

Breaking the Stigma

A Construction Suicide Prevention Partnership Toolbox Talk

www.suicide-stops-here.org

The Facts

Mental health can be a tough topic to discuss, especially at work. For those going through a mental health challenge, the lack of open dialogue on mental health can make them feel alone and isolated. In construction, we know mental health challenges are common. Knowing the facts can make it easier to start a conversation about mental health and suicide with friends, family, or coworkers. Here are some facts about mental health that you should know:

The construction industry has the



highest rate of suicide

We lose more construction workers to

Suicide

than to job site injuries or accidents

Life events that cause distress are experienced by

43.8 mil

adults each year

Serious negative emotional reactions
))) are experienced by)))



1 in 5

adults in the US



Nearly

1 in 25

adults in America live with a serious mental illness

Suicide is the

2nd

leading cause of death for men between the ages of 25 and 54

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Scenario #1

Your partner Jim trips and falls hard on his shoulder. You immediately run to his aid. You check him out and help him up. He can work the rest of the day, but you notice him favoring his shoulder. You continue to check in with him throughout the day to make sure he is ok. People grappling with mental health challenges need the same type of support.



Two Points to remember:

- Many people find it easier to ask for help dealing with a physical injury than a mental health challenge.
- People worry they will be judged by their mental illness, or struggle with unhelpful thoughts such as "asking for help is a weakness."

Scenario #2

Your partner Dan is going through a tough time. He is going through a divorce, and he is really worried about his two kids: one is in Jr High and the other is in HS. You notice some changes in his behavior, he seems detached and starts coming in late to work every day often missing the start time.



Scenario Question and Discussion:

- **Starting Point:** You ask him if he is okay and he says, "I am fine don't worry about me."
- What should you do next?
- One idea is to approach Dan at lunch. Sit down with him and directly tell him that you are worried about his well-being and you want to help. Listen without judging.
- How is he sleeping at night? What is his largest fear?
- You point out that when facing a tough situation many people can suffer from anxiety and depression.
- Refer him to the EAP Program, and encourage him to get counseling. Help him build a support plan. Continue to check in with him so he knows you care.

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