



# Toolbox Talks

## Mental Health and Suicide Prevention



### **The Facts:**

The U.S. construction industry has the second-highest rate of suicide at 53.3 per 100,000 workers, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That breaks down to 14 construction workers per day.

### **What makes construction workers vulnerable?**

- Roles that are isolating
- Employment dependent on the economy
- Large amounts of time spent away from family and friends
- Chronic pain caused by manual labor
- Stress due to time constraints, work environments and poor sleep
- Use of alcohol and mood-altering substances to cope
- Stigma of mental illness encourages secrecy and isolation

### **Warning Signs**

- Decreased attention to appearance and personal hygiene
- Self-destructive behavior, including self-criticism or talk of self-harm
- Withdrawal from others
- No hope for the future
- Decreased productivity
- Talk about being a burden
- Extreme mood swings
- Increased tardiness and absenteeism
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol

### **Prevention Tip: Don't Ignore It!**

Speak up to show your concern if you are worried about someone. Let them know that you've noticed they are acting differently and ask why they don't seem like themselves. Act quickly if you feel like a family member, friend, co-worker or you are in crisis.

### **Assistance Is Available**

Most companies provide an Employee Assistance Program, which provides trained counselors for employees and their family members who need or request it for personal or behavioral problems. EAP provides services that are confidential, and the privacy of employees and their family members is always protected. Common problems addressed include alcoholism, drug abuse, financial difficulties, family tensions and conflicts with co-workers.

### **For Immediate Help: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**

The 988 Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the United States.

