

A construction worker wearing a yellow hard hat, an orange safety vest over a dark long-sleeved shirt, and dark pants is working on a rooftop. The worker is bent over, using a power tool (possibly a drill or sander) on a concrete or metal surface. The background shows a cityscape with buildings under a cloudy sky. An orange horizontal bar is located at the top left of the image.

Suicide Awareness and Prevention

A Vital Safety Focus in Construction

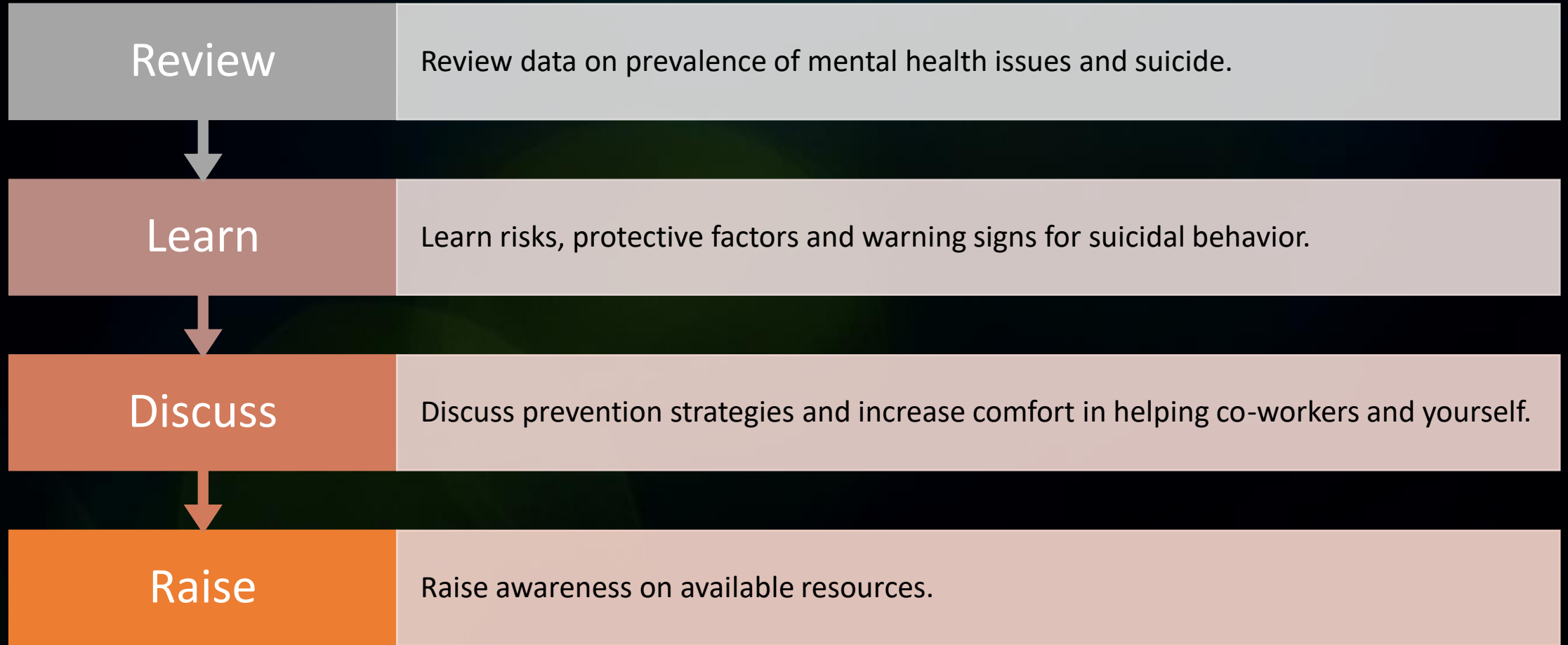
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Topic Introduction

- Suicide awareness and prevention is a sensitive topic and can be very personal.
- Many people have been impacted by suicide in some way.
- Although this topic may be uncomfortable, it is vital to start the conversation and keep it going to potentially save lives.
 - Especially true for construction industry.



Objectives





Mental Health Challenges

- In 2023, 77% US workers suffer from work related stress. (APA)
- About 1 in 5 Americans are experiencing a mental illness. (NAMI)
- Mental health and physical health overlap.
- There has been a significant increase in awareness and acceptance of need to address mental health issues, especially at work.

Suicide Facts (CDC)

- The overall suicide rate for the US in 2022 was 14.3 per 100,000.
 - Michigan rate was 14.6
 - Almost 80% male
 - Almost 55% by firearm
 - Highest rate for age is over 85, and American/Indian and Alaskan Native, then non-Hispanic White
 - Working age 25-34 19.5 rate
- In 2021, a total of 37,602 persons (17.8 per 100,000 population) of working age (16–64 years, employed or unemployed) in the United States died by suicide.
 - A rate increase of approximately 33% since 2001 (13.4)
 - 1.7 million adults attempted suicide



Suicide Facts

- In 2021, the construction industry had the second highest suicide rate for working aged population.
 - 53 per 100,000 for males
 - 3 to 4 times the national rate
- Could top the list of OSHA's Fatal Four
 - 5000 suicides compared to 1000 workplace deaths

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- There is no single cause of suicide.
 - Understanding the risk factors and warning signs as well as having knowledge of available resources can help prevent suicide.

Mental Health Challenges in Construction Industry

- High Stress, both physical and mental
- Long work hours, difficult commutes
- Chronic pain and long-term health conditions
- High rates of substance abuse
- Work conditions
- Isolation or loneliness
- Job insecurity and inconsistency
- Unsupportive work environment
- “Tough Guy Culture”, stigma



Risk Factors

Risk factors are situations or problems that can increase the possibility that a person will attempt suicide.

- Previous suicide attempts
- History of depression or other mental illness
- Chronic disease or pain
- Legal problems
- Financial problems
- Isolation, lack of connections
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Abuse of alcohol and drugs
- Veteran or current military service
- Access to lethal means
- Too uncomfortable or unwilling to seek help
- Lack of awareness of resources

Protective Factors

- Personal factors and circumstances that can protect people from attempting suicide.
 - Effective coping and problem-solving skills
 - Reasons for living (family, friends, pets)
 - Feeling connected to others
 - Support from partners, friends, family, community
 - Cultural, spiritual or religious beliefs
 - Access to clinical care for mental, physical, and substance use disorders.
 - Reduced access to lethal means



Signs at Work

- Decreased productivity
- Increased conflict among co-workers
- Near hits, incidents and injuries
- Decreased problem-solving ability
- Increased tardiness and absenteeism



Warning Signs

Warning signs can be behaviors or statements that someone is at high risk for suicide and should be taken seriously.

Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

Talking about being a burden

Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain

Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs

Increased anxiety, agitation, and/or anger


Talking or posting about wanting to die

Looking for a way to access lethal means



Be aware of potential tipping points or triggering events

Job loss, relationship break-up, arrest or legal charges, significant financial stressors



Suicide Prevention Strategies and Resources



Responding in the Workplace

- Have you seen risk factors or warning signs in the workplace?
- On a scale of 1-10, how would rate your comfort in handling a situation where a co-worker may be at risk for suicide?
- What would be your concerns for responding?

Helping Others (A.C.T.)

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXTkGKRO_8w
- Ask
 - Acknowledge what you have seen, heard, know.
 - Ask if they are thinking about suicide.
 - If they say yes, ask if they have a plan, and what it is.*
- Care
 - Demonstrate care through active listening
 - Be supportive, let them feel heard
 - Avoid judgement, blame or sarcasm
- Take Action
 - Explore options, resources and come up with a plan (988)
 - Stay with them to ensure safety if needed*
 - Follow up

Helping Yourself



- Take care of yourself
 - Sleep, nutrition, exercise, connections, hobbies, health
 - **Regular Maintenance**
- Check in with yourself
 - Stress level, mood, temper, self-care, interactions, health
 - **Warning Lights**
- Identify your supports
 - Know your go-to people.
 - **Knowledge, trust, tools**
- Know and use resources when needed
 - Give yourself permission
 - **Mechanic, body shop**

Breaking Down Barriers to Using Resources

- Stigma
 - Reaching out is a sign of strength, not a weakness
 - Unfair, outdated burden
 - Science of mental illness and the brain much more advanced
 - [About Man Therapy® | Bold Solutions for Difficult Problems](#)
- Concerns for Confidentiality
 - Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), therapy and treatment programs are all confidential
- Concerns for costs
 - Many free resources available (Crisis Line and Text, EAP's, Online programs)
 - Insurances can cover all or most of treatment costs
- Suicide Postvention in the Workplace

Resources

- Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 24/7 Call or Text 988
 - Michigan Crisis and Access Line
- 211-Resource and Referral Line
- Employer/Union provided Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and Insurances
- The Wellness Institute of Michigan (In-person and telehealth therapy)
 - 517-347-4645
- Mantherapy.org
- The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Construction Suicide Prevention Week Sept. 9-13, 2024
- The Center for Construction Research and Training
- Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention
- A Manager's Guide to Suicide Postvention in the Workplace

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Questions

Thank you!

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References

- [APA 2023 Work in American Survey](#)
- [NAMI-Mental Health By the Numbers](#)
- [CDC-Provisional Suicide Deaths in the United States, 2022](#)
- [Suicide Rates by Industry and Occupation National Vital Statistics System, United States 2021](#)
- [CIASP-Toolbox Talks](#)
- [CDC Suicide Prevention Risk and Protective Factors](#)

It's Okay to
Talk About **SUICIDE**
Thoughts of suicide can be frightening. But by reaching out for help or checking in with friends and family, we can avoid devastating outcomes.

Suicide is
NOT
the
answer.