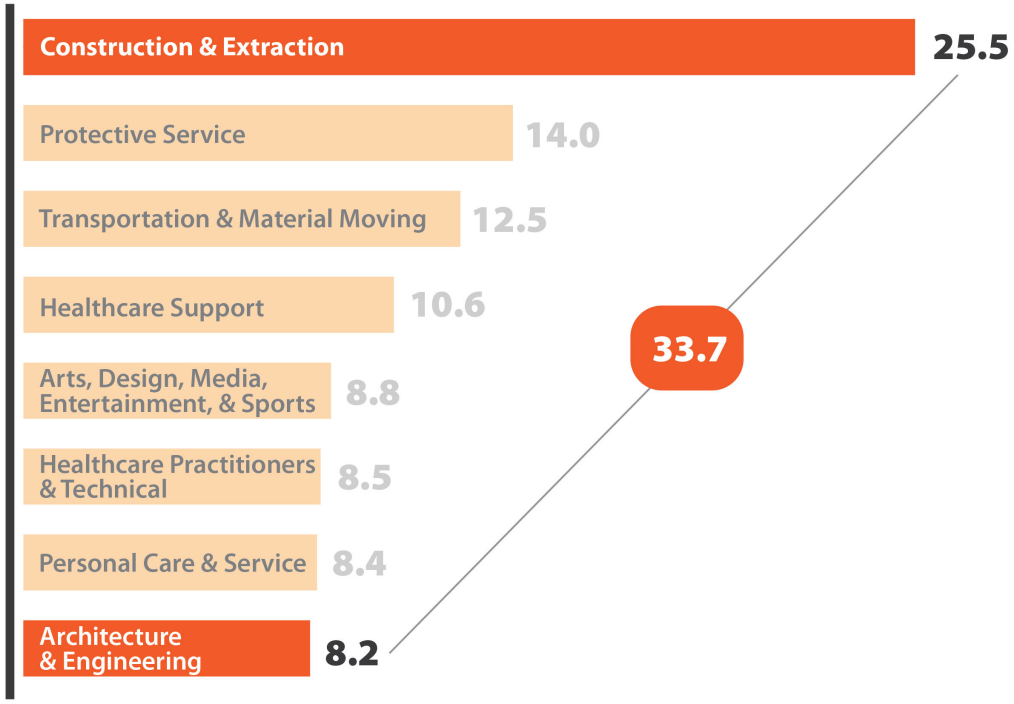
TOP 8 FEMALE OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS WITH THE HIGHEST RATES OF SUICIDE



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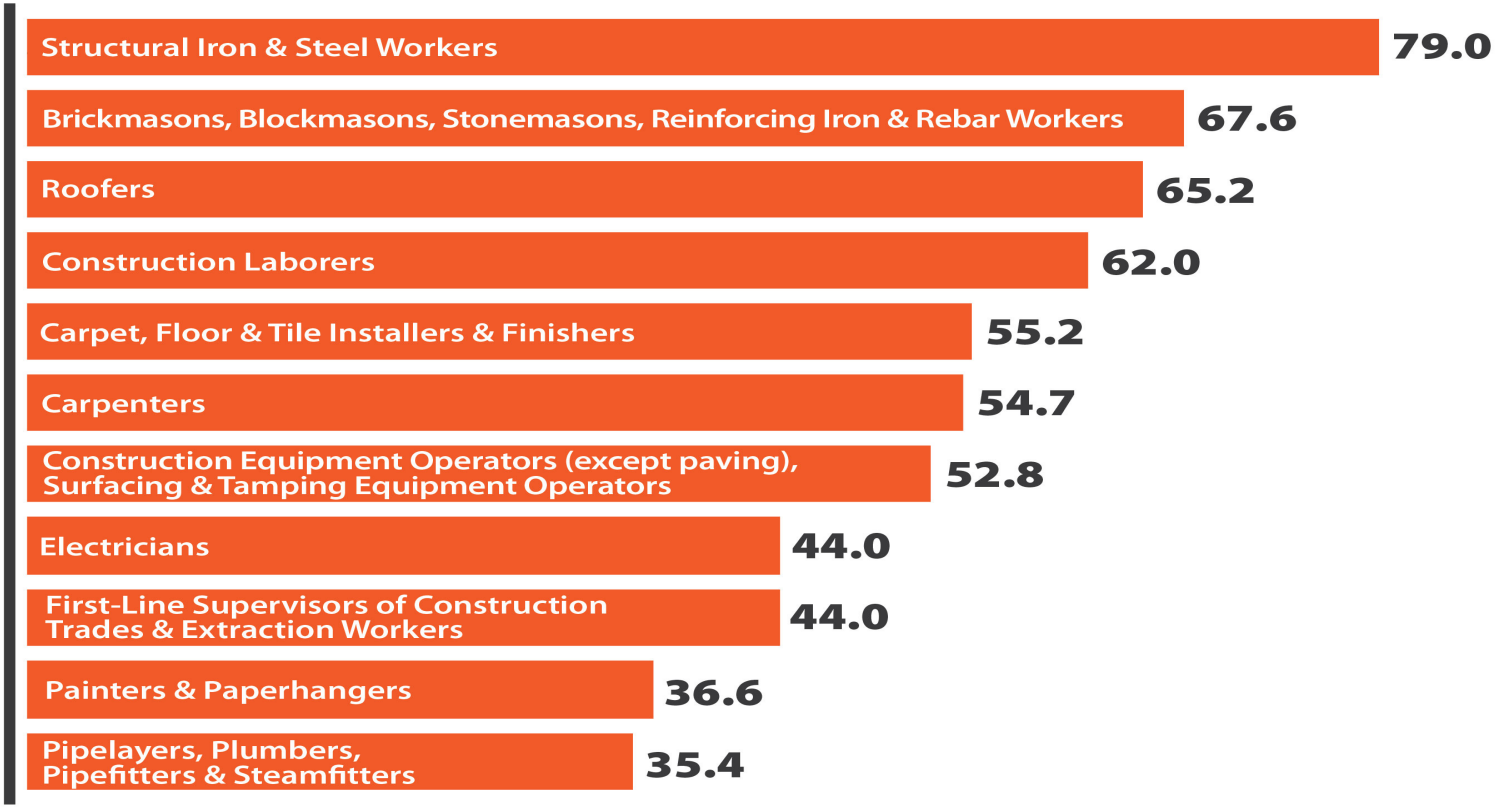
SUICIDE RATE BY CONSTRUCTION TRADE



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Approaching 50,000 suicide deaths annually

2016 numbers:

--5,190 Workplace fatalities (all industries)

--Reported 5,229 Construction Worker Suicides

--991 Construction Worker Fatalities including the Big 4 (Electrocution/struck by/falls/caught in between)

Risk Factors

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Risk Factor #1

Culture / Mentality

- Stoic
- "Old school"
- Tough guy
- "Suck it up"

*The **stigma** surrounding mental illness is one of the greatest barriers for those seeking help.*

Address Risk Factor #1

- Create a caring culture
- Educate work force on the reality of mental illness
- Remove the shame & stigma
- Leadership support – set expectations for acceptance, shared experiences/stories of success

Risk Factor #2

Chronic pain

- Years of manual labor
- Injuries
- Industry with one of the highest rates of opioid use

Address Risk Factor #2

- Promote injury & pain management not reliant on addictive medications
- Educate employees on the dangers of abuse
- Promote Safety

Risk Factor #3

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Sleep disruption &/or Sleep deprivation

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Address Risk Factor #3

- Create consistent schedules for as long a period as possible
- Be open to hearing from crew members who struggle with night work

Risk Factor #4

Separation &/or Isolation

- Family
- Friends
- Social / Community
- Church

Address Risk Factor #4

- As much as possible allow for time home with family on a regular basis
- Create consistent crews that can "fill the gap" as family
- Rotate crews on out of town assignments when possible

Risk Factor #5

Layoffs

- Seasonal
- End of project layoffs/Furloughs

Address Risk Factor #5

- Communicate with as much reality and positivity as possible
- Make financial counseling services available to employees

Risk Factor #6

Tolerant culture of alcohol and substance abuse

--Consistent with the tough guy and isolation culture

--After hours habits

--Time filler

--Self medication

Address Risk Factor #6

- Promote events that don't center around alcohol
- Educate on *confidential* substance abuse counselling programs available
- Encourage company policies that provide for leaves of absence for treatment without fear of termination

Risk Factor #7

Extreme Pressure / Low Margin for Error

- High expectations to meet schedules, budgets, etc.
- Serious consequences
  - Financial impact
    - Company
    - Personally
  - Reputation on the line

Address Risk Factor #7

- Provide tools and accurate information in a timely manner
- Staff according to project demand
- Celebrate the wins / Learn from the losers

Risk Factor #8

Access to lethal means

- On the jobsite
- Drugs & alcohol
- Firearms

Address Risk Factor #8

- Reduce access on the jobsite where possible
- If danger is sensed, have means removed/locked up

Risk Factor #9

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Poor access to &/or Utilization of Behavioral Health Care and EAP programs

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Address Risk Factor #9

- Know and understand your behavioral health benefits
- Educate employees on how to access and on confidentiality of services
- Be sure your group insurance and/or EAP provide quality benefits

Risk Factor #10

Promotion of supervision without leadership training

- Management driven to get the work done no matter what

Address Risk Factor #10

- Management means more than getting the work done
- Suicide prevention training/warning signs
- Incorporate mental health into performance management
- Front-line supervisors are the first line of defense to intervene with an employee in distress

Risk Factor #11

Skills gaps

- Want/need to do something else
- Trapped in job with no way out
- Need to provide for family

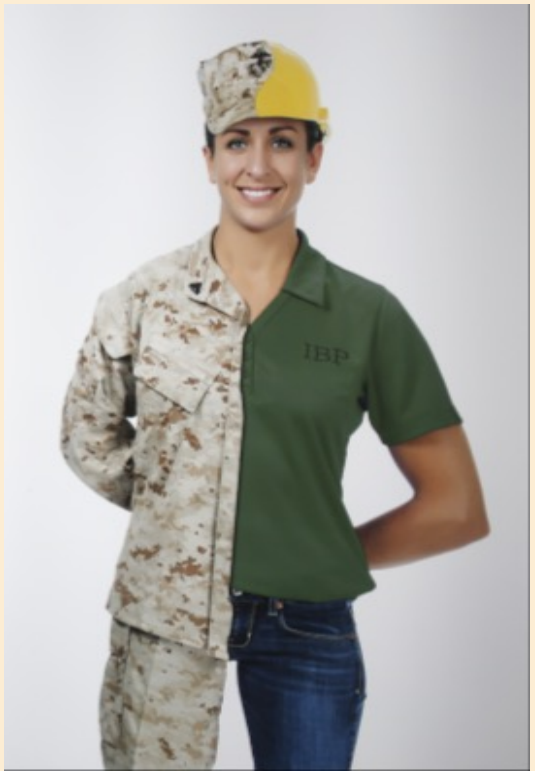
Address Risk Factor #11

- Training & development
- Employees who feel invested in are more likely to stay & do a good job
- Employees with multiple skills are more valuable

Risk Factor #12

High Number of Veterans

- May be dealing with PTSD
- Rejoining non-military society and employment
- Possible physical injuries and limitations



Address Risk Factor #12

- Pre-plan how to accommodate needs:
  - Schedule
  - Physical limitations
  - Stress & Trauma

- Partner with organizations who help transition veterans into the workforce

Other Veteran Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Also known as Veteran's Crisis Line)
1-800-273-8255
https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/
https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

VA Mental Health Program
https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/

National Center for PTSD (Programs for our Military, Veterans and Families)
https://www.ptsd.va.gov/

National Resource Directory:
https://nrd.gov/

What are the warning signs?

Workplace Performance

- Decreased problem-solving ability
- Decreased self-confidence
- Decreased productivity
- Increased tardiness/absenteeism
- Increased conflict among co-workers
- Increased near hits, incidents, injuries

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Co-workers, friends, & family may notice:

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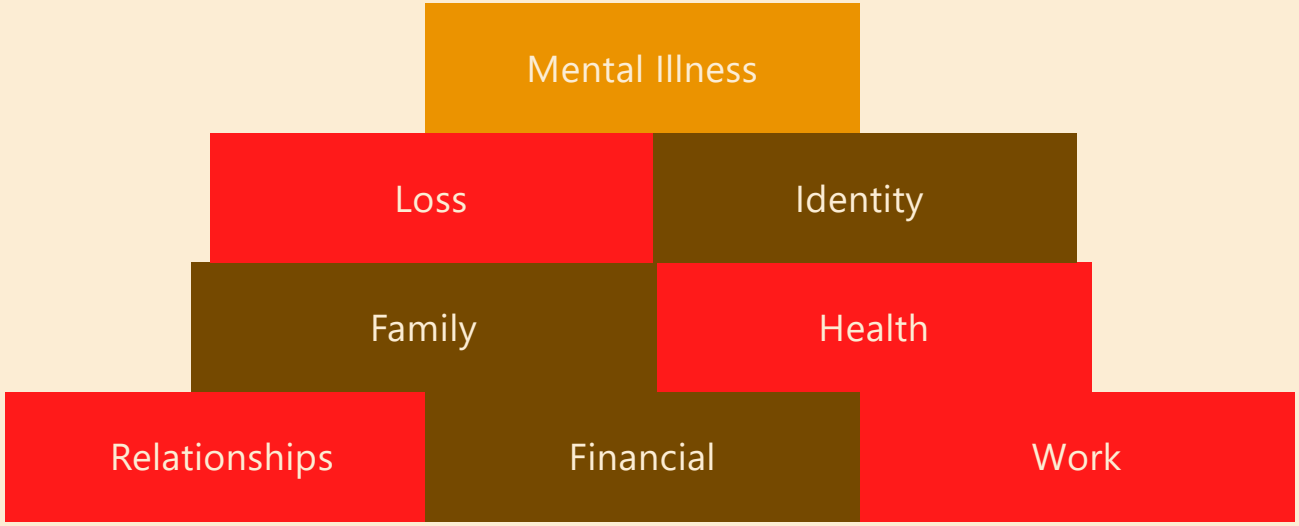
“THE WALL” that can challenge Mental Health



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“DIE BY SUICIDE”

WHY THESE WORDS (AND OTHERS) MATTER

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Upstream / Midstream / Downstream Approaches

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UPSTREAM GOALS:

- Prevent Problems
- Build Protective Factors
- Identify & Promote Resources

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ACTIONS:

1. Shift Workplace Culture
   A. Leadership Engagement
   B. Integration of safety, health, wellness and employee benefits; coordinate with labor unions
2. Improve mental health literacy & addiction knowledge
3. Teach life skills, e.g., conflict resolution, stress management
4. Promote social networks (Peer Support)

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MIDSTREAM GOALS:

- Early Identification
- Link People to Care

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ACTIONS:

1. Learn warning signs and responses (Gatekeeper training)
2. Screenings – mental health to go along with biometrics
3. Include mental health as part of performance management
4. EAPs & Employee Benefits:
   - Do they provide access to Quality Mental Health Services?
   - Know & communicate benefit programs to employees

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DOWNSTREAM GOALS:

- Manage crises
- Restore functioning

ACTIONS:

1. Restrict Access to Lethal Means
2. Provide resources to contact (lifelines, postvention)
3. Show Respect, Dignity & Empowerment
4. Offer Grief & Trauma Support

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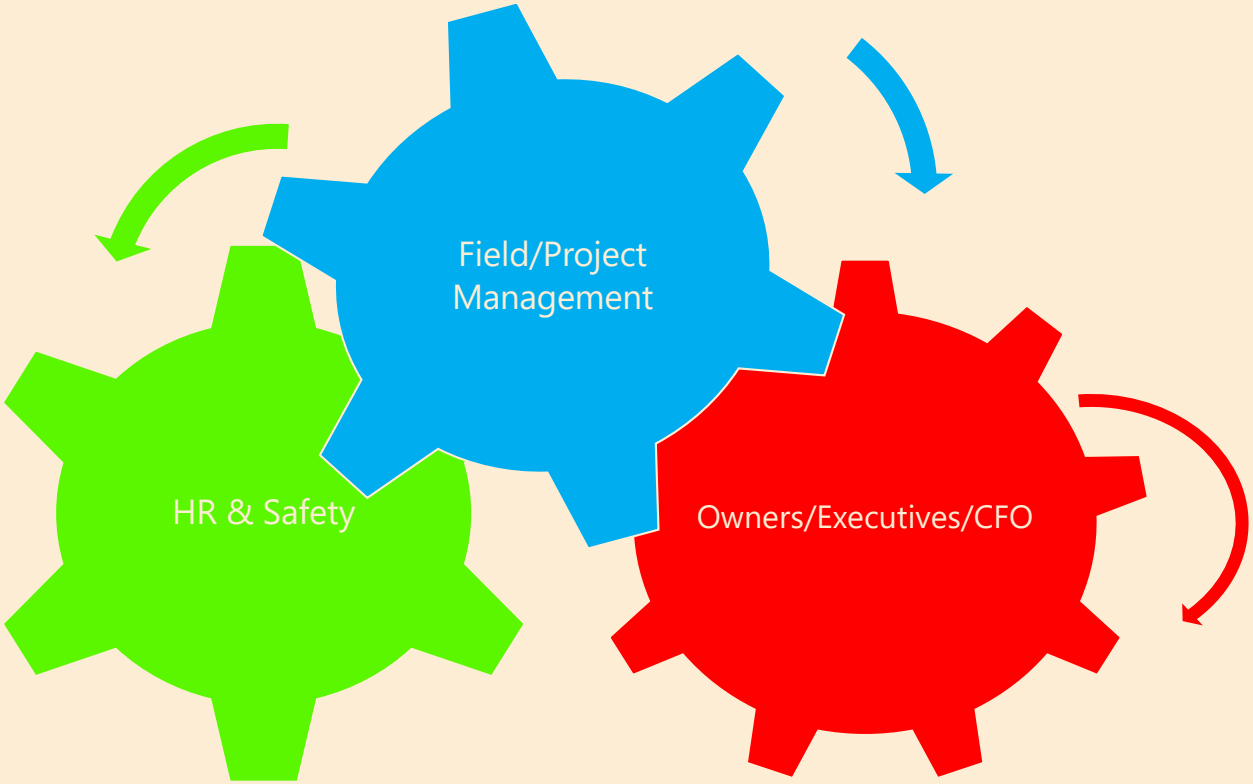
It is a TEAM effort!



Organizational Role: Company Leadership

- Be bold!
- Establish caring company culture
- Share lived experience, stories of hope
- Commitment to Zero Suicide
- Promote Social Networks

Safety Leadership

Incorporate into Safety Culture:

- Safety meetings
- Tool box talks
- THA/JHA
- Site safety review/audits
- Training
- Broaden Zero Accidents to Zero Suicides

Organizational Role: Human Resources Leaders

- Performance reviews & disciplinary actions
  - Incorporate mental health as a performance management tool
- Understand your Health Benefits and EAP
  - Educate employees on services and access
  - Obtain and study utilization report
- Have completely separate/local 3rd party resources available for those concerned about confidentiality

Organizational Role: Field Leadership - - Managers/Foremen/Superintendents

- Front line interface with employees
  - Observe performance, changes in behavior
  - Build relationships, trust, opportunities for sharing
  - Likely who “first report” of concern would go to
- Gatekeeper Training:
  - Warning Signs
  - Referral process

Building a “My Brothers Keeper” mentality

Resources - Where To Get Help

Gatekeeper Training

Question – Persuade - Refer
www.qprinstitute.com

SafeTalk
www.livingworks.net

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CFMA > Industry News & Advocacy > Suicide Prevention in Construction Resources

Dues & Special Events | Store Products | Print

Industry News & Resources

- Suicide Prevention in Construction
  - Why Suicide Prevention in Construction
  - Chapter Event Planning
  - Upcoming Events
  - Resources
  - Donate
- Revenue Recognition Hub
- CONFINDEX Quarterly Reading
- CFMA in the News
- Legislative & Regulatory Issues
- Key Industry Financial Indicators
- Covid-19 Resource Center

Suicide Prevention in Construction Resources

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ALLIANCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION www.preventconstructionsuicide.com

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE 1-800-273-TALK (8255) suicidepreventionlifeline.org

CRISIS TEXT LINE | Text HELLO to 741741 Free, 24/7, Confidential

posters

10 questions

ACTION steps

CFMA webinar

ANALYSIS & integration

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HOW TO INCORPORATE MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE

The Needs Analysis is broken into five primary areas of readiness for a company to study:

1. **Corporate attention to/consideration of mental health (building a caring culture)**
2. **Resources in place for employees dealing with a mental health issue/personal crisis**
3. **Readiness of the company to assist suicidal employees**
4. **Building protective factors**
5. **Crisis response**

The Integration Checklist follows the Needs Analysis by breaking the steps down into the same five sections

AND . . .

The Three Levels of Integrating Suicide Prevention in Your Company

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Email communications

Posters

Newsletters

Weekly Health Alerts

Wellness Program

EAP – Partner up on communication

Wallet Cards

Company Charge Card Sleeves

Lunch N Learn – Employees & Subs

Tool Box Talks

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STAND Up for Suicide Prevention

STAND up for suicide prevention and address it as a health and safety priority by creating **safe** cultures, providing **training** to identify and help those at risk, raising **awareness** about the suicide crisis in construction, **normalizing** conversations around suicide and mental health, and ultimately **decreasing** the risks associated with suicide in construction.
Pledge to **STAND** up for suicide prevention today.

STAND PLEDGE APPROPRIATE FOR: CFMA CHAPTERS; CONTRACTOR/ASSOCIATE MEMBERS; UNIONS; ASSOCIATIONS; ETC

Carry a Message of Hope

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