

# IHSA's Suicide Prevention Toolkit



*Three pathways, one goal:*

*To reduce suicide risk among Ontario construction workers through improved prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies and education*

## Pathway 1: Equipping leadership

This pathway is designed for senior leadership at construction companies and any other individuals who are responsible for developing a strategic response to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in the workplace.

### Learn more about suicide

#### Discover quick resources

- [A suicide prevention toolkit: The workplace and suicide prevention](#)—Centre for Suicide Prevention
- [Declining Mental Health and Suicide Risk](#) - IHSA
- Episode 42 of the *IHSA Safety Podcast*, "[Declining Mental Health and Suicide Risk](#)" (25:10 min)

### Create a suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention plan at the workplace

#### Keep it simple

Review the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention's [Needs Analysis & Implementation Tool](#). This tool was developed to help construction companies evaluate how they address mental health and suicide prevention in the workplace.

## Create your plan

Review [A Construction industry blueprint: Suicide prevention in the workplace](#) from Action Alliance and the Carson J. Spencer Foundation.

## Understand strategic planning for suicide prevention

Construction employers should take a strategic approach to suicide prevention. This means planning with a clear focus on long-term goals, rather than reacting to problems as they come up. [Suicide Prevention Research Centre's \(SPRC\) strategic planning approach to suicide prevention](#) includes the following six steps:

- 1. Describe the problem and its context.** Use data and other sources to understand how suicide affects your community.
- 2. Choose long-term goals.** Identify a small set of realistic and achievable long-term goals (e.g., reduce the suicide rate among a particular group).
- 3. Identify key risk and protective factors.** Prioritize the key risk and protective factors on which to focus your prevention efforts.
- 4. Select or develop interventions.** Begin planning your approach by deciding which activity or combination of activities best address your key risk and protective factors.
- 5. Plan the evaluation.** Develop an evaluation plan to track progress toward your long-term goals, show the value of your prevention efforts, and give you the information you need to refine, expand, or determine other next steps for your programming.
- 6. Implement, evaluate, and improve.** Implement and evaluate your activities, and use your evaluation data to monitor implementation, solve problems, and enhance your prevention efforts.

## Train leadership

Register for SPRC's [Strategic Planning Approach to Suicide Prevention](#) free online training program.

## Share your success

Email [kmartin@ihsa.ca](mailto:kmartin@ihsa.ca) to share your company's success at creating a suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention plan with IHSA.

# Suicide prevention program implementation resources

## Resources to support organizational efforts

Pathway 1: Equipping leadership with tools, resources, and training		
Area of focus	Resource	Developer
<b>Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention</b>		
Strategy guidance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">A Construction Industry Blueprint: Suicide Prevention in the Workplace</a></li> <li><a href="#">Construction + Suicide Prevention: Why Is This an Industry Imperative?</a></li> <li><a href="#">Needs Analysis &amp; Implementation Tool</a></li> <li><a href="#">Suicide prevention webpage</a></li> <li>Episode 42 of the <i>IHSA Safety Podcast</i>, "<a href="#">Declining Mental Health and Suicide Risk</a>"</li> <li>Episode 70 of the <i>IHSA Safety Podcast</i>, "<a href="#">Trauma Management in the Workplace</a>"</li> <li><a href="#">"Leading a company in the aftermath of a suicide loss" article</a></li> <li><a href="#">Framework for Successful Messaging</a></li> <li><a href="#">Workplace Suicide Prevention video</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suicide Prevention Resource Centre</li> <li>The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance)</li> <li>Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP)</li> <li>Workplace Strategies for Mental Health</li> <li>IHSA</li> <li>IHSA</li> <li>Construction Financial Management Association</li> <li>Action Alliance</li> <li>Action Alliance</li> </ol>

Pathway 2: Brave conversations at work		
Area of focus	Resource	Developer
<b>"Brave" conversations and support for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention</b>		
Prevention training programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Opening the Door to Support</a></li> <li><a href="#">LivingWorks Start program</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IHSA</li> <li>LivingWorks</li> </ol>
Prevention resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">The Role of Co-workers in Preventing Suicide in the Workplace</a></li> <li><a href="#">The Role of Managers in Preventing Suicide in the Workplace</a></li> <li><a href="#">Declining mental health and suicide risk safety talk</a></li> <li><a href="#">Posters and flyers for download</a></li> <li><a href="#">Peer Support program</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suicide Prevention Resource Centre</li> <li>Suicide Prevention Resource Centre</li> <li>IHSA</li> <li>Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention</li> <li>Hard Hats</li> </ol>
Intervention training programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">LivingWorks safeTALK (designed for people leaders)</a></li> <li><a href="#">LivingWorks ASIST (designed for union reps, occupational health and safety staff, HR, crisis teams, and peer teams)</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LivingWorks</li> <li>LivingWorks</li> </ol>
Postvention resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">A Manager's Guide to Suicide Postvention in the Workplace: 10 Action Steps for Dealing with the Aftermath of Suicide</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Workplace Postvention Task Force of the American Centre for Suicidology</li> </ol>

### Pathway 3: My mental health supports

Area of focus	Resource	Developer
Resilience and stress management training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">The Working Mind for The Trades - Worker (Virtual Training)</a></li> <li><a href="#">BounceBack® program</a></li> <li><a href="#">Self-assessment tools</a></li> <li><a href="#">Resources for employees</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IHSA and the Mental Health Commission of Canada</li> <li>BounceBack</li> <li>Workplace Strategies for Mental Health</li> <li>Workplace Strategies for Mental Health</li> </ol>
Resilience and stress management resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Episode 83 of the <i>IHSA Safety Podcast: "The Construction Athlete"</i></li> <li><a href="#">Assessing your mental health safety talk</a></li> <li><a href="#">Work stress and burnout safety talk</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IHSA</li> <li>IHSA</li> <li>IHSA</li> </ol>
Bias-shifting and improving emotional intelligence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Challenging stigma and preventing mental harm safety talk</a></li> <li><a href="#">Toxic masculinity mental health resource</a></li> <li><a href="#">Understanding chronic pain mental health resource</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IHSA</li> <li>IHSA</li> <li>IHSA</li> </ol>
Recovery/hope	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Discussing chronic pain with your doctor mental health resource</a></li> <li><a href="#">Peer Support program</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IHSA</li> <li>Hard Hats</li> </ol>
Additional referral resources	<p><b>Mental health and addiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">9-8-8 (Suicide Crisis Helpline)</a></li> <li><a href="#">Connex Ontario</a></li> <li><a href="#">Hard Hats - Peer Support program</a></li> <li><a href="#">Hammer Time - Substance use peer support meetings</a></li> <li><a href="#">De Novo Treatment Centre</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Pain management supports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Pain Canada</a></li> <li><a href="#">McMaster University Michael G. DeGroote National Pain Centre (includes a listing of Canadian pain clinics)</a></li> <li><a href="#">Chronic Pain Network</a></li> </ul>	

## How to add a suicide prevention plan into your OHSMS

IHSA's *Equipping Leadership Toolkit* is designed to help you build a complete occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS) with a focus on worker well-being. Every successful business process begins with a well-structured plan built on a strong foundation. This is equally true for improving workplace psychological health and safety, as well as fostering a culture that supports mental health and overall worker well-being. If you are unsure what a comprehensive OHSMS includes or how it connects to mental health at work, you are in the right place. This toolkit will guide you through the essentials.

IHSA's "Mental Health at Work" Pillar Framework is designed to integrate into your OHSMS through tailored policies and programs.

# Every great plan needs a clear focus

Core focus areas of a workplace psychological health and safety strategy



On IHSAs workplace mental health webpage, you can access links to many resources to support your workplace’s mental health efforts:

- [Violence and harassment](#)
- [Modified duties/return to work/stay at work](#)
- [Work and human rights](#)

These resources cover many topics, including:

- Substance use, with a focus on opioid use
- Pain management
- Fitness for duty

## Pathway #2: Brave conversations at work

This pathway focuses on the skills required to have open conversations about declining mental health and suicide risk in the construction industry and foster a culture of support.

If you believe that your co-worker is thinking about suicide, you might feel scared and confused. If you feel like it is an emergency or crisis, contact emergency services by calling 9-1-1 or reach out to the suicide crisis hotline at [9-8-8](#). Make sure to stay with your co-worker and follow company procedures and policies for reporting.

### Have a brave conversation

Having a “brave” conversation about suicide in the workplace means initiating an open, honest, and compassionate discussion with a co-worker who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide or mental health challenges. Here are some practical resources that can help you prepare for these conversations:

- [Download this poster from Buddy Up and the Centre for Suicide Prevention about starting a conversation.](#)
- Practice having important conversations with [Movember’s conversation guide](#).
- Review the many suicide prevention resources listed within this document.

# How can you prepare to help someone who is going through a mental health crisis?

## Learn more about suicide and mental illness

You can prepare to help someone who is going through a mental health crisis by educating yourself about suicide and declining mental health.

Everyone experiences mental health challenges, but what might seem like “normal” struggles can develop into a mental illness if left unaddressed. Mental illness is a medically diagnosed condition that impacts a person’s thoughts, behaviors, and interactions with others. It often leads to a long-term, negative effect on their quality of life.

According to the [Canadian Mental Health Association](#) (CMHA), approximately 50 per cent of people will have experienced a mental illness by the age of 40.

Around 12 Canadians die by suicide each day, totalling about 4,500 annually. In comparison, [workplace-related fatalities](#) account for about three deaths per day, totalling approximately 1,000 annually.

- Learn more about men’s mental health and suicide risk with [Buddy Up](#), a division of the Centre for Suicide Prevention. Check out their website for information, tips, and strategies you can use right now.
- Review IHSA’s Brave Conversations toolkit for tips, available at [www.ihsa.ca/workplacementalhealth](http://www.ihsa.ca/workplacementalhealth)

## What training is available for workers and supervisors?

The [LivingWorks suicide prevention skills training](#) will teach you to:

- Recognize the signs that someone may be thinking of suicide
- Reach out to someone with thoughts of suicide and talk openly
- Connect someone to further help and support

IHSA’s [The Working Mind for the Trades facilitated training](#) and [Opening the Door to Support eLearning course](#) will help you foster a supportive workplace culture, improve your own mental health, and support the mental health of workers who are struggling. Both courses are free for a limited time.

## More resources

### Postvention resources

- Review [postvention resources from Together to Live](#) to learn how to support someone who has experienced a suicide loss or attempted suicide.

### Information on suicide and self-harm

- Watch [CMHA Suicide Prevention](#), a 15-minute video from the Canadian Mental Health Association.
- Review [the fact sheet from the Mental Health Commission of Canada about how alcohol and suicide are connected](#).
- Read “[Why do people self-harm?](#),” an article from SuicideLine Victoria.

If you have more questions, check out the suicide prevention and mental health resources from the [Centre for Suicide Prevention’s Resources Library](#).

## How to recognize declining mental health among employees

- Download the [Recognizing Declining Mental Health in Employees toolkit](#) from the Mental Health Commission of Canada:
  - Create safe spaces for having open conversations about mental health
  - Have regular check-ins and meetings with workers
  - Share internal and external resources
  - Attend [The Working Mind for the Trades](#) and/or [Mental Health First Aid training](#)

- Listen to [Episode 42 of the IHSA Safety Podcast, “Declining Mental Health and Suicide Risk,”](#) to learn how you can address declining mental health and suicide in the trades.
- Watch [Workplace Suicide Postvention: A Supervisor’s Perspective](#), a video from the Veterans Health Administration.
- Use [IHSA’s mental health and substance use health resources](#) to talk to your crew about these important topics and review the [facilitator’s guide](#) to using these resources.

## Keep learning about mental health at work

- Review [IHSA’s Mental Health: Worker Toolkit](#) for information about psychological health and safety and mental health that you can share with your workers.
- Check out the [employee resources from Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#).
- Learn the basics about mental health by taking a course in the [Mental Health 101 series from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#).

## Pathway #3: My mental health and well-being supports

This pathway will help you understand what suicidal thoughts are and how they can affect people. It also provides you with helpful tools to build resilience and connects you to community-based or workplace resources. If you are concerned about someone else, please visit the Brave Conversations section of this toolkit for practical guidance and resources.

### Do you need help?

If you have attempted to seriously hurt yourself or end your life within the last few hours, or intend to harm yourself, please call 9-1-1 immediately or go to your nearest emergency department. If you are at work, contact a supervisor or a co-worker who you trust to support you and drive you to the hospital if needed.

9-8-8 suicide and mental health crisis responders are available to support you at all times.

- Call 9-8-8
- Text 9-8-8

Want to learn more about the Suicide Crisis Helpline before you call? Check out their [website](#).

### Do you need access to culturally appropriate crisis support?

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) offers [specialized resources and crisis lines](#) and supports for various identified groups and multiple language groups.

### Are you struggling with thoughts of suicide?

[Hope by CAMH](#) is a free smartphone app with suicide prevention information, tools, and crisis resources to support and guide individuals when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide. One of the key features of this app is the ability for individuals to create a personalized suicide safety plan, which can be done in consultation with their healthcare professional, loved one, or someone they trust. The Hope by CAMH safety plan is accessible at any time—especially if someone is thinking about suicide.

It is now available for download on Android and [iOS](#).

### Are you struggling with your mental health?

If you have been struggling with your mental health, start by reviewing these webpages from Workplace Strategies for Mental Health:

- [Assessing your current situation](#)
- [Self-assessment health tools](#)

## Are you thinking about going to therapy?

- Review your employer or union benefits for cost assistance or find free local services.
- Check out [Therapy for Men](#), a Movember project that challenges myths, shares videos of men discussing their therapy experiences, and offers resources for accessing therapy.

## Do you need help finding support?

Finding support can be tough. Reach out to your employer (e.g., Human Resources, your supervisor, or your occupational health and safety representative) and union (if applicable) to learn about available support, including Employee and Family Assistance programs and health care benefits.

Before taking time off, remember to ask about the return-to-work process and accommodations, such as staying at work or gradually returning.

If you need additional support, check out the organizations below that can help you navigate services across Ontario.

### ConnexOntario

[ConnexOntario](#) provides information for people who are experiencing mental health issues or issues with drugs, alcohol, or gambling:

- 1-866-531-2600
- [Live web chat](#)
- [Email](#)

### 211 Ontario

[211 Ontario](#) provides information and referrals for community, government, social, and health services across Ontario, including mental health resources. This resource focuses on the Greater Toronto Area:

- 2-1-1 (toll-free: 1-877-330-3213)
- [Live web chat](#)
- [Email](#)

### Ontario Government

[Ontario.ca](#) provides an extensive list of community-based services to support you and those who you may be helping find support. Bookmark this valuable webpage:

- [Get help. Talk to someone.](#)
- [Children and youth](#)
- [Indigenous communities](#)
- [Resources at work](#)

### Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) provides a list of resources available for areas in and around Toronto, including several multilingual offerings:

- [Distress lines](#)
- [Mobile crisis response](#)
- [Community crisis supports](#)
- [Specialized resources](#)
- [Additional resources](#)

## Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

[Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#) offers various community resources for a wide range of mental health concerns.

### Peer support networks

- [The Peer Support program from Hard Hats](#) is a construction industry peer support program.
- [Hammer Time, a substance use peer support group](#), is a construction industry peer support program that meets virtually once a week.
- [Buddy Up](#) offers multiple peer support programs for men by men.

## Are you interested in in-patient treatment?

In-patient treatment involves staying at a facility for a period of time to receive medical or mental health care. This approach offers a structured and supervised environment with 24/7 support and monitoring. There are many other public and private treatment options available. ConnexOntario can help you find a treatment option that is right for you. Check out the following treatment centres:

- [De Novo Treatment Centre](#) is an addiction treatment centre for Ontario unionized construction workers supported by Ontario's Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council.
- [Homewood Health Centre](#) is an in-patient treatment facility that can often be accessed with employer benefits.

## Do you need help finding a therapist?

Use the following search tools to find a therapist:

- [Ontario Association of Mental Health Professionals](#)
- [Ontario Society of Registered Psychotherapists](#)

Remember to connect with your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) if you have one.

## Are you returning to work after a suicide attempt?

Check out the following resources to prepare for your return to work:

- [Mental Health – Return to Work](#) (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety)
- [Supporting an employee's return to work](#) (Mental Health Works)
- [Supporting people after a suicide attempt or death](#) (Together to Live, a project by the Centre for Suicide Prevention)

## Do you want to be an advocate for change at work?

Check out the following resources if you are wondering whether you can talk about your experience with suicide in the workplace:

- Read the [guidelines for sharing experiences with suicide](#) from the Centre for Suicide Prevention.
- Share your [personal story to inspire hope in others](#).