



Shining Light on Mental Health & Suicide Prevention

Conversations to Lead & Inspire

March 2, 2022 2-330 pm EST

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Co-Presenters: New Friends & Collaborators



Vince Hafeli
President
Ajax Paving Industries of Florida



Cal Beyer
Vice President
Holmes Murphy & Associates



Cal & Vince
at Ajax in North
Venice, FL



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How We Got Here Today

- Ajax Paving in FL has been a long-term sponsor of WofA
- Vince issued a challenge to WofA increase 2022 sponsorship amount
- Example of “*careful of what you ask for...*”



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Opening Comments from Vince

- Why is this topic important to:
 - *You personally?*
 - *Your company?*
 - *Our industry?*
 - *Your future?*



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“Softball” Questions from Vince to Cal

1. How did you get involved in workplace suicide prevention?
2. What has the effect been of the pandemic on mental health?
3. Since you left working for a hot mix asphalt producer and paving contractor, what have you been doing to promote this work?



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Poll Question #1

**Has your organization addressed
mental health and suicide prevention?**



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Origins of Workplace Suicide Prevention

- National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (2010)
 - Workplace Task Force
 - Construction Subcommittee
- Media Saturation Campaign (2014-15 to ongoing)
- Association Penetration Campaigns (Started 2014-15)
- Labor Union Participation Campaign (Started 2015)
- Regional Suicide Prevention Summits (Started 2016)
- Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Oct 2016)
- **Key Points:**
 - No data by industry until July 2016
 - No data by occupation until January 2020



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The Challenge of Breaking Stigma

- **Vince question:** Why is it so hard to talk about mental health?
- **Cal question:** Are there differences and disparities to address in:
 - Genders
 - Families
 - Racial and ethnicity (cultural norms)
 - Generations
- **Key Points:** Incorporate into workforce development and Diversity & Inclusion processes and practices!



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Poll Question #2

What is the biggest mental and/or behavioral health challenge of workers in your company?



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Prevalence of Mental Health Conditions

- 1 in 5 adults (and 1 in 6 children) in the US experiences a diagnosable mental health condition
- More common than cancer, diabetes and/or heart disease
- Approximately 45% receive care for mental health conditions



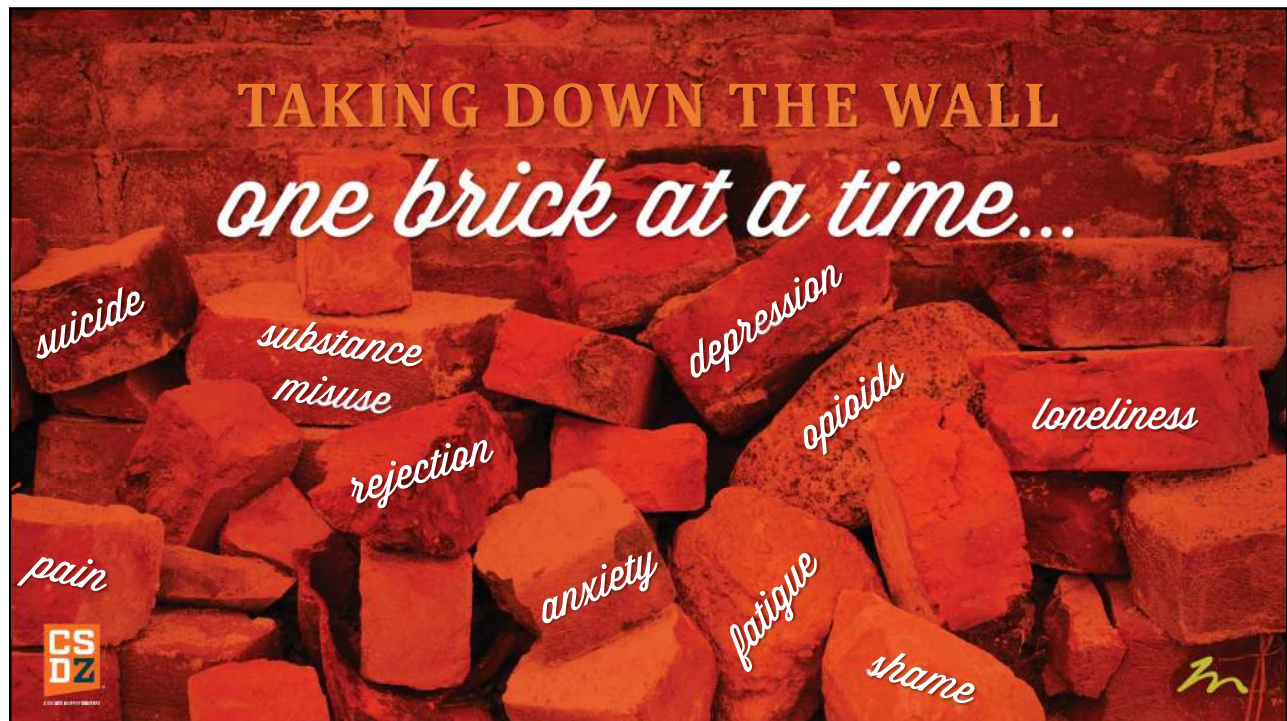
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Human Costs

- Average delay of 11 years from the onset of mental health symptoms to receiving effective treatment
- Of those with diagnosable mental health condition 56% do not seek treatment
- Depression is leading cause of disability in the united states among people ages 15-44
- Comorbidities with chronic health conditions



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Engineering News-Record (ENR) 8/3/2021 Cover story



Associations, contractors, unions and other organizations have created a proliferation of hardhat stickers, wallet cards, posters, placards and other messaging to boost mental health awareness and suicide prevention.

Source: <https://www.enr.com/articles/52163-safety-advocates-see-strength-in-numbers-to-combat-suicide-and-substance-misuse>



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Poll Question #3

What is the biggest barrier that keeps your organization from addressing mental and/or behavioral health?



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Barriers to Overcome

- Social stigma of others
- Self-stigma and shame
- Employees fear adverse consequences at work
- Employers are unsure of how employees will respond
- Privacy and confidentiality centered on HIPAA compliance
- Companies often not aware of the number of employees and families who are suffering in silence until it is too late
- Companies are not sure where to start



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SUICIDE PREVENTION

**SUICIDE IS A PRESSING
NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH
CONCERN**

➤ **44,834 DEATHS IN 2020**

➤ **SUICIDE CAN BE PREVENTABLE**

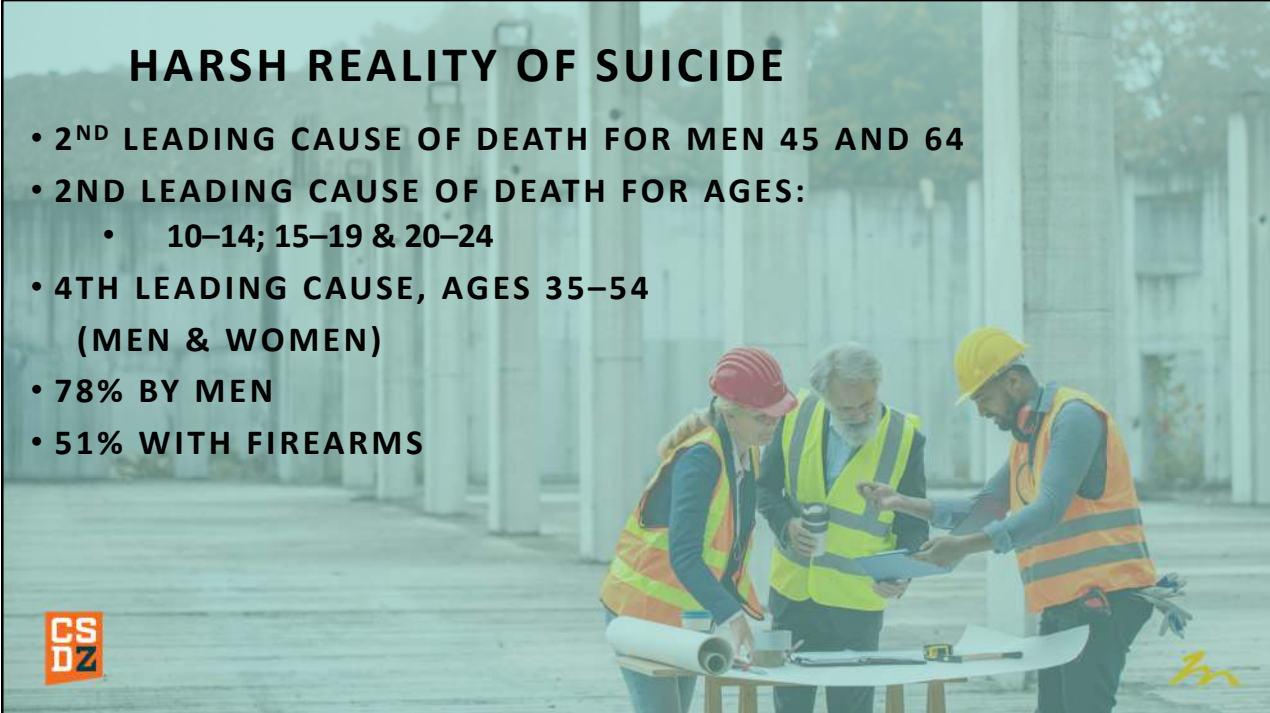
➤ **HOPE-HELP-RECOVERY**



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HARSH REALITY OF SUICIDE

- 2ND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR MEN 45 AND 64
- 2ND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR AGES:
 - 10–14; 15–19 & 20–24
- 4TH LEADING CAUSE, AGES 35–54
(MEN & WOMEN)
- 78% BY MEN
- 51% WITH FIREARMS



CS DZ

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CONSTRUCTION 2ND HIGHEST RATE



More construction workers die by suicide than all occupational injuries combined

CS DZ

- 45.3 PER 100,000 WORKERS
- 3.5 TIMES GREATER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE
- ESTIMATED >5,500 SUICIDES EACH YEAR
- ESTIMATED 15 SUICIDES PER DAY COMPARED TO 3 WORK-RELATED FATALITIES
- DOES NOT INCLUDE RETIREES

Source: CDC; <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6903a1.htm>

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Rates for Trades Vary | Top 11 Rate per 100,000 workers

1. Ironworkers = 79
2. Millwrights = 78.7
3. Brick/Block masons = 67.6
4. Roofers = 65.2
5. Automotive Service Techs/Mechanics = 64.8
6. Machinists = 64.2 (*at plants*)
7. Laborers = 62
8. Carpenters = 54.7
9. Equipment Operators = 52.8
10. Construction Managers = 45.7
- T-11 Electricians = 44 (*at asphalt plants*)
- T-11 Trades first-line supervisors = 44

NOTE:

Red denotes occupations found in
hot mix asphalt production and
paving operations



Source: CDC; January 24, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6903a1.htm>

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Poll Question #4

**Before today were you aware of these statistics?
What is your reaction to these statistics?**



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Why Construction...?

- Complex issue with many risk factors
- Understanding the intersection of many risk factors:
 - Industry (culture)
 - Company (Work type, location, schedule)
 - Job/Task/Environment
 - Worker Lifestyle and choices



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Characteristics of “High-Risk” Industries

HIGH CONCENTRATION OF MALE EMPLOYMENT	DEMANDING TASKS IN HARD WORK ENVIRONMENTS
SEASONAL INDUSTRIES	MUSKULOSKELETAL INJURIES AND CHRONIC PAIN
“OLD SCHOOL” CULTURES	BARRIERS TO CARE SEEKING
LONG HOURS, FREQUENT OVERTIME, ROTATING SHIFTS	SLEEP DEPRIVATION AND FATIGUE
TRAVEL WITH SEPARATION FROM FAMILY AND OTHER SUPPORTS	CULTURE OF ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE



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CONSTRUCTION RISK FACTORS

Industry Culture	Company/Job Factors	Worker Lifestyle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stoic, tough guy/gal ✓ Undesirable image ✓ Cyclical industry ✓ Tolerant of alcohol and substance use ✓ 2nd highest industry for "heavy drinking" (>16% of workers) ✓ Drug use increased 13.2% (2015-2018) ✓ Accelerated schedules ✓ Harsh conditions ✓ Family separation & isolation ✓ Layoffs/project furloughs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Limited supervisory skills training ✓ No time off in season ✓ Weather and sequence delays ✓ Night work or OT ✓ Commuting ✓ Out of town or out of state travel for work ✓ Humiliation of bad job (daily scorecard) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-pressure and perfectionism ✓ Financial pressures ✓ Chronic pain from soft tissue injuries ✓ Construction had highest rate of prescription opioids ✓ Access to lethal means at home ✓ Skills gap and feeling trapped ✓ Fearless or risk-taking behaviors



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Large Group Activity: USA Hotlines Create 2 New Contact Cards for Your Phone



For Spanish, press 2

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Text HELP or CONNECT to:
741-741



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Poll Question #5

Has your company experienced a death by suicide or overdose to an employee or an employee's family member?



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Learn Suicide Warning Signs

Suicide Warning Signs

These signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. Risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- ❖ Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.
- ❖ Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- ❖ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.
- ❖ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- ❖ Talking about being a burden to others.
- ❖ Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- ❖ Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly.
- ❖ Sleeping too little or too much.
- ❖ Withdrawing or feeling isolated.
- ❖ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- ❖ Displaying extreme mood swings.

Suicide Is Preventable.

Call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

With Help Comes Hope



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How to Talk About Suicide



Help Prevent Suicide - LEARN® SAVES LIVES

Most people can relate to a time when they felt alone. We may have just needed a reminder, / see you. / care. To help those in crisis and considering suicide, we recommend using LEARN®. We need everyone to play a role in suicide prevention. Most suicides are preventable. Together, we can save lives. To learn more, go to www.intheforefront.org.

LOOK FOR SIGNS

- Talking, joking or researching ways to die.
- Feeling hopeless, depressed, trapped, burdensome, anxious, ashamed, or humiliated.
- Changes in personality, academic/work performance, sleep, withdrawing from friends/activities.
- Increasing use of alcohol/drugs, reckless behavior, self-harm/cutting, giving away possessions.

EMPATHIZE AND LISTEN

- People who have survived suicide attempts report what was most helpful to them—**just listen**.
- Listen with compassion, remain calm, avoid judgement and validate their feelings.
- Don't offer quick fixes, tell them everything will be OK, show anger, panic, or ask "why" questions.
- Let them know that you care about them.

ASK ABOUT SUICIDE

- Ask in a way that invites an honest response. Use any signs you've noticed as part of "the ask."
- Be direct. Use the word "suicide" and be prepared to hear a "yes."
- Asking about suicide will NOT put the idea in someone's head.

"Sometimes when people feel hopeless they are thinking about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?"

REMOVE THE DANGER

- If they say yes, ask them *"Do you have a plan?"* *"Do you have access to those means?"*
- Putting time and distance between a person at risk for suicide and lethal means can save lives.
- Remove or limit access to firearms, medications, belts, ropes, knives, alcohol and chemicals.
- Report concerning posts on social media.

NEXT STEPS

- Ideally with the person at risk, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (see number below).
- If the person will not agree to stay safe, do not leave them alone. **CALL 911.**



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What Companies Can Do

- Not a program or a policy
- Need to embed and ingrain in your company's culture
- How Ajax Paving in FL is Addressing Risk
- Turning Point at AJAX Paving in FL -- January 3, 2022



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Opportunities to Discuss Mental Health & Wellbeing – Company Level

- Recruiting, Career Fairs and Apprenticeship programs
- New hire orientation programs
- Onboarding processes
- Company newsletter
- Benefits Open Enrollment
- Pre-Meeting Mental Health Moments
- Manager and supervisor training programs



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Opportunities to Discuss Mental Health & Wellbeing – Project Level

- Workplace posters
- Safety huddles
- Toolbox talks
- Safety stand-downs
- Pre-season or pre-project kickoff meetings
- Project pre-planning meetings
- Progress/coordination meetings



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Human Capital Risk Management: The Real Business Case

- People are our core strategic asset
- War on Talent: Recruitment and retention
- The workforce imperative: Becoming and staying an employer – and industry -- of choice
- Caring culture
 - Respectful workplace
 - Empathy and concern
 - Psychological safety and trust
 - Diversity & Inclusion



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Examples of Integration

HR & Benefits

- Communications
- Recruitment / D&I
- Onboarding & Engagement
- Training & Development
- Performance Management
- EAP/Chaplain
- Drug & Alcohol Testing Programs
 - Last Change Agreements
 - Treatment & Recovery Programs
- Benefits Open Enrollment
- Wellness Programs

Safety & Health

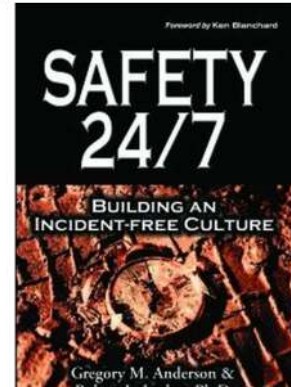
- Safety Orientation
- Pre-season /Pre-Project Kickoffs
- Daily Safety Huddles
- Safety Observations
- Posters & Banners
- Toolbox Talks
- Stand-Downs
- Critical Incident Response
- Drug & Alcohol Testing
- Workers Compensation
- Wallet Cards & Hardhat Stickers



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Reframe Safety 24/7

- Safety and worker wellbeing doesn't stop when the worker goes home!
- We focus on getting everyone home safe at the end of their shift.



Are we focusing on getting people back to work safe from home?



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Risk of Presenteeism



The practice of coming to work despite illness, injury, anxiety, impairment, and any other distractions that results in reduced productivity -- or worse



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Impacts of Presenteeism

- Distractions leading to loss of attention and focus
- Increased number of near hits
- Rising risk of Serious Injuries and Fatalities (SIFs)
- Quality defects leading to rework
- Slowed productivity resulting in:
 - Increased labor costs and profit fade (overtime)
 - Idle equipment
 - Schedule delays
 - Sequence challenges
 - Angry owners and trade contractors



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PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

- **WORKPLACE BELIEVES IN AND SUPPORTS BEING A "SAFE PLACE" FOR ALL.**
- **NOT A NEW CONCEPT SINCE PANDEMIC**
 - 1999 Amy Edmonson
 - 2014 Ted Talk
- **GOOGLE'S ARISTOTLE PROJECT ANALYZED TOP PERFORMING TEAMS AND LEADERS**



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Psychological Safety in the Field

1. Workers feel comfortable asking questions about things they don't understand or don't know.
2. Workers feel comfortable asking other workers for help when they need it.
3. Workers feel they can disagree with work plans and offer other ideas or options.
4. Workers are invited to contribute regardless of their job title or length of employment.



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Poll #6

**Does your company have an
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?**



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Knowledge Check on EAPs

1. Does your company have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) included with your Behavioral Health Benefits Plan? Your unions, if applicable?
2. Do you know who is eligible for your EAP?
3. Do you know your EAP benefits?
4. Do you share the EAP number with your employees?
5. Do you know the utilization rate and impact metrics for your EAP?



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BEST PRACTICES REMOVING BARRIERS AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO CARE

1. Expanded education on Employee Benefits
2. Invite spouses & domestic partners to attend Employee Benefit Open Enrollment meetings
3. Changed Employee Assistance Provider
4. Initiated Chaplain services
5. Expanded number of EAP counseling sessions per issue/concern
6. Offered telehealth options for physical and mental health services
7. Invited labor union partners to offer jobsite explanations of how to access benefits
8. Negotiated increased preventive care services
9. Reduced co-pays for in-network providers
10. Expanded number of "in-network" mental health counselors
11. Allowed biometric testing to be performed by primary care physicians
12. Sponsored family health/wellness fair
13. Incentivized participation of wearable monitors
14. Provided app for mental health counseling services
15. Offered mindfulness, resiliency and wellbeing apps



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Poll #7

Have you heard of the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention and have you visited their website?



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www.preventconstructionsuicide.com



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Lived Experience Observations from Vince

- Increasing awareness of the prevalence of suicide
 - Professional contacts
 - Community
 - Friends
- Ongoing doctoral program and research
- Personal story from a man I know who survived suicidal ideations



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Vince's Closing Comments

Simple Steps to Make a Difference

- Be a kind person
- Be a good friend
- Acknowledge that we all go through peaks and valleys – we sometimes need the support of others
- Recognize others may not have a support structure and be there for them
- Agree that it is ok for all of us to call a timeout and say I need help



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CAL BEYER

VICE PRESIDENT

WORKFORCE RISK & WORKER WELLBEING

HOLMES MURPHY & ASSOCIATES

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CBEYER@HOLMESMURPHY.COM



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Appendix: Early Adopters in HMA Industry



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Early Adopters in Hot Mix Asphalt & Paving

- APAO – John Hickey
- Sandy Lender of *Asphalt Pro*
- SCAPA – then, Ashley Batson
- Granite in the Pacific NW Region
- WAPA – Dave Gent
- NAPA –
 - In 1st 10 associations to partner with CIASP
 - *Asphalt Pavement*
- Jay Winford; NAPA Chairman (2020-21)



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Asphalt Pro Article 2/27/2017



CONSTRUCTION SAFETY'S NEXT FRONTIER: SUICIDE PREVENTION

Authored by Cal Beyer



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Asphalt Pro Article: 2/27/2017



BUILD PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST MENTAL HEALTH CRISES, SUICIDE RISK

Authored by Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas



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NAPA *Asphalt Pavement* Article Nov/Dec 2019

HEALTH & SAFETY

Getting Real About Mental Health

Ten steps toward integrating mental health into your safety, health, and wellness program.

By Monica Dutcher



Former editor Monica Dutcher; Co-Founder of *MOXY: The Voice of Women in Infrastructure*

https://www.asphaltpavement-digital.com/naps/0619_november_december_2019/MobilePagedArticle.action?articleId=1533999#articleId1533999



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2020 *Asphalt Pro* Article: 8/24/2020

AP >> SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

CANDID SAFETY TO SAVE LIVES

Cal Beyer and John Hickey discuss the Asphalt Pavement Association of Oregon's mental health and suicide prevention efforts

Interview by John Hickey; Asphalt Pavement Association of Oregon with Cal Beyer, former Risk Manager of Lakeside Industries (Issaquah, WA).



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Appendix: Additional Resources



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Building a Caring Culture Whitepaper



Download: https://think.holmesmurphy.com/WC-WP-Building-A-Caring-Culture_Brochure--Form-v3.html



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2021 Mental Health & Well-being in the Construction Industry Survey

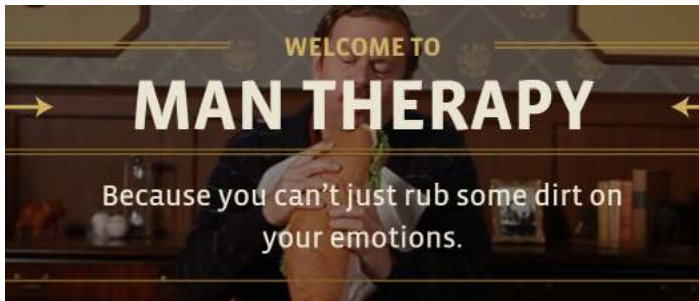
Download:
www.workplacementalhealth.org/constructionsurveyreport








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WELCOME TO
MAN THERAPY
 Because you can't just rub some dirt on your emotions.

Using humor to break stigma of mental health
 Dr. Rich Mahogany, Man Therapist, is not a real therapist
(but he is a real guy...)

Man Therapy
www.ManTherapy.org
 © Grit Digital Health 2020



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2 Brief Videos – 6 minutes total

What's Under the Hardhat: Mental Health & Wellbeing
in the Construction Industry Additional Q&A

1. *How do companies increase their usage rate for EAPs*
2. *How to get a conversation started about suicide prevention
(starts @ 3:18 mark)*



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Illustrating Mental Health Safety Conversations 2 Minute Video

Construction Suicide Prevention & Opioids
Washington Department of Labor & Industries



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=empsWzqpQaE&feature=share>



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Joyages

SUICIDE PREVENTION VIDEOS BY JOYAGES
WWW.JOYAGES.COM/CONSTRUCTION/



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Construction Suicide Prevention Partnership (Oregon)



Download Take Action Guide:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.safestates.org/resource/resmgr/business/CSPP_NotToday_Interactive_Ac.pdf



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Construction Wellbeing Model

- Integrated model focused on wellbeing *strategies, tools, and outcomes*:

- ✓ **Workplace**
- ✓ **Workforce**
- ✓ **Worker**
- ✓ **Worksite**
- ✓ **Work Tasks**
- ✓ **Work Group**



<https://www.csdz.com/service/construction-wellbeing-model/>

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