



Suicide Prevention – Awareness: Mental Health versus Mental Illness

Suicide is a leading cause of death among working age adults in the United States. It deeply impacts workers, families, and communities. There were approximately 1.2 million suicide attempts in America in 2020. Tragically, more than 45,000 of these attempts were fatal. The construction industry has one of the highest rates of suicides among all occupations - four times higher than in the general population. September is Suicide Prevention Month and is an opportunity to raise awareness and provide support in protecting the mental health of America's workers.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly 1 in 5 adults are living with a mental health condition, such as anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress. In June 2020, the Center for Disease Control found that 40% of U.S. adults were struggling with mental health or substance abuse and 11% seriously considered suicide. Work-related stress can have an impact on mental health and, without proper support, could lead to substance abuse and even suicide.

Workers in the construction industry are generally at a higher risk for suicide due to work-related stress factors including seasonal/temporary employment, demanding work schedules, and serious injuries, which are sometimes treated with opioids. Not addressing the underlying stressors or injuries can exacerbate mental health symptoms and may increase the risk of substance abuse or even suicide.

Mental Health

- Emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing
- Affects how we think, feel, and act
Helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices
- Changes over time and is impacted by many factors:
 - Genetics
 - Life events
 - Environmental stressors
 - Poor physical health
 - Change in routine

Mental Illnesses

- Conditions that affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood or behavior, such as depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder.
- May be occasional or long-lasting (chronic) and affect someone's ability to relate to others and function each day



- Among the most common health conditions in the United States - more than 50% of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime

SAFETY REMINDER

Mental health is a personal issue, a family issue, a work issue, and a society issue. This is why mental health should be part of the SAFETY CONVERSATION.