

EHS CONCEPTS

TOP 10 THINGS THAT ACTUALLY HELP

A sticker is not a program. Ten concrete actions a contractor can take on men's mental health and suicide prevention, beyond posting 988. In crisis now? Call or text 988. A free field guide.

Ryan L. Rinehart

Retired Navy Veteran · Navy Safety Technician (NEC 9571) · Navy Rescue Swimmer
19+ years in EHS · Author of Safe on Purpose and No License to Lead

Keep your people whole.

FROM RYAN

A sticker is not a program

The scenes in this guide are illustrative, not reports of real people or events. If you or someone on your crew is in crisis, call or text 988, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Veterans and service members, press 1.

Most of us have put 988 on a hard-hat sticker, a wallet card, or a pin. Keep it. It matters. But a sticker tells a man where to call. It does not make him call, and it does not fix what is crushing him. Most men in this trade will not make that call on their own.

The numbers say this is our problem. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that men in construction and extraction jobs died by suicide at 65.6 per 100,000 in 2021, the highest of any occupation group and about double the 32.0 rate for all working men (CDC, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, or MMWR, 2023).

CPWR – The Center for Construction Research and Training counts it a different way. By its count about 5,000 construction workers ages 16–64 died by suicide in 2024, a rate of 41.9 per 100,000, down slightly from 2023 (CPWR REASON, February 2026). The two sources use different methods, so do not mix their numbers. Both say the same thing: this is a jobsite hazard.

We already know how to manage hazards. Name an owner. Train people. Control the energy. Check that it works. This guide applies the same thinking to suicide prevention. It leans on COMPASS (Construction Organizations Mobilizing for Peer Support & Suicide Safety), CPWR's U.S. adaptation of Australia's MATES in Construction, plus CDC and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) guidance.

I will be straight with you about the evidence. It is promising but modest, MATES included. No program can promise to stop every suicide, and this one does not. It gives you concrete steps you can take this quarter. Do them anyway. Someone on your crew may need you to.

Ryan L. Rinehart

Founder, EHS Concepts — The Ways of Safety

Keep your people whole.



THE VERIFIED NUMBERS

Why this belongs in your safety program

988

Call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, 24/7. Veterans: press 1. Chat at 988lifeline.org. Keep it posted, and keep reading.

65.6

Suicides per 100,000 men in construction and extraction occupations, 2021, highest of any occupation group (CDC)

41.9

Suicides per 100,000 construction workers ages 16–64 in 2024, about 5,000 deaths (CPWR)

1 in 10+

More than 1 in 10 people who died by suicide in the U.S. in 2023 worked in construction (CPWR, citing the New York Times)

60.7%

Of U.S. male suicides in 2023 involved a firearm (National Institute of Mental Health, or NIMH; CDC data)

3.82×

Higher odds of prescription opioid use for construction workers with a work-related injury (Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, or MEPS, 2011–2018 study)

CDC and CPWR figures come from different data and methods (CDC: 2021 deaths by occupation group; CPWR: 2024 deaths by industry), so they are shown separately and not compared. Sources: CDC MMWR 72(50), Dec. 15, 2023; CPWR/North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) REASON, Issue 7, February 2026; NIMH Suicide Statistics (CDC Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) data, 2023); Dong et al., PMC8842216.

The ten actions in this guide

	ACTION	THE ONE THING TO DO THIS QUARTER	MAIN SOURCE
1	Run it like a safety program	Name an owner and work through CPWR's COMPASS ten-step guide	CPWR COMPASS
2	Give everyone the basics	One hour of general awareness training, or five toolbox talks	CPWR COMPASS
3	Build peer connectors	Train volunteer peers (about 5% of the workforce) in safeTALK or similar	CPWR COMPASS
4	Name navigators	Train a few people in ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) to assess, support, and refer	CPWR COMPASS
5	Teach a supervisor check-in	Notice, ask, listen, connect, follow up	EHS Concepts, from CDC/NIOSH guidance
6	Lethal means safety	Peer or family counseling on temporary secure storage of guns and pills; never confiscation	NIOSH; NIMH; Barber 2022
7	Treat pain and opioids as risk	Check in on every injured worker; opioid-aware return to work; naloxone	MEPS study; CPWR
8	Fix the job strain you control	Stop bullying; manage hours and layoffs with notice	NIOSH; CPWR
9	Make help easy and private	Test your employee assistance program (EAP) and counseling access; post 988	NIOSH; 988 Lifeline
10	Plan postvention now	Write what you will do after a suicide, before you need it	Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP)

Sources are listed in full at the back. COMPASS training levels and the ten-step guide are CPWR's; the check-in steps are an EHS Concepts summary.

BEFORE THE TEN ACTIONS

Four things that sit under all ten

<u>988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline</u> Crisis line · GUIDANCE	Call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org, 24/7. Veterans and service members press 1 for the Veterans Crisis Line. Keep it on every board, card, and sticker. It is the floor, not the plan.
<u>CPWR COMPASS</u> Framework · GUIDANCE	CPWR's U.S. adaptation of MATES in Construction: three training levels and a ten-step implementation guide.
<u>NIOSH workplace suicide prevention</u> Strategies · GUIDANCE	NIOSH points to four general strategies: limit access to lethal means, provide peer support, increase access to mental health care, and reduce stigma. Fix the organization, then support the person.
<u>CIASP resources</u> Tools · GUIDANCE	The Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention offers free tools, toolbox talks, a needs analysis, and postvention guidance in English and Spanish.

Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) suicide prevention standard.

Ten-minute foundation check

#	CHECK	YES	NO
1	988 is posted where workers actually look, in English and Spanish.	☐	☐
2	One named person owns our suicide prevention program.	☐	☐
3	Mental health is on our safety meeting agenda at least once a quarter.	☐	☐
4	We know our EAP number, and we have called it to test it.	☐	☐
5	Supervisors know what to do if a worker says he is thinking about suicide.	☐	☐
6	We have trained at least some volunteer peers, not just managers.	☐	☐
7	Injured workers get a check-in while they are off work.	☐	☐
8	We have a written plan for what we do after a suicide.	☐	☐

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Walk it. Score it. Own it.

1. Read the ten actions. Pick the two you can start this month. Do not wait to do all ten.
2. Use the self-audit for each action as a planning check with your leadership team, not a crew inspection.
3. Do not ask workers to disclose their own mental health on any audit. Check the system, not the person.
4. Every “No” gets one owner and one date.
5. Review it every quarter. Count what was delivered: trainings held, check-ins made, peers trained.

USE THIS EVERY TIME

When you find a gap: the eight-step response

1. If someone is in danger now, act now.	Stay with him. Call or text 988, or call 911 if there is immediate danger. Do not leave him alone. This comes before any paperwork.
2. Ask directly.	Asking someone if they are thinking about suicide does not put the idea in their head. It opens the door.
3. Connect him to help.	Walk him to the next step: 988, the EAP, a doctor, a navigator, or family. A warm handoff beats a phone number.
4. Make the environment safer.	Help arrange temporary storage of guns and extra medications away from him, with his agreement and his family's help.
5. Follow up.	Check on him the next day and the next week. Keep it private.
6. Find the condition that made it worse.	Look at what you control: bullying, hours, layoffs, injury, pain, no time off for care.
7. Protect privacy.	Share only what is needed to keep him safe. Never make it gossip or a discipline issue.
8. Take care of the helper.	The person who stepped in needs a check-in too.

Leaders own the conditions. Workers make choices inside the conditions we build. When a gap shows up, the first question is not “who did it?” It is “what did we build, fund, schedule, or tolerate that made this normal?”

This guide is a practical summary for planning. It is not medical, clinical, or legal advice, and it is not a substitute for crisis services or professional care. Training names (safeTALK, ASIST) are LivingWorks programs; CPWR says similar trainings may be substituted. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text 988.

01

Run it like a safety program

CPWR COMPASS ten-step guide [GUIDANCE]

10

steps in CPWR's guide to implementing COMPASS

1

named owner, the first thing to fix

Annual

review built into the guide

THE PAIN POINT The company did a suicide prevention stand-down in September. Everyone got a sticker. Nothing happened after that. (illustrative)

What the evidence says

Source: CPWR, COMPASS framework and Ten-Step Guide. COMPASS is CPWR's U.S. construction adaptation of MATES in Construction. Its ten-step guide walks a contractor through leadership and union engagement, program design, referral resources, training, rollout, and annual review. What the evidence shows for MATES-style programs: gains in mental health literacy, less stigma, and more help-offering. Reductions in suicide rates have been modest and are not strongly shown to be caused by the program. A 2025 trial of MATES in manufacturing found it was not effective as implemented, in part because sites did not fully put it in place. So this guide promises steps, not results.

Why it really happens

Not weakness, and not a character flaw. These are the conditions on the job that make this harder than it has to be.

- It is treated as an awareness event, not a program.
- Nobody owns it, so it fades after the stand-down.
- There is no budget or time on the clock for training.
- Leaders never say out loud that it matters.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · RUN IT LIKE A SAFETY PROGRAM

What the guidance says, in plain words

COMPASS step guide · GUIDANCE	Get leadership and union buy-in, design the program, line up referral resources, train at three levels, roll it out, and review it each year.
NIOSH · GUIDANCE	Treat mental health as part of total worker safety and health: fix work conditions first, then support individuals.

Summarized from the sources listed. The research on workplace suicide prevention programs is still thin, so this guide promises steps, not results. Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no OSHA suicide prevention standard.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Tomorrow: supervisor	Put mental health on the next safety meeting agenda and say out loud that asking for help is safety.
Tomorrow: company	Name one program owner and open CPWR's COMPASS ten-step guide.
Leadership	Owner or president says on the record that asking for help is safety, not weakness.
Owner	Name one program owner with time and budget.
Plan	Work through the COMPASS ten-step guide this quarter.
Measure	Track what was delivered: trainings, peers trained, check-ins, referrals.

Leaders own the conditions. If the only plan is a hard-hat sticker and a phone number, the plan depends on a man in his worst hour making the call alone. Build it so somebody notices and walks with him.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

01 · Run it like a safety program

COMPANY / SITE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	A named person owns suicide prevention.	☐	☐	☐	
2	There is a budget and paid time for training.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Leadership has spoken about it publicly.	☐	☐	☐	
4	We have read the COMPASS ten-step guide.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Referral resources are listed and current.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Union partners are involved where they exist.	☐	☐	☐	
7	The program has a written plan.	☐	☐	☐	
8	We track what was delivered.	☐	☐	☐	
9	The program is reviewed at least annually.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Subcontractors are invited in.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · RUN IT LIKE A SAFETY PROGRAM

Who owns it

Owner / executive	Funds it and speaks for it.
Supervisor / foreman	Brings it to the crew.
Program owner / safety lead	Runs the plan and tracking.
Every worker	Takes part.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Ask three workers who to go to if a coworker is struggling.
- Ask the owner what was delivered last quarter.
- Check the safety agenda for mental health.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

If one of us was in a dark place, what would actually happen on this job?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Name the owner this week and set the first three steps with dates. If anyone is in crisis now, call or text 988. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

02

Give everyone the basics

COMPASS Level 1: General Awareness Training [GUIDANCE]

1 hour

general awareness training for all workers

5

short toolbox talks as an alternative

Annual

refresh recommended by CPWR

THE PAIN POINT A carpenter has noticed his partner stopped talking at lunch and started giving away tools. He doesn't know whether to say anything. (illustrative)

What the evidence says

Source: CPWR, COMPASS framework and Ten-Step Guide. COMPASS Level 1 is general awareness training for everyone at the company or on the site, given as a one-hour presentation or five short toolbox talks. A 2025 meta-analysis of gatekeeper training found gains in knowledge and confidence to help, but the knowledge gains faded over time, so refreshers matter.

Why it really happens

Not weakness, and not a character flaw. These are the conditions on the job that make this harder than it has to be.

- Training is one-time and fades.
- Workers do not know the warning signs.
- Workers fear saying the wrong thing.
- Nobody knows the next step after noticing.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · GIVE EVERYONE THE BASICS

What the guidance says, in plain words

COMPASS Level 1 · GUIDANCE	Train all workers on awareness of suicide risk, warning signs, and how to get help. One hour or five toolbox talks.
BMC 2025 meta-analysis · GUIDANCE	Gatekeeper training improves knowledge and confidence to help, but the gains fade over time, so plan refreshers.

Summarized from the sources listed. The research on workplace suicide prevention programs is still thin, so this guide promises steps, not results. Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no OSHA suicide prevention standard.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Tomorrow: supervisor	Give one five-minute toolbox talk on warning signs and 988.
Tomorrow: company	Book a one-hour awareness session for every worker, on the clock.
Train	One hour for every worker, on the clock.
Toolbox	Five short talks spread over a month.
Refresh	Repeat every year; short talks each quarter.
Language	English and Spanish, or the crew's language.

Leaders own the conditions. If the only plan is a hard-hat sticker and a phone number, the plan depends on a man in his worst hour making the call alone. Build it so somebody notices and walks with him.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

02 · Give everyone the basics

COMPANY / SITE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Every worker has had awareness training in the last year.	☐	☐	☐	
2	It was on paid time.	☐	☐	☐	
3	It was in the crew's language.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Workers can name three warning signs.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Workers know the next step after noticing.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Toolbox refreshers happen each quarter.	☐	☐	☐	
7	New hires get it within their first month.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Subcontractor crews are included.	☐	☐	☐	
9	988 is covered in the training.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Trainers have had safeTALK or ASIST, as CPWR recommends.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · GIVE EVERYONE THE BASICS

Who owns it

Owner / executive	Pays for training time.
Supervisor / foreman	Delivers or hosts toolbox talks.
Program owner / safety lead	Schedules and tracks.
Every worker	Attends and watches out for coworkers.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Ask a worker to name warning signs.
- Check the training roster against the crew list.
- Check the date of the last refresher.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

What would make you worried about a buddy on this crew?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Schedule general awareness training this month. If anyone is in crisis now, call or text 988. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

03

Build peer connectors

COMPASS Level 2: safeTALK Peer Connectors [GUIDANCE]

~5%

of the workforce trained as peer connectors (CPWR)

4 hours

safeTALK training

Volunteers

CPWR says peers should volunteer

THE PAIN POINT **The crew will talk to the old journeyman before they will ever talk to the superintendent.** (illustrative)

What the evidence says

Source: CPWR, COMPASS framework and Ten-Step Guide. COMPASS Level 2 trains volunteer Peer Connectors, about 5% of the workforce, in the four-hour safeTALK course. Connectors notice, ask, and connect coworkers to help. CPWR says they should include foremen, safety champions, and trusted workers outside formal leadership. Men often go to a peer before a boss, so the network has to reach past management.

Why it really happens

Not weakness, and not a character flaw. These are the conditions on the job that make this harder than it has to be.

- Only managers are trained, and workers do not go to managers.
- Connectors are assigned, not volunteers.
- Nobody knows who the connectors are.
- Connectors have no backup.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · BUILD PEER CONNECTORS

What the guidance says, in plain words

COMPASS Level 2 · GUIDANCE Train volunteer peer connectors in safeTALK (or a similar course) to recognize, ask, and connect coworkers to help.

NIOSH · GUIDANCE Peer support is one of four general workplace suicide prevention strategies.

Summarized from the sources listed. The research on workplace suicide prevention programs is still thin, so this guide promises steps, not results. Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no OSHA suicide prevention standard.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Tomorrow: supervisor	Ask your crew who would volunteer to be a peer connector.
Tomorrow: company	Book safeTALK (or a similar course) for volunteers, about 5% of the workforce.
Recruit	Ask for volunteers on every crew; include trusted non-supervisors.
Train	Four-hour safeTALK or an equivalent course, on the clock.
Identify	Hard-hat stickers or a list so workers know who connectors are.
Back up	Connect every connector to a navigator.

Leaders own the conditions. If the only plan is a hard-hat sticker and a phone number, the plan depends on a man in his worst hour making the call alone. Build it so somebody notices and walks with him.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

03 · Build peer connectors

COMPANY / SITE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	We have trained peer connectors.	☐	☐	☐	
2	About 5% of workers are connectors.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Connectors volunteered.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Connectors include non-supervisors.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Every crew can name a connector.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Connectors know their navigator.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Training was on paid time.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Connectors are checked on themselves.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Connectors reflect the crew's languages.	☐	☐	☐	
10	New connectors are added as people leave.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · BUILD PEER CONNECTORS

Who owns it

Owner / executive	Funds training.
Supervisor / foreman	Encourages volunteers.
Program owner / safety lead	Recruits, trains, and supports connectors.
Every worker	Knows the crew's connector.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Ask workers who the connector is.
- Ask a connector who backs them up.
- Count connectors per crew.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

Who on this crew would you actually talk to if you were in a bad spot?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Recruit volunteers and book safeTALK. If anyone is in crisis now, call or text 988. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

04 Name navigators

COMPASS Level 3: ASIST Navigators [GUIDANCE]

2 days

ASIST training

A few

navigators: safety, human resources (HR), foremen, project managers

Warm handoff

the goal of the referral

THE PAIN POINT A peer connector calls on a Saturday. A coworker told him he doesn't see the point anymore. The connector doesn't know who to call next. (illustrative)

What the evidence says

Source: CPWR, COMPASS framework and Ten-Step Guide. COMPASS Level 3 trains a smaller number of Navigators in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), a two-day course, so they can work with peer connectors, assess, support, and refer workers to care. CPWR suggests safety staff, HR, foremen, project managers, and union health and safety staff.

Why it really happens

Not weakness, and not a character flaw. These are the conditions on the job that make this harder than it has to be.

- Connectors have nowhere to hand off.
- Referral resources are not known or not tested.
- Navigators are not reachable after hours.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · NAME NAVIGATORS

What the guidance says, in plain words

COMPASS Level 3 · GUIDANCE Train navigators in ASIST (or similar) to support connectors and refer workers to mental health and other services.

Summarized from the sources listed. The research on workplace suicide prevention programs is still thin, so this guide promises steps, not results. Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no OSHA suicide prevention standard.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Tomorrow: supervisor	Find out who your navigator is and save the number.
Tomorrow: company	Name one navigator and one backup and book ASIST.
Train	Two-day ASIST for a few navigators.
Resources	A tested list of local counseling, EAP, and crisis resources.
Reach	Navigators reachable by phone, including off-hours where possible.

Leaders own the conditions. If the only plan is a hard-hat sticker and a phone number, the plan depends on a man in his worst hour making the call alone. Build it so somebody notices and walks with him.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

04 · Name navigators

COMPANY / SITE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	We have trained navigators.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Connectors know how to reach them.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Navigators have a current referral list.	☐	☐	☐	
4	The referral list was tested by calling.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Navigators have a backup.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Navigators get support after hard calls.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Privacy rules are clear.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Navigators know when to call 911.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Navigators include HR or safety.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Navigators review the program annually.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · NAME NAVIGATORS

Who owns it

Owner / executive	Funds ASIST.
Supervisor / foreman	Knows the navigator.
Program owner / safety lead	Coordinates navigators.
Every worker	Knows how to reach help.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Ask a connector to call a navigator.
- Call two referral numbers.
- Ask a navigator who supports them.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

If a connector called you tonight, what would you do?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Name navigators and test the referral list. If anyone is in crisis now, call or text 988. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

05 Teach a supervisor check-in

Notice · Ask · Listen · Connect · Follow up [GUIDANCE]

5

steps every supervisor can learn

Ask directly

asking does not plant the idea

Next day

the follow-up most plans skip

THE PAIN POINT A foreman sees a solid worker show up late three times, snap at the crew, and say he is done with all of it. (illustrative)

What the evidence says

This check-in is an EHS Concepts summary of the steps that run through CDC/NIOSH guidance and the COMPASS training levels: notice changes, ask directly, listen without fixing, connect to help, and follow up. It is a framework to teach, not a clinical tool.

Why it really happens

Not weakness, and not a character flaw. These are the conditions on the job that make this harder than it has to be.

- Supervisors are trained to manage performance, not people.
- They fear saying the wrong thing.
- The conversation turns into discipline.
- No one follows up.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · TEACH A SUPERVISOR CHECK-IN

What the guidance says, in plain words

Notice · GUIDANCE	Watch for changes: withdrawal, anger, drinking, talk of being a burden, giving things away, missed work.
Ask · GUIDANCE	Ask privately and directly, including whether he is thinking about suicide.
Listen · GUIDANCE	Listen. Don't argue, judge, or rush to fix.
Connect · GUIDANCE	Walk him to help: a peer connector, navigator, EAP, doctor, or 988. Stay with him if he is in danger.
Follow up · GUIDANCE	Check in the next day and the next week. Keep it private.

Summarized from the sources listed. The research on workplace suicide prevention programs is still thin, so this guide promises steps, not results. Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no OSHA suicide prevention standard.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Tomorrow: supervisor	Check in with one person using notice, ask, listen, connect, follow up.
Tomorrow: company	Print the five steps on a card for every supervisor.
Train	Teach the five steps in supervisor training.
Practice	Role-play the ask.
Separate	Keep check-ins separate from discipline.
Support	Connect supervisors to a navigator.

Leaders own the conditions. If the only plan is a hard-hat sticker and a phone number, the plan depends on a man in his worst hour making the call alone. Build it so somebody notices and walks with him.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

05 · Teach a supervisor check-in

COMPANY / SITE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
----------------	-------------	------

#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Supervisors have been taught the five steps.	☐	☐	☐	
2	They have practiced asking directly.	☐	☐	☐	
3	They know who to connect a worker to.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Check-ins are kept separate from discipline.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Supervisors follow up.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Privacy is protected.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Supervisors know when to call 911.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Supervisors have support after a hard conversation.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Performance changes trigger a check-in, not just a write-up.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Supervisors model asking for help themselves.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · TEACH A SUPERVISOR CHECK-IN

Who owns it

Owner / executive	Expects supervisors to check in.
Supervisor / foreman	Does the check-in.
Program owner / safety lead	Trains and supports supervisors.
Every worker	Looks out for coworkers.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Ask a foreman to walk through the five steps.
- Check whether recent discipline cases had a check-in first.
- Ask supervisors who supports them.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

When did you last ask someone on this crew how they're really doing?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Train supervisors in the five steps. If anyone is in crisis now, call or text 988. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

06 Lethal means safety

Temporary secure storage of guns and pills [GUIDANCE]

60.7%

of male suicides in the U.S. in 2023 involved a firearm (NIMH, CDC data)

88%

of adult men who died by firearm suicide used their own gun (National Violent Death Reporting System, NVDRS; 5 states, 2015–2017)

Temporary

storage during a hard stretch, offered by a peer or family member

THE PAIN POINT A worker going through a divorce says he has been sitting in his truck at night with his rifle. He trusts his brother. (illustrative)

What the evidence says

Firearms were the method in 60.7% of male suicide deaths in the U.S. in 2023 (NIMH, using CDC data). In a study of National Violent Death Reporting System data from five states (2015–2017), 88% of adult men who died by firearm suicide used their own gun (Barber et al., Preventive Medicine, 2022). The authors note that locking guns gives little protection if the man controls the keys, so storing them away from home or having someone else hold the keys may be safer. Limiting access to lethal means is one of NIOSH's general workplace suicide prevention strategies.

Why it really happens

Not weakness, and not a character flaw. These are the conditions on the job that make this harder than it has to be.

- Nobody talks about it because guns are personal.
- People think it means taking guns away for good.
- Pills and leftover opioids sit in the cabinet after an injury.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · LETHAL MEANS SAFETY

What the guidance says, in plain words

NIOSH · GUIDANCE	Limiting access to lethal means is a core suicide prevention strategy.
Barber et al. 2022 · GUIDANCE	For men, storage away from home, or someone else holding the keys or combination, may be safer than a lock he controls.
Practice · GUIDANCE	Secure storage means locked, unloaded, ammunition stored separately, or held by someone he trusts for a while. Do the same for pills: lock them up, have someone else hold them, or dispose of extras. This is voluntary counseling from a peer or family member. The company never confiscates anyone's guns or medications.

Summarized from the sources listed. The research on workplace suicide prevention programs is still thin, so this guide promises steps, not results. Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no OSHA suicide prevention standard.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Tomorrow: supervisor	Learn the words: "Would you let your brother hold onto your guns for a while, just until things settle?"
Tomorrow: company	Add a lethal means safety toolbox talk and order free cable locks or lock boxes.
Peer and family	Train connectors and navigators to bring family in and offer temporary storage options.
Medications	Promote lockup and safe disposal of leftover pills and opioids.
Partner	Know local options for voluntary temporary storage, such as a trusted friend, gun shop, or law enforcement where allowed.

Leaders own the conditions. If the only plan is a hard-hat sticker and a phone number, the plan depends on a man in his worst hour making the call alone. Build it so somebody notices and walks with him.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

06 · Lethal means safety

COMPANY / SITE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Our training covers lethal means safety.	☐	☐	☐	
2	It is framed as temporary, voluntary, and peer- or family-led.	☐	☐	☐	
3	No policy suggests company confiscation.	☐	☐	☐	
4	We offer gun locks or lock boxes.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Workers know medication lockup and disposal options.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Navigators know local temporary storage options.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Family involvement is encouraged.	☐	☐	☐	
8	The message respects gun owners.	☐	☐	☐	
9	It is in the crew's language.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Messaging follows safe-messaging practice (no method detail).	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · LETHAL MEANS SAFETY

Who owns it

Owner / executive	Funds locks and boxes.
Supervisor / foreman	Raises it calmly and privately in a crisis.
Program owner / safety lead	Builds it into training.
Every worker	Offers to hold a buddy's guns or pills for a while.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Check whether training covers it.
- Ask whether locks are available.
- Ask a navigator about local storage options.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

If a buddy was in a bad spot, who could hold his guns for a while?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Add lethal means safety to training. If anyone is in danger now, stay with him and call 988 or 911. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

3.82×

higher odds of prescription opioid use after a work injury (MEPS study)

2.31×

higher odds with a musculoskeletal disorder

11.3K

construction overdose deaths, ages 16–64, 2024 (CPWR)

THE PAIN POINT An ironworker hurt his back two months ago. He is home on comp, in pain, and nobody from the company has called. (illustrative)

What the evidence says

In a study of construction workers (MEPS 2011–2018), a work-related injury raised the odds of prescription opioid use 3.82 times and a musculoskeletal disorder 2.31 times. CPWR reports construction overdose deaths fell 28.8% from 2023 to 2024, to about 11,300, and calls for upstream steps like reducing injuries that cause pain.

Why it really happens

Not weakness, and not a character flaw. These are the conditions on the job that make this harder than it has to be.

- Injured workers drop out of contact.
- Pain is managed only with pills.
- Workers fear treatment will cost them their job.
- No naloxone on site.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · TREAT PAIN AND OPIOIDS AS RISK

What the guidance says, in plain words

MEPS study · GUIDANCE	Injury and MSDs are linked to opioid use among construction workers.
CPWR · GUIDANCE	Upstream actions include reducing injuries that cause pain, paid leave, and naloxone availability.

Summarized from the sources listed. The research on workplace suicide prevention programs is still thin, so this guide promises steps, not results. Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no OSHA suicide prevention standard.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Tomorrow: supervisor	Call every injured worker on your crew who is off work.
Tomorrow: company	Stock naloxone in every first-aid kit and train people to use it.
Prevent	Reduce the strains, falls, and overexertion that cause chronic pain.
Check in	Weekly contact with every worker off on injury.
Return to work	Modified duty and an opioid-aware return-to-work plan.
Naloxone on site	Keep naloxone in first-aid kits and gang boxes, with training on how to use it.

Leaders own the conditions. If the only plan is a hard-hat sticker and a phone number, the plan depends on a man in his worst hour making the call alone. Build it so somebody notices and walks with him.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

07 · Treat pain and opioids as risk

COMPANY / SITE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Injured workers get regular check-ins.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Modified duty is available.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Return to work considers pain and medications.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Naloxone is in first-aid kits.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Workers are trained to use it.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Seeking treatment does not cost a job.	☐	☐	☐	
7	EAP covers substance use help.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Ergonomic risks are being reduced.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Supervisors know the link between pain and risk.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Privacy is protected.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · TREAT PAIN AND OPIOIDS AS RISK

Who owns it

Owner / executive	Funds modified duty and naloxone.
Supervisor / foreman	Calls injured workers.
Program owner / safety lead	Builds return-to-work policy.
Every worker	Checks on injured buddies.

How to verify it is working in the field

- List workers off injured. Check last contact date.
- Open a first-aid kit. Look for naloxone.
- Ask about the treatment policy.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

Who from this crew is home hurt right now, and when did we last call him?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Call every injured worker this week. If anyone is in crisis now, call or text 988. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

08

Fix the job strain you control

Organizational risk factors [GUIDANCE]

Bullying

named as a risk factor by NIOSH

Long hours

and shift work also named

Job insecurity

a risk in project-based work

THE PAIN POINT A crew has worked 13 straight days. A new apprentice gets hazed every morning. Layoff rumors are everywhere. (illustrative)

What the evidence says

NIOSH lists workplace risk factors including low job security, job stress, long hours and shift work, access to lethal means, and bullying. CPWR names upstream steps like paid leave, anti-bullying training and policies, and safety culture.

Why it really happens

Not weakness, and not a character flaw. These are the conditions on the job that make this harder than it has to be.

- Hazing is treated as tradition.
- Overtime has no limit.
- Layoffs come without notice.
- No paid time off to get care.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · FIX THE JOB STRAIN YOU CONTROL

What the guidance says, in plain words

NIOSH · GUIDANCE	Address work organization: hours, job strain, bullying, and job insecurity.
CPWR · GUIDANCE	Upstream steps: injury reduction, paid leave, anti-bullying policies, safety culture.

Summarized from the sources listed. The research on workplace suicide prevention programs is still thin, so this guide promises steps, not results. Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no OSHA suicide prevention standard.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Tomorrow: supervisor	Stop any bullying or hazing you see, on the spot.
Tomorrow: company	Pull hours records and cap the longest overtime streaks.
Policy	Anti-bullying and anti-hazing policy, enforced.
Hours	Limit consecutive days and long overtime stretches.
Notice	Give layoff notice as early as possible.
Time off	Paid time for medical and counseling appointments where possible.

Leaders own the conditions. If the only plan is a hard-hat sticker and a phone number, the plan depends on a man in his worst hour making the call alone. Build it so somebody notices and walks with him.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

08 · Fix the job strain you control

COMPANY / SITE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	We have an anti-bullying policy.	☐	☐	☐	
2	It is enforced.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Consecutive workdays are limited.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Overtime is tracked.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Layoff notice is given early.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Workers can take time for care.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Apprentices are protected from hazing.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Leaders model respect.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Workers can report bullying safely.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Strain is reviewed in the annual program review.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · FIX THE JOB STRAIN YOU CONTROL

Who owns it

Owner / executive	Sets hours and leave policy.
Supervisor / foreman	Stops bullying on sight.
Program owner / safety lead	Tracks strain factors.
Every worker	Calls out hazing.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Check hours records for long streaks.
- Ask an apprentice how they're treated.
- Ask how layoffs are announced.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

What part of this job wears people down the most, and can we change it?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Stop bullying on sight and review hours. If anyone is in crisis now, call or text 988. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

988

call, text, or chat, 24/7

EAP

test it by calling

Private

use never reported to supervisors

THE PAIN POINT The EAP number is on a poster from three providers ago. When a worker called, it rang to voicemail. (illustrative)

What the evidence says

Increasing access to mental health care is one of NIOSH's general strategies. CPWR notes that many construction workers worry that asking for help could cost them their job, especially without paid time off for care.

Why it really happens

Not weakness, and not a character flaw. These are the conditions on the job that make this harder than it has to be.

- The EAP number is old or unanswered.
- Counseling copays are high.
- Workers believe use gets reported.
- Help is only during office hours.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · MAKE HELP EASY AND PRIVATE

What the guidance says, in plain words

NIOSH · GUIDANCE	Increase access to mental health services.
988 Lifeline · GUIDANCE	Call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org, 24/7. Veterans press 1.

Summarized from the sources listed. The research on workplace suicide prevention programs is still thin, so this guide promises steps, not results. Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no OSHA suicide prevention standard.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Tomorrow: supervisor	Call the EAP number yourself to see who answers.
Tomorrow: company	Fix any dead number and post 988 and the EAP in every trailer.
Test	Call your EAP and health plan line; see who answers.
Cover	Low-cost counseling in the health plan where you can.
Privacy	Make clear that use is never reported to supervisors.
Post	988 and the EAP on every board, card, and sticker, in the crew's languages.

Leaders own the conditions. If the only plan is a hard-hat sticker and a phone number, the plan depends on a man in his worst hour making the call alone. Build it so somebody notices and walks with him.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

09 · Make help easy and private

COMPANY / SITE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	988 is posted.	☐	☐	☐	
2	The EAP number is current.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Someone answers the EAP.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Counseling is affordable under our plan.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Workers know use is private.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Help is available after hours.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Resources are in the crew's languages.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Family members can use the EAP.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Navigators know the resources.	☐	☐	☐	
10	We review resources annually.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · MAKE HELP EASY AND PRIVATE

Who owns it

Owner / executive	Funds EAP and plan coverage.
Supervisor / foreman	Knows the numbers.
Program owner / safety lead	Tests and posts resources.
Every worker	Knows where to go.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Call the EAP number.
- Read a posted number. Is it current?
- Ask a worker whether EAP use is private.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

If you needed to talk to someone tonight, do you know who to call?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Fix any broken help line this week. If anyone is in crisis now, call or text 988. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

10 Plan postvention now

After a suicide [GUIDANCE]

Before

write the plan before you need it

Crew

support for the people closest to the loss

Safe messaging

how leaders talk about it matters

THE PAIN POINT A crew lost a coworker to suicide over the weekend. Monday morning, the superintendent doesn't know what to say. (illustrative)

What the evidence says

Crisis response is part of a complete workplace suicide prevention program. CIASP provides postvention and focused-support resources for construction, including how to support crews and communicate after a loss.

Why it really happens

Not weakness, and not a character flaw. These are the conditions on the job that make this harder than it has to be.

- No plan, so leaders improvise.
- Work resumes as if nothing happened.
- Details are shared in ways that harm.
- Close coworkers get no follow-up.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · PLAN POSTVENTION NOW

What the guidance says, in plain words

CIASP · GUIDANCE	Use construction-specific postvention guidance: support the crew, communicate carefully, and connect people to help.
Practice · GUIDANCE	Postvention is also prevention: people close to a suicide loss may be at higher risk and need follow-up.

Summarized from the sources listed. The research on workplace suicide prevention programs is still thin, so this guide promises steps, not results. Tags: GUIDANCE = recommended practice from CDC/NIOSH, CPWR, or industry groups, not a regulation. There is no OSHA suicide prevention standard.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Tomorrow: supervisor	Learn who leads if the crew loses someone.
Tomorrow: company	Write a one-page postvention plan using CIASP resources.
Plan	Write a postvention plan now: who leads, who calls whom, who supports the crew.
Support	Bring in grief counselors or the EAP on site.
Communicate	Share facts carefully; follow safe-messaging guidance; no method details.
Follow up	Check on close coworkers for weeks, not days.

Leaders own the conditions. If the only plan is a hard-hat sticker and a phone number, the plan depends on a man in his worst hour making the call alone. Build it so somebody notices and walks with him.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

10 · Plan postvention now

COMPANY / SITE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	A written postvention plan exists.	☐	☐	☐	
2	A lead is named.	☐	☐	☐	
3	EAP or grief support can come on site.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Leaders know safe-messaging basics.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Close coworkers get follow-up.	☐	☐	☐	
6	The family's wishes are respected.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Crew work is adjusted after a loss.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Navigators are part of the plan.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Communications are reviewed before release.	☐	☐	☐	
10	The plan is reviewed annually.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

Who owns it

Owner / executive	Leads with care after a loss.
Supervisor / foreman	Supports the crew.
Program owner / safety lead	Writes and maintains the plan.
Every worker	Looks out for each other.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Ask who leads after a loss.
- Read the plan.
- Ask who would support the crew Monday.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

If we lost someone this weekend, what would we do Monday?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Write the postvention plan this quarter. If anyone is in crisis now, call or text 988. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

PRACTICE · BEYOND THE TEN ACTIONS

Practice scenarios: can your supervisors actually do it?

In crisis now? Call or text 988, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, any time. Veterans press 1. Chat at 988lifeline.org. In immediate danger, call 911.

A sign-in sheet proves someone sat in a room. It doesn't prove they can have the talk. Run these with two people and an observer, 10 minutes each, at a toolbox talk or foreman meeting. Use the five steps from Action 5: **Notice · Ask · Listen · Connect · Follow up**.

How to score: the observer marks each check Yes or No. All Yes = Pass. Any No = Needs practice: run it again next week. This is about skill, not grading people.

SCENARIO 1

The quiet one

The situation: Marcus, a framer who's always cracking jokes, has gone quiet for two weeks. He eats lunch alone in his truck and snapped at an apprentice this morning.

Good response: Pull him aside privately, away from the crew. "Hey, you've been quieter than usual lately, and that's not like you. How are you really doing?" Then let him talk.

Avoid: Calling it out in front of the crew. "Man up." Making it about his attitude or the apprentice.

Observer check (all yes = Pass, any no = Needs practice):

- ☐ Picked a private moment
- ☐ Named what they noticed, not a judgment
- ☐ Asked an open question and waited for the answer

SCENARIO 2

"Sometimes I wonder what the point is"

The situation: Driving to a job, a laborer says, "Sometimes I wonder what the point of any of this is."

Good response: Ask directly and calmly: "When you say that, are you thinking about suicide?" Asking directly does not put the idea in someone's head. If yes, stay with him, stay calm, and connect him to 988 right then (call or text together).

Avoid: Changing the subject. Laughing it off. Asking it the leading way: "You're not thinking of doing anything stupid, are you?"

Observer check (all yes = Pass, any no = Needs practice):

- ☐ Used the word "suicide" plainly
- ☐ Stayed calm and didn't argue or lecture
- ☐ Offered to call or text 988 together

SCENARIO 3

Back to work hurting

The situation: An operator came back from a back injury. He's in pain, worried about money, and mentions he's "taking whatever gets me through the day."

Good response: Listen first. "That sounds rough. Pain and money stress together is a lot." Then connect: EAP, his doctor, and modified duty if you have it. Follow up later in the week.

Avoid: Asking for medical details. Giving advice about his medications. Threatening his job on the spot. (Fitness-for-duty concerns go through your normal company process, separately.)

Observer check (all yes = Pass, any no = Needs practice):

- ☐ Listened before offering anything
- ☐ Named at least one real resource (EAP, doctor, 988)
- ☐ Set a follow-up time

SCENARIO 4

"Keep this between us"

The situation: A carpenter tells you he's been thinking about ending his life, then says, "Don't tell anybody. Promise me."

Good response: "I care about you too much to keep that promise. I'm not going to spread it around the jobsite, but I am going to get you help, and I'll stay with you while we do." Connect to 988 now. If he has a plan or means at hand, or you think he's in immediate danger, call 911 and don't leave him alone.

Avoid: Promising secrecy. Telling the crew. Leaving him alone to "think it over."

Observer check (all yes = Pass, any no = Needs practice):

- ☐ Did not promise to keep a risk secret
- ☐ Explained privacy (not a crew story) vs. safety (getting help)
- ☐ Stayed with the person and connected to 988 or 911

SCENARIO 5

Worried about a coworker

The situation: An apprentice comes to you: "I'm worried about Dave. He's been giving away his tools and saying goodbye-type stuff."

Good response: Thank the apprentice for speaking up. Check in with Dave privately and ask directly. If you can't reach Dave and you think he's in danger, call 911. Follow up with the apprentice too. That's heavy to carry.

Avoid: Brushing it off. Waiting until Monday. Making the apprentice handle it.

Observer check (all yes = Pass, any no = Needs practice):

- ☐ Thanked the person who spoke up
- ☐ Acted the same day
- ☐ Checked back with the apprentice

SCENARIO 6

The next-day follow-up

The situation: Yesterday you connected a crew member to the EAP. Today he's back at work like nothing happened.

Good response: A quiet, short check-in: "Glad you're here. How'd it go? I'm still here if you need anything." Respect it if he doesn't want to talk details.

Avoid: Skipping it because it feels awkward. Asking what he said to the counselor. Treating him differently in front of the crew.

Observer check (all yes = Pass, any no = Needs practice):

- ☐ Followed up within a day
- ☐ Kept it private and short
- ☐ Didn't dig for details

LISTENING SKILLS · BEYOND THE TEN ACTIONS

Listening skills, and where your role stops

How to ask

- Pick a private moment. Side of the truck, not the middle of the gang box.
- Say what you saw: "You've seemed off this week."
- Ask straight: "Are you thinking about suicide?" Asking directly does not plant the idea.

How to listen without fixing

- Let him talk. Silence is fine. Count to five before you speak.
- Repeat back what you heard: "So the divorce and the layoff hit at the same time."
- Don't argue, don't compare ("I had it worse"), don't rush to solutions.
- Thank him for telling you. That took guts.

How to connect

- **988**: call or text, or chat at 988lifeline.org. Veterans press 1. Offer to make the call with him.
- **EAP**: know the number before you need it. It's usually free and private for the worker.
- **His doctor, a licensed counselor, union or chaplain resources** if your company has them.
- **911** for immediate danger. Don't leave him alone.
- **Follow up** the next day. This is the step most plans skip.

What a supervisor is NOT

- **Not a counselor.** You don't do therapy. You open the door and walk him to it.
- **Not a diagnoser.** Don't label anyone ("he's depressed," "he's bipolar"). Describe what you saw.
- **Not the keeper of a secret about risk.** Privacy, yes: it isn't a crew story. But if someone's life is at risk, you get help, even if he asked you not to.
- **Not alone.** If it's heavy for you, call 988 or the EAP yourself. Supervisors need support too.
- **Not the judge of his job.** A check-in is not discipline. Keep any fitness-for-duty or HR issue separate and follow company policy.

30/60/90-DAY ROLLOUT · BEYOND THE TEN ACTIONS

30/60/90-day rollout for a small company (under about 50 workers)

Low cost. One owner. Built on the free tools already in this guide (CPWR COMPASS, CIASP resources, 988 materials).

Days 1–30: Set it up

- Name one owner (owner, superintendent or safety lead).
- Get your EAP number (or confirm you don't have one) and put 988 and the EAP on every jobsite board, hard hat sticker and the back of badges.
- Print the five-step card (Notice · Ask · Listen · Connect · Follow up) for every supervisor.
- Run one toolbox talk on mental health. Say out loud: asking for help is safety.
- Run the 3-question crew survey (below) to get your starting point.
- Have a counselor or the EAP review your plan and the words you'll use.

Days 31–60: Build the skill

- Every supervisor and foreman runs the six practice scenarios. Record Pass / Needs practice.
- Re-run anyone who needs practice within two weeks.
- Ask for one or two peer volunteers on each crew who people already go to. Point them to free materials from CPWR COMPASS and CIASP.
- Supervisors start logging check-ins (count only: date and "check-in done," no names, no details).
- Write a one-page postvention plan (what you'll do after a suicide or overdose on your team), using CIASP resources.

Days 61–90: Check and adjust

- Re-run the crew survey and compare to day 30.
- Look at the measures below with your supervisors. What's working, what isn't?
- Add a lethal means safety toolbox talk (Action 6).
- Set the next year: scenarios twice a year, survey every 6 months, review at your annual safety review.

What to measure (things a small company can actually collect)

MEASURE	HOW TO COLLECT	GOAL
Scenario pass rate	Observer checklist: supervisors passing all six ÷ supervisors who ran them	Every supervisor passes all six
Check-ins	Supervisor tally per month (count only, no names)	Going up, not zero
988 / EAP awareness	Crew survey Q1 and Q2: % who answer correctly	Higher at day 90 than day 30
Know where help is	Crew survey Q3: % who can point to it	Higher at day 90 than day 30
Follow-ups done	Supervisor tally: next-day follow-ups after a connect	Every connect gets one

3-question crew survey (anonymous, paper or phone, 2 minutes):

1. If you or a coworker were in crisis, what number could you call or text? (Correct: 988)
2. Do we have an EAP, and do you know how to reach it? (Yes / No / Not sure)
3. Where on this jobsite is help info posted? (Can point to it / Not sure)

Keep surveys anonymous and check-in tallies free of names. The goal is to see whether people know where help is, not to track anyone.

Sources already in this guide: 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline; CPWR COMPASS and Ten-Step Guide; CIASP Resources; NIOSH, Preventing Workplace Suicide (2023). Mentoring, not counseling.

CHECK OUR WORK

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Sources retrieved and checked October 13, 2026. This guide is a practical summary for planning. It is not medical, clinical, or legal advice, and it is not a substitute for crisis services or professional care. Training names (safeTALK, ASIST) are LivingWorks programs; CPWR says similar trainings may be substituted. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text 988.

Get help first: call or text 988 (Veterans press 1), use your EAP, or see a doctor or licensed counselor. In immediate danger, call 911.

Further reading from the author

The Bully I Needed: A Necessary Ass-Kicking by Ryan L. Rinehart. A short field manual for the hour a leader's hard question feels like an attack: how to tell a builder from a tyrant, and what to do in the hour after you storm out.

No License to Lead: The journey into the supervisor role by Ryan L. Rinehart. A field book for the move from best hands to supervisor: walk the job, hear the newest voice, hold a stop, and build one person in your first ninety days.

These books are not a substitute for crisis support or professional help.

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