

"For safety's sake—do something."

MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX TALK---[2TUFF2TALK.COM](https://www.2tuff2talk.com)

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the construction industry has the second-highest rate of suicide in the U.S. There are approximately 123 suicides per day. That breaks down to one death by suicide every 12 minutes. In construction, it is typical for us to discuss physical safety on a daily basis. The focus of our work plans has been on keeping ourselves and our co-workers safe from bodily harm. What we have not typically talked about is our mental health. When you see someone physically struggling with a task, do you stop them and ask them if they need help? What about our mental state and the ability to perform the task at hand? Do we conduct a Job Safety Analysis (JSA) to see what hazards are floating around in our heads that day? When we see someone emotionally struggling, do we stop them and ask them if they need help?

WHAT MAKES CONSTRUCTION WORKERS VULNERABLE

- Stoic, “tough guy or tough girl” culture
- Seasonal employment
- Exposure to physical strain
- Capability for fearlessness
- Fragmented community / isolation
- Industry with highest rate of prescription opioids
- Culture of substance abuse
- Access to lethal weapons
- High pressure with risk of failure

KNOW THE SIGNS

- Increased tardiness and absenteeism
- Decreased productivity
- Decreased self-confidence
- Isolation from peers
- Agitation and increased conflict among co-workers
- Increased feelings of being overwhelmed


WHAT DO WE DO

If you suspect someone may be at risk for suicide, it is important to ask directly about suicidal thoughts. Do not avoid using the word “suicide”. It is important to ask the question without expressing negative judgment. The question must be direct and to the point. If you appear confident in the face of a suicide crisis, this can be reassuring for the suicidal person. For example, you could ask:

Are you having suicidal thoughts? *Or*

Are you thinking about killing yourself? *Or*

Are you ok?



2tuff2talk is a resource developed by The Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Northwest Ohio to help get the word to union construction workers regarding mental health in the workplace and in our daily lives.

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**Safety Scott says,
"Safety always is
ALWAYS!"**