

Addressing Suicide and Mental Health in Construction

Topic of the Day: Starting the Conversation

It is not always easy to talk to someone about suicide/mental health, but when someone's life is at risk, it is more important to ensure their safety than dance around the topic.

Here is a **step-by-step guide** to help you through the conversation.

1. ASK – Start the Conversation

- Prepare:** Practice what you will say, plan for a time when you won't be rushed, and come with crisis resources on hand. It's important to be patient, understanding, and provide hope.
- Using non-judgmental language, ask directly about suicide.** Mention what prompted you to ask, making it clear you aren't asking "out of the blue." **If they answer YES to your direct question about suicide,** stay calm and don't leave the person alone until further help is obtained.

2. BE THERE - Listen, Express Concern, Reassure

- Listen** your coworker and validate their feelings, let the person know you are genuinely concerned, and that you take their situation seriously.

3. KEEP THEM SAFE - Create a Safety Plan

- Create a safety plan together.** Ask what will help keep them safe and make sure they do not have access to any lethal means and ask if they will refrain from using drugs or alcohol.
- Get a **verbal commitment that the person will not act** upon thoughts of suicide until they have met with a professional.

4. HELP THEM CONNECT - Get Help

- Provide the resources** you have come prepared with.
- Give them a "warm hand off" to someone who can help. Help them call** the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or **connect them with a mental health professional.** Stay connected
- If you feel the situation is **critical**, take the person to a nearby **Emergency Room** or **call 911.**

5. What NOT to say

- Don't ask about suicide in a way that indicates you want "No" for an answer.
- Don't tell the person to do it. This is the most dangerous thing you can say.
- Don't promise secrecy. Instead, you can say: "I care about you too much to keep a secret like this. You need help and I am here to help you get it."

REMEMBER: Talking about suicide does NOT put the idea in someone's head. It gives them permission to talk about it & they are usually relieved.



#youarenotalone