

Suicide Awareness & Mental Health in Construction

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Disclaimer

Suicide & mental health are difficult topics to discuss. Whether it is with a coworker, family member, or friend, these conversations are not easy to have. Having an uncomfortable conversation is better than not being able to have a conversation at all. Discussing mental health and suicide is the first step in breaking the stigma surrounding both topics.



Statistics

There are approximately 133 deaths by suicide per day in the United States.

Suicide rates in the United States have increased 35% since 1999.

More women attempt suicide, but men are four times more likely to die by suicide and account for 79% of suicide deaths.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for males in the age range between 25 and 54, which is the exact population predominately working in construction.

Statistics provided by the CDC. Article: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6903a1.htm>

The Professions with the Highest (and Lowest) Suicide Rates 2015 rate of suicide per 100,000 according to CDC

Rank	Professions	Suicide Rate	
1	Construction and Extraction	52.1	
2	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	37.8	
3	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	27.3	
4	Transportation and Material Moving	26.8	
5	Production	24.3	
6	Protective Service	24.2	
7	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	18.7	
8	Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	18.2	
9	Architecture and Engineering	17.6	
10	Food Preparation and Serving Related	14.8	
11	Sales and Related	14.2	
12	Computer and Mathematical	14.0	
13	Legal	13.8	
14	Life, Physical, and Social Science	12.8	
15	Health Care Practitioners and Technical	12.5	
16	Management	12.5	
17	Health Care Support	11.9	
18	Personal Care and Service	10.1	
19	Community and Social Service	9.0	
20	Office and Administrative Support	8.6	
21	Business and Financial Operations	8.5	
22	Education, Training, and Library	5.3	

Data Source: CDC Report from 2018 showing 2015 results in 22 states

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Statistics

A January 2020 study showed approx. 5,500 deaths by suicide each year in the construction industry.

For every 100,000 construction workers, 45.3 will end up dying by suicide. This is compared to the national average of 14.2.

People in construction are 3.5 times more likely to take their own life.

97 percent of the U.S. construction workforce is male and according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 38 percent of construction workers in the U.S. in 2018 were between the ages 45 and 64.



What does suicide look like to you?



Knowing our why

Male-dominated industries tend to have more suicides. According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), 97 percent of the U.S. construction workforce is male.

The macho, tough guy, and stoic nature of construction workers can discourage those who are most at risk for suicide from seeking help.

Moving from project to project can create a disconnect within a workers work and personal life.

Seasonal layoffs, physical demands, drug/alcohol use, and military service all create an increased likelihood of attempted suicides.

Call to action - Corporate

Raising awareness around suicides and mental health

Create a culture of change in your organization

Bolstering your company's EAP to include more mental health options

Fostering an environment that allows people to speak up when they need help

Training managers on what to look for and ways to talk about mental health and suicide

Training of all employees on mental health and suicide

Call to action - Individuals

Show empathy

Listen → Hear → Talk

Look for changes in behavior, appearance or performance

Speak up

Be direct

Be hopeful

Encourage people to seek help

INSTEAD OF THIS...	...SAY THIS	WHY
commit/committed suicide	died by suicide / death by suicide / lost their life to suicide	<p>"commit" implies suicide is a sin or crime, reinforcing the stigma that it's a selfish act and personal choice</p> <p>using neutral phrasing like "died by suicide" helps strip away the shame/blame element</p>
successful/unsuccessful suicide completed/failed suicide	<p>died by suicide / survived a suicide attempt / lived through a suicide attempt</p> <p>fatal suicidal behaviour / non-fatal suicidal behaviour</p> <p>fatal suicide attempt / non-fatal suicide attempt</p>	<p>the notion of a "successful" suicide is inappropriate because it frames a very tragic outcome as an achievement or something positive</p> <p>to be matter-of-fact, a suicide attempt is either fatal or not</p>
epidemic, skyrocketing	rising, increasing	<p>words like "epidemic" can spark panic, making suicide seem inevitable or more common than it actually is</p> <p>by using purely quantitative, less emotionally charged terms like "rising", we can avoid instilling a sense of doom or hopelessness</p>
<Name> is suicidal	<Name> is facing suicide / is thinking of suicide / has suffered through suicidal thoughts / has experienced suicidal thoughts	we don't want to define someone by their experience with suicide; they are more than their suicidal thoughts
<p>He's suicidal</p> <p>They're a schizophrenic</p> <p>She's bipolar</p> <p>The mentally ill</p> <p><Substance> addicts</p>	<p>he is facing suicide / thinking of suicide / experiencing suicidal thoughts</p> <p>they have schizophrenia / are living with schizophrenia</p> <p>people with mental illness</p> <p>people addicted to <substance>, people with addiction</p>	<p>putting the condition before the person reduces someone's identity to their diagnosis — people aren't their illness; they <i>have</i> an illness</p> <p>people-first language shows respect for the individual, reinforcing the fact that their condition does not define them</p>

Breaking the Stigma

Mental health and suicide NEEDS to be talked about



Active and continued training



Advocate for others



Share your story/journey



Provide resources

Training

Building
Awareness

Prevention

Intervention

Postvention

How to find
resources

Substance
abuse

Toolbox
Talks

Resources

<https://preventconstructionsuicide.com/index.php>

[ConstructConnect Suicide in Construction](#)

<https://www.nami.org/home>

<https://www.livingworks.net/start>

<https://988lifeline.org/>

<https://www.crisistextline.org/text-us/>

Questions, Comments or Feedback?

*thank
you*