



Incorporating Mental Health Resources into EH&S Programs

What Prompted Action?

- In 2020 there were 16 construction fatalities in Washington
- 6 were related to mental health
 - 3 on the job overdoses
 - 3 on the job suicides
- Male construction workers die by suicide at a rate of 45.3/100k persons
- General population 14/100k
- Males 22.8/100k
- Females 5.7/100k



Step 1: Presentation to Ops & Leadership

- Concept developed by National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), part of the CDC
- “Policies, programs, and practices that integrate protection from work-related safety and health hazards with promotion of injury and illness–prevention efforts to advance worker well-being”.

Fundamentals of *Total Worker Health*® Approaches

Essential Elements for Advancing
Worker Safety, Health, and Well-Being



Benefits of a TWH Approach

Worker-Centered Outcomes

Maintenance of individual physical and mental health

Safe work environment

High level of job satisfaction

Ability to make contribution to the organization

Ability to meet needs outside of work

Fair treatment and respect



Organization-Centered Outcomes

Lower health care costs

Reduced workplace injuries, disability, and worker's compensation costs

Low turnover and absenteeism

Maintenance or improvement in overall productivity of workforce

Recruitment and retention of experienced workers

Transfer of expertise between generations

The 5 Defining Elements of TWH

1. Demonstrate leadership commitment to worker safety and health at all levels
2. Design work to eliminate or reduce safety and health hazards and promote worker well-being
3. Promote and support worker engagement throughout program design and implementation
4. Ensure confidentiality and privacy
5. Integrate relevant systems to advance worker well-being



Psychological Safety

- Coined by a Harvard Business School Professor
- **Google conducted a two-year study and concluded that psychological safety was the most important factor on high performing teams**

WHAT'S THE DIFF? Trust and Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is the belief that your environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. It's similar, but slightly different from, trust.

TRUST

Will **YOU** give others the benefit of the doubt when you take a risk?



"Bob is probably going to freak out if I disagree with him."

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Will **OTHERS** give you the benefit of the doubt when you take a risk?



"My team expects me to speak up. It's how we do things."

Sources: Edmondson, A. C. (2002). Managing the risk of learning: Psychological safety in work teams. Boston, MA: Division of Research, Harvard Business School, and Frazier, M. L., Fainshmidt, S., Klünger, R. L., Pezeshkan, A., & Vracheva, V. (2017). Psychological safety: A meta-analytic review and extension. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(1), 113-165.

Psychological Safety

- Psychological safety is the belief that you won't be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.
- ***It's a shared belief held by members of a team that others on the team will not embarrass, reject, or punish them for speaking up.***
- *“When you have psychological safety in the workplace, people feel comfortable being themselves. They bring their full selves to work and feel okay laying all of themselves on the line”*

the fearless organization

Creating **Psychological Safety** in the
Workplace for Learning,
Innovation, and Growth

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“Psychological safety at work doesn’t mean that everybody is nice all the time. It means that you embrace the conflict and you speak up, knowing that your team has your back, and you have their backs.”

- David Altman, CCL COO

CREATE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AT WORK



Promote self-awareness



Demonstrate concern for team members as people



Actively solicit questions



Provide multiple ways for employees to share their thoughts



Show value and appreciation for ideas



Promote positive dialogue and discussion



Be precise with information, expectations and commitments



Explain reasons for change



Own up to mistakes



QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

Step 2: Gather Resources

- OSHA Resources

Workplace Mental Health



Mental health is an important component of overall well-being and is equally as vital as physical health for all employees. Mental health concerns due to work have the potential to adversely impact an employee's social interactions, productivity, performance, and absenteeism.

Stress affects people in a variety of ways such as muscle tension, headaches, stomach discomfort, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Ignoring workplace stress can have lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, co-workers, and communities.

Traumatic Events

Sometimes a shocking, scary, or dangerous experience can be so intense that it can have an emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physical impact on a person. Some examples of traumatic events that can happen in workplaces are:

- Explosions or chemical releases
- Building, crane, or other equipment collapses
- Co-workers being injured or dying on the job
- Abuse or assault of a co-worker or client

It is normal to feel terrified during and after a traumatic event. This is part of the body's "fight or flight" response to possible danger.

Traumatic events can happen to workers in all industries.

After experiencing a traumatic event people may:

- Feel anxious, sad, or angry
- Have terrifying thoughts or flashbacks
- Have recurring nightmares

- Be confused or unable to think clearly
- Have a hard time falling and staying asleep
- Frighten easily



If these symptoms continue long after the event or affect day-to-day life, they can be signs of acute stress disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Both require professional help to address.

Substance Use Disorder

Substance use disorder is a persistent desire for substances even in the face of negative consequences. Some people come to rely on opioids, stimulants, alcohol, or other substances even when the substances cause harm. People may develop a dependence on drugs, including prescription medications, and alcohol for many reasons, including the presence of other mental health conditions, chronic pain, or injuries. Regardless of the underlying reason, substance use disorder can be treated and controlled.



MAY
Mental Health Awareness Month

JUNE
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month

SEPTEMBER
National Suicide Prevention Month
National Recovery Month

Support One Another How to Talk to Your Coworkers About Mental Health



Are you feeling the effects of workplace stress or worried about your coworkers? Are you looking for ways to support one another? Here are some tips:

1. Be respectful.

Check on your coworkers. A simple "How's it going?" could start a meaningful conversation. If someone does not want to talk, be respectful and say that you are available to listen at another time. Other questions you can ask to get the conversation going:

- How are you feeling?
- Are you keeping in touch with your support system (e.g., family and friends)?
- How can I help?

2. Listen compassionately.

If someone wants to talk, give them your undivided attention. Put away devices, make eye contact, and have an open body position (look at them and do not cross your arms or legs). Then listen without judgement.

3. Determine if more assistance is needed.

A coworker might just need to talk about what is bothering them. However, if someone mentions or shows any of the following signs or symptoms, they might need additional support:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people
- Having low or no energy
- Having unexplained aches and pains, such as constant stomachaches or headaches
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Excessive smoking, drinking, or using drugs, including prescription medications
- Worrying a lot of the time
- Feeling guilty but not sure why
- Thinking of self-harm or suicide

It may not be appropriate for you to offer advice, but do share resources or information about how to get help (e.g., refer to your human resources department or an employee assistance program).

4. Check back later.

It can be hard to strike a balance between checking in and giving space. If your concern comes from a sincere place, your coworkers will likely appreciate that you care enough to check in, listen, and provide reassurance when they need it.

Step 2: Gather Resources

- Shortlist of resources
 - 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
 - AGC Washington Website
 - Mental Health Best Practice Guide
 - Toolbox Talks/Safety Meetings
 - Posters
 - Mantherapy.org
- ASSP Website
- Insurance providers
- Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM)



AGC
WASHINGTON CHAPTER
THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Step 3: Identify Champions

- You're likely to have people outside of EH&S Dept who want to support mental health initiatives
- Human Resources
- Start a committee and send out requests to each department for support
- Marketing can help with branding

Step 4: Train Your Team



- Free options online or in person
- Can also pay a trainer to provide
- Easy search tool on website www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/take-a-course/
- Teaches employees, supervisors, etc. on how to engage with a person experiencing a mental health crisis
- Already used twice on projects by the safety team

Step 5: Schedule Reoccurring Times to Pause & Discuss

- May – National Mental Health Awareness Month
 - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI.org)
 - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA.gov)

- September – National Suicide Prevention Month and Construction Suicide Prevention Week
 - Association of General Contractors (AGC) of WA and CA

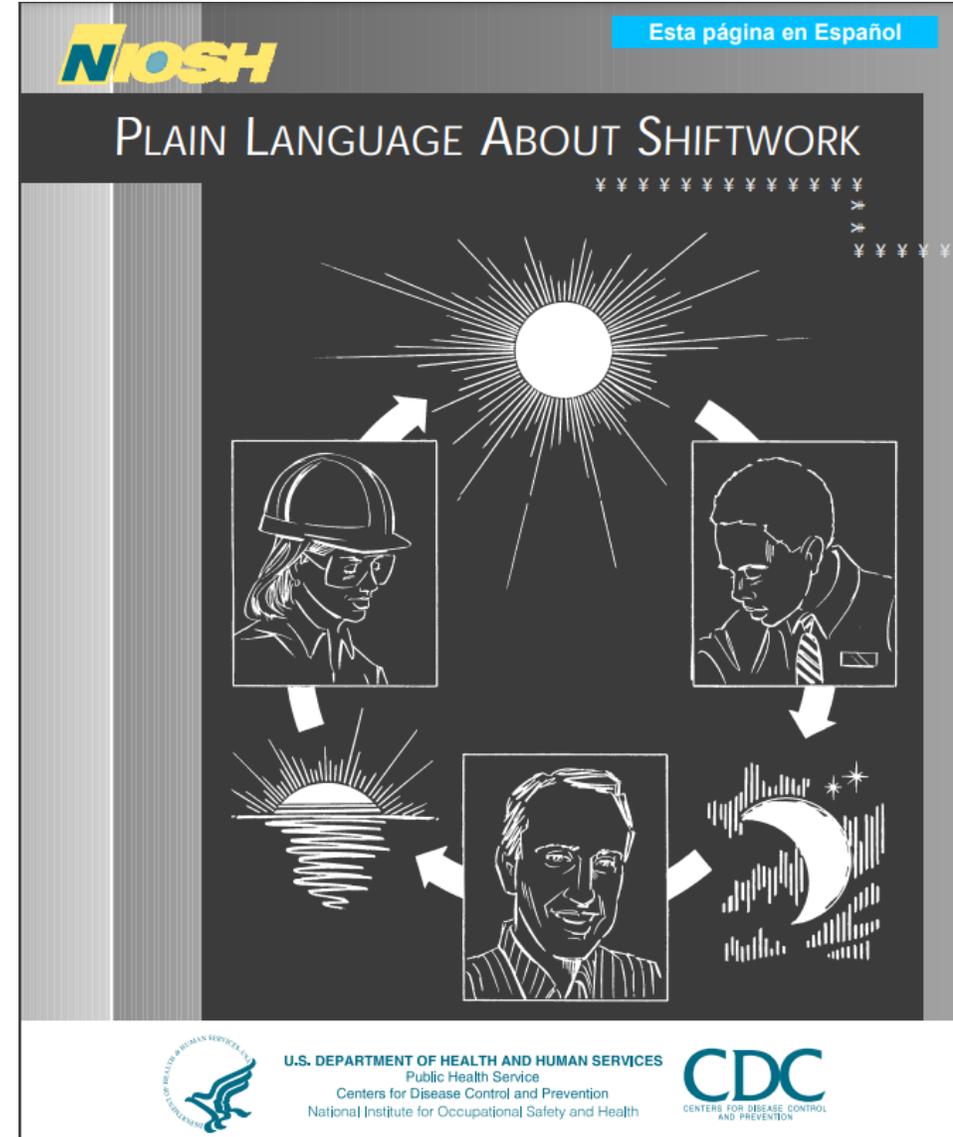


Step 5: Schedule Reoccurring Times to Pause & Discuss

- Recruit champions to participate
- Can be in the form of stand downs, safety meetings, round tables, etc.
- Get outside help
- Weave mental health topics into routine safety meetings & communications

Step 6: Identify & Change Elements That Create an Environment of Negative Mental Health Outcomes

- **Ex: Limit strenuous shiftwork**
 - Shiftwork is defined as working outside of normal daylight hours
- Immediate effects
 - Avg 2-3 hrs/day sleep lost
 - Increase in sleepiness, therefore accidents and injuries
 - Interference with social & family life leading to increased personal stress
- Long-term
 - Digestive Problems
 - Heart Disease
 - Substance dependence



Step 6: Identify & Change Elements That Create an Environment of Negative Mental Health Outcomes

- **Other examples**

- Toxic work behavior like bullying
- Sudden changes in schedule, responsibility, or stability
- Communication around downturns & layoffs
- Accelerated schedules & reduced budgets

Challenges & Lessons Learned

- Management reluctance to make trainings mandatory
- Lack of optional participation
- Limited content
- Time commitment for Mental Health First Aid

Protecting Your Own Mental Health

- Utilize existing resources when developing new programs
- Take advantage of your employers EAP
 - May include free counseling and legal or financial advisors
- Use all PTO
- Speak up when you're burned out
- Guard your calendar
- Say No



Thank You All