



TOOLBOX TALK:

Suicide Postvention - Supporting Our Crew After a Suicide Loss



SUICIDE PREVENTION - SUPPORTING OUR CREW AFTER A SUICIDE LOSS

STANDUP

Just as we respond to severe work-related injuries and fatalities on the jobsite, we must also respond when our team is affected by a suicide or suspected suicide. These types of deaths can be just as – or more – traumatic as any other type of loss. After the loss of a crew member, it is important to address the collective grief those that knew them are experiencing. And after a suicide loss, we can support one another by talking about mental health to reduce the stigma, promoting healing, and sharing relevant resources.

A suicide loss impacts everyone differently. There is no “right” way to grieve. Some people may experience:

- Shock or disbelief
- Anger or frustration
- Sadness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble sleeping
- Feelings of guilt or “what if”
- Increased stress or anxiety

These reactions are normal after a traumatic event.

What should you do now?

1. Look out for One Another

Check in with coworkers, especially those who were close to the person who died. Studies show that someone that has experienced a loss has a 65% higher chance of attempting suicide, especially in the first year after the loss.

Simple questions can help:

- “How are you doing today?”
- “How are you handling everything?”
- “Is there anything you need?”

2. Listen Without Judging

You do not need to be a counselor.

- Listen more than you talk.
- Avoid trying to “fix” someone’s grief.
- Let people share as much or as little as they want.

3. Watch for Warning Signs

Seek help immediately if someone:

- Listen more than you talk.
- Avoid trying to “fix” someone’s grief.
- Let people share as much or as little as they want.

4. Encourage Professional Support

Resources may include:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Company mental health benefits
- Community mental health providers
- Union support programs
- Clergy or trusted community leaders

Mental health is a safety issue. After a suicide loss, the strongest thing we can do is look out for each other, speak openly, and connect people with support when needed. In construction, nobody should carry the weight alone.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever been impacted by a suicide death? What kind of support would have been helpful at the time?
2. What are some examples of things you might do to help a coworker or friend that’s grieving?

Sources:

- Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or Text 988
- CIASP Resources