

PEER SUPPORT AND POSTVENTION IN CONSTRUCTION

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

OVERVIEW

Construction workers face elevated suicide risk due to job stress, injury and chronic pain, substance use, long hours, time away from family, and stigma around asking for help.

A **Peer Support Program** consists of trained employees who can recognize distress, offer guidance, and connect peers to professional resources when needed. These programs build upon existing relationships and experiences and are successful in reducing stigma and increasing use of both workplace and community resources.

Postvention refers to the actions a workplace takes following a suicide or suspected suicide. Its purpose is to support workers, supervisors, families, and crews; reduce trauma, confusion, and isolation; lower the risk of additional suicides; and help the jobsite return to safe, stable operations. Postvention is not separate from prevention—it is an essential part of it.

Together, peer support programs and postvention planning normalize help-seeking, enable early intervention, and ensure workers have access to critical resources during times of crisis.

CORE ELEMENTS OF A POSTVENTION PLAN

Create a Response Team

Identify a response team in advance. This can include company leadership, HR, a safety lead, the site supervisor or foreman, a union representative, an EAP/MAP or mental health partner, and trained peer supporters or respected crew members.

Support for Workers

Support for workers should include access to grief or crisis counseling, flexibility such as time off or reassignment, and regular reminders about EAP, union, and community resources. Peer support plays a key role here.

Support for Supervisors

Supervisors also need support. Provide talking points for crew conversations, guidance on how to check in with workers, and permission to rely on peer supporters and professional resources rather than carrying the burden alone.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

Risk does not end after the first week. Plans should include follow-up check-ins with crews, ongoing observation for signs of distress or substance misuse, and continued mental health and suicide prevention messaging.

SCAN TO WATCH WEBINAR

This webinar examines the essential role of peer support programs in construction and practical strategies for suicide postvention that support individuals and teams after a loss. Learn how peer-led initiatives normalize help-seeking, enable early intervention, and provide critical resources during times of crisis.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Postvention

Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention Postvention Resources (CIASP)

Postvention guidance tailored to construction culture, including response after a suicide loss.

A Manager's Guide to Suicide Postvention in the Workplace (Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention)

Step-by-step guidance for leaders on immediate response, communication, and long-term follow-up after a suicide.

After a Suicide: Postvention Toolkit for Workplaces (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention)

Practical guidance on crisis response, supporting employees, memorial practices, and returning to operations.

Workplace Suicide Postvention Podcast Series (VA MIRECC)

Expert discussions on why postvention matters and how to implement effective workplace responses.

Suicide Prevention Safe Messaging Guide (CPWR)

Guidance on communicating about suicide safely and responsibly in the workplace.

Suicide and the Workplace – Intervention, Prevention and Support (British Standards Institution (BSI))

Evidence-based guide for organizations supporting people affected by suicide.

Peer Support

Workplace Peer Support Frameworks (Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention)

Guidance on integrating peer support into workplace safety and wellness systems.

Peer Support for Mental Health in Construction Workers (CPWR)

Overview of peer support models tailored to construction workers' mental health needs.

Peer Advocacy for Construction Workers Struggling With Substance Use (CPWR)

Peer advocacy approaches to support workers experiencing substance use challenges.

Listen

After the Unthinkable: Workplace Suicide Postvention (First 48 Hours) (Hope Illuminated Podcast)

Focus on immediate postvention actions and peer support after a workplace suicide.

How Two Former Construction Workers Are Breaking the Stigma of Seeking Help (St. Louis Public Radio)

Personal accounts of peer leadership and cultural change around mental health.

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