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Suicide Prevention Month

Instructor -- Chris Jenkins

Division -- Missoula

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Foreman -- Carl Depoorter

Attendance -- Carl Depoorter, Chris Jenkins, Bernard Shaw

Comments:

Let's talk about something real. Not a hazard you can see on a job site. Not a fall risk, or a trip hazard. But something that's taking more lives in our industry than all of those combined:

Suicide.

September is Suicide Prevention Month, and a time to raise awareness around this devastating reality.

The Hard Truth: Construction Has One of the Highest Suicide Rates

Construction workers are 4 times more likely to die by suicide than the general population.

It's estimated that **more than 5,000 construction workers** die by suicide every year in the U.S.: **that's 14 per day.**

For every construction workplace fatality, there are **5 suicides in the construction industry.**

These are not just numbers. These are **our coworkers, our friends, our brothers and sisters.**

Why Our Industry:

Let's be honest construction is tough.

We face:

Long hours and physically demanding work.

Chronic pain or injuries.

Seasonal layoffs or financial stress.

Pressure to "tough it out" and not talk about feelings.

Substances are often used to cope with stress or trauma.

Lack of access to mental health care.

What Can We Actually Do: We've all heard the phrase :raise awareness,: but when it comes to suicide prevention, awareness alone isn't enough:we need real action.

The good news: There are plenty of free training programs out there that can give you the tools to help someone who might be struggling.

One simple method you can **LEARN**, and practice comes from **Forefront Suicide Prevention** at the University of Washington. Their mission is simple:help people take action to prevent suicide in their own communities.

These steps are practical, straightforward, and something any of us can do. For more information, check out inthe forefront.org.

Remember: it's not about being a therapist, it's about showing up, listening, and being ready to help when it matters most.

Here's how we can begin : Just remember the simple acronym: LEARN.

L - Look for signs.

It can look different for everyone.

A change in someone's usual personality, outlook on life; sleep issues, withdrawing from friends/activities.

Increased feelings of hopelessness, anger, depression, shame; or an increase in behaviors like substance use, risk taking, self-harm.

Warning signs may appear after a painful event, loss, or significant life change.

E : Empathize and listen.

Just Listen.

Those who have struggles say this helped them the most.

Offer compassion, **not advice**, and avoid judgment.

Validate their suffering, :I can see you're in a lot of pain. Thank you for telling me.:

Summarize what you heard: :So, you're feeling:. (alone, hopeless). This sounds overwhelming.:

A : Ask about suicide.

Asking about suicide will **NOT** plant the idea in someone's head.

In a private setting ask calmly, in a straightforward way: :are you thinking about suicide:: or :Are you thinking about killing yourself::

Another way to ask is: :Sometimes when people feel, alone, hopeless, they are thinking about suicide, are you thinking about suicide::

R : Reduce the danger.

Whenever possible.

If they say yes, ask :Do you have a plan::; if they have a plan, ask :Do you have a way to carry out your plan::

Make a plan to lock up firearms and medications. Depending on the situation it may be necessary to remove belts, ropes, knives, and chemicals.

Report concerning social media posts.

Putting time and distance between someone thinking about suicide and the means they may use to end their life **can** help prevent suicide.

N : Next Steps.

Have resources ready.

Together, call, text, or chat with the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline [988](https://www.988lifeline.org/).

Stay with the person if it is safe for you to do so.

If someone is in imminent danger, calling 911 may be necessary.

Plan to follow up with the person. Arrange a time you can call and see how they are doing.

This is real life, We All Have a Story.

We come from different walks of life. Many of us have battled with family problems, health scares, divorce, addiction, financial pressure, or the loss of someone we love. While **time doesn't heal all wounds**, it does give us space to **adapt**, to **grow**, and to **build strength from pain**. We pride ourselves on being tough, pushing through:but real strength is also knowing when to ask for help.

There are resources to utilize if you or someone you know is struggling.

Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Resources. These free services are available to all and provide

a range of support services.

[Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention \(CIASP\)](#)

[National Institute of Mental Health](#)

[Psychology Today](#)

SAVE Training : Free voluntary suicide prevention training w/ training certificate will soon be available on the LMS. More details to come on this-stay tuned!

Resources available through your Local:

[International Member Assistance Program \(IMAP\)](#) (Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers)

[All One Health](#) (Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers) offers many services including six free counseling sessions for every member: no cost, no judgment, just support.

Local 36 offers an [EAP Program](#) through First Choice Health or by calling 1- (800) 777-4114

[Carpenters Assistance Program \(CCAP\)](#) Download the App: GuidanceNowSM or by calling 1- (833) 792-2271.

Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA) is proud to address Mental Health Awareness & Suicide Prevention with an impactful video! This video highlights the success story of an industry veteran, Brandon Anderson, with appearances from MCAA's president Robert Beck, the UA's Jen Massey, industry expert Dr. Sally Spencer Thomas, and MCAA member Ricky Reams.

[MCAA Mental Health Awareness & Suicide Prevention Video](#)

Remember This!

No one is expected to be unbreakable. "The hardest battles are given to the toughest soldiers." And when the storm passes, we often realize: we're stronger than we ever thought we were. If you're struggling, you're **not alone**. And if you're doing okay, check on someone who might not be. Together, we can build more than buildings: we can build each other back up.

Please take a moment of silence to remember our HBI mechanical insulator brother we lost to suicide June 13th, 2025. Their passing is a painful reminder of the silent struggles so many of us carry. **Together we can make a difference, Let's end suicide in construction.**