

Mental Health and Asking Twice

About 8 minutes to deliver

Construction has one of the highest suicide rates of any industry, and the whole intervention is one person asking a direct question.

This is not a hazard talk and it is not a soft one. Construction has one of the highest suicide rates of any industry in the country — in most years it takes far more people in this trade than falls do.

The reasons are not mysterious. Long hours and time away from home. Chronic pain from work that wears the body out, and painkillers that follow it. Seasonal layoffs and money worry. A culture where you are expected to be fine, and where admitting you are not has always felt like admitting you cannot do the job.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Not a diagnosis — a change in someone you know:

- Withdrawing, going quiet, stopping coming to lunch or to the truck.
- Anger or a short fuse that is not like them.
- Turning up late, or not turning up, when they never did.
- Drinking more, or pills.
- Sleeping badly, looking exhausted all the time.
- Giving things away, sorting affairs out, saying goodbye oddly.
- Saying they are a burden, that people would be better off, that there is no point.

ASK DIRECTLY

The one thing everybody gets wrong is being vague. "You alright?" gets "yeah, fine" every time — that is not a question, it is a greeting.

- Ask twice. "No, really — how are you doing?" The second ask is the one that gets an answer.
- Ask the direct question if you are worried: "Are you thinking about killing yourself?" People are afraid this puts the idea in someone's head. It does not. What it does is tell somebody that they are allowed to say yes, often for the first time.
- Then listen. Do not fix it, do not compare it to your own, do not tell them it could be worse. Listening is the whole job.
- Staying with them matters if they say yes. Stay, and get help with them rather than for them — 988 will talk you both through what happens next.

WHERE TO POINT PEOPLE

- 988 — the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Call or text, 24 hours, free. It answers in Spanish — dial 988 and press option 2 for the Spanish line. Anyone can use it, including you if you are worried about someone else.
- The employee assistance programme if we have one, which is confidential and does not come back to me.
- A doctor. Depression is treatable and so is chronic pain, and being treated for one usually helps the other.

WHAT WE DO HERE

Nobody loses work, hours or standing for saying they are struggling. If somebody needs a day, a lighter task, or time to see someone, that is arranged and it is nobody else's business.

And if you are the one having a bad stretch — this is a room full of people who would rather know.

ASK THE CREW

- Has anyone on this crew seemed different lately?
- Do people here know the 988 number, and is it on the board?
- What would make it easier to say you were having a bad run?

This is a toolbox talk, not a course. It is general awareness on one topic — not site-specific, not a hazard assessment, and not a substitute for assessment of your workplace by a competent person, your written programs, or manufacturers' instructions. It does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. Regulations change; verify against the current standard. Whoever delivers it is responsible for deciding it is suitable and sufficient for the work. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, not a substitute for professional medical care or certified emergency-response training, and it confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. Migna Safety Solutions · training.mignasafetyolutions.com

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Mental Health and Asking Twice

About 8 minutes to deliver

Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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