

TOOLBOX TALK #9

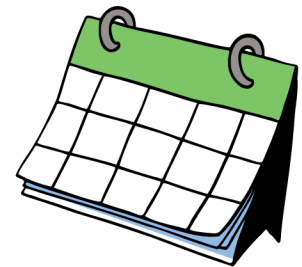
Suicide Prevention



September is National Suicide Prevention Month. This month is dedicated to raising awareness around mental health and suicide prevention, breaking the stigma, and making sure every one of us knows signs to look for and how to help. Think of it like any other safety focus; we identify hazards on the job site, use the right tools, and watch each other's backs. Same mindset, just a different kind of hazard.

September at a Glance

- **National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month** (Month of September).
- **National Recovery Month** (Month of September).
- **National Suicide Prevention Week** (September 7-13).
- **Construction Suicide Prevention Week** (September 8-12).
- **#988 Day** (September 8).
- **World Suicide Prevention Day** (September 10).



Why It Matters

We all know someone who might be struggling or we might be struggling ourselves. It is ok to talk about it. It is ok to ask for help. This is not just about mental health in general; it is about safety on the job, teamwork, and looking out for your crew - just like you would for any other safety hazard on the job site.

Signs and Symptoms to Watch For

Everyone handles their struggles differently, but the following are some common signs that can be recognized.

- Talking about feeling hopeless, trapped, or wanting to harm themselves.
- Withdrawal from friends, family, or coworkers.
- Trouble sleeping, showing up late, missing days, or not fully "present" on the task.
- Sudden changes in mood, personality, or behavior.
- Increased reckless or self-destructive behavior.
- Declining performance, difficulty concentrating, or making decisions.
- Consistently mentioning chronic stress or pain.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Why is it important to save resources like 988, TEAM EAP, and your Business Rep's number in your phone?
2. What can supervisors, stewards, or crew leads do to help make mental health a regular part of jobsite safety culture?

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Ways to Intervene Safely

You do not need to be a mental health professional to step in and support someone who may be struggling. Sometimes just noticing, caring, and asking the right questions can save a life. The following is an approach that is simple to remember and put into action.

1. **ASK: Start the conversation directly.** A simple, “I am concerned about you - how are you really doing? or “Are you thinking about hurting yourself?” can make a huge difference and open the conversation.
2. **LISTEN: Be present and non-judgmental.** Give the person your full attention. Put the tools down and find a private space on the job site when you can have a calm conversation without distractions. Avoid offering quick-fixes or judgement - this is about hearing them, not solving the problem.
3. **SUPPORT: Help them access professional help.** Let them know there are trained professionals ready to help. Offer to help them call 988, TEAM, or a Carpenters Union business representative if they are open to it. Sometimes just staying with them until they connect with support can be life-saving. Remember to follow up to see how they are doing - it shows that you genuinely care and that they are not alone.
4. **SAFETY FIRST: Know when to escalate.** If someone is in immediate danger or has made a plan to act on suicidal thoughts, call 911 immediately and state that it is a mental health crisis. Remove any immediate means of harm if it is safe to do so, like tools, medications, or other items that could be used in self-harm.

You do not need to have all the answers. Just being present, showing care, and connecting someone to help can prevent a crisis. Your experience, empathy, and willingness to step up are exactly what can make a difference.

Let's End the Stigma Together

- **Mental health is part of safety:** “How’s everything going?” should be as routine as “Do you have your PPE?”
- **Normalize help-seeking:** Share support contacts with each other.
- **Supervisors/Stewards:** Open meetings or breaks with a quick check-in; model the tone you want.
- **Treat mental health like any other hazard**—identify, control, and acknowledge concerns.

This month is a reminder, but the work is year-round. Notice the signs, start the conversation, and connect to help. That is how we keep each other safe, productive, and going home healthy. No one has to carry this alone.

988 Lifeline

TEAM 1-800-634-7710

Additional resources can be found at www.northcountrycarpenter.org/mental-health

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Mental Health Resources

Take a moment to add the following mental health resources to your contacts. If you or someone you know is struggling, these are good resources to have on-hand for quick access.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline understands that life's challenges can sometimes be difficult to navigate. Whether you are facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, or just need someone to talk to, their counselors are available 24/7 for free and confidential support.

- **Call or text 988**
- **Chat via www.988lifeline.org**



TEAM (Employee Assistance Program)

TEAM offers a unique approach that gives members and their dependents direct access to an experienced team of clinicians and other experts who understand the challenges of working individuals in their day-to-day lives. TEAM provides support for behavioral health, patient advocacy, and care coordination and are available 24/7.

- **Call 1-800-634-7710**
- **Visit www.startwithteam.com**



Carpenters Union

The Carpenters Union is dedicated to supporting the mental well-being of our members and the industry as a whole. Resources are available by reaching out to your local business representative for guidance or visit our Mental Health Resource page for national and state specific support contacts.

- **northcountrycarpenter.org/activism/mental-health**

