

Stepping Up To Save Lives

A Facilitator's Guide to Suicide Prevention in Construction



988

SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE



A community service program from Lyn Learning and the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention



LynLearning.com



PreventConstructionSuicide.com

The Stepping Up To Save Lives Program

This program is the result of organizations coming together with a shared concern over the high level of suicides in the construction industry. The initiative is stewarded by Lyn Learning Inc., and everyone involved in this project has donated their time and resources.

Avatar Lyn Learning Inc.

This guide was created as a public service by Lyn Learning Inc., a video production company that companies create innovative, practical, and effective training programs and tools. For this project, Lyn Learning combined their deep expertise in micro-learning programs with 27 years of instructional design skills and cutting edge technology to create a powerful custom video with an avatar of a construction leader- Bill Aalerud.



Lyn Learning can create custom videos for your company too. Imagine having an avatar of your director of safety providing video toolbox talks! Videos can be used for:

- Toolbox talks on safety or stand-down topics
- Incorporating communication and jobsite briefings into online platforms or learning management systems
- Team building and team effectiveness education on topics such as active listening, providing feedback, developing trust and fostering psychological safety

If you want to bring your training programs, toolbox talks or job site communications to the next level, contact: Kari Heistad, CEO of Lyn Learning: LynLearning.com Kari@LynLearning.com



Avatar:

The person speaking in the video is an avatar of Bill Aalerud, a 40 year+ veteran of the construction industry. Trained as an engineer, he has held many roles in several construction firms, with his last post being an Executive Vice President at Columbia, a construction management firm in Massachusetts and as the Board Chair of the Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts. To create this avatar, a two minute video was recorded of Bill speaking about his love of sailing and then a script was provided for the video.

Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention

The Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention was born out of necessity in response to a statistic released in a CDC study ranking construction as the #1 industry for deaths by suicide. Established by the Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA) in 2016 to shatter the stigma surrounding mental health issues, CIASP became a stand alone 501(c)(3) organization in 2018 to raise awareness about suicide prevention and provide resources and tools to create a zero suicide industry by uniting and supporting the construction community. PreventConstructionSuicide.com CIASP provided the script for the video and owns the copyright of it. They also reviewed this guide.



Legal Disclaimer: Copyright © 2026 Lyn Learning, Inc. Some rights reserved.

This work is protected under copyright law. This work may be reproduced as a complete work and distributed internally by the original recipient for the purpose for which it was provided by the owner, but for no other purpose. These materials may be shared and used without additional licensing permissions as long as they are used exactly as originally distributed by the owner. They may not be repackaged, sold or used in any other way without the written permission of Lyn Learning Inc. These materials are being provided for educational purposes only.

Neither Lyn Learning nor the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention accept any responsibility for the final use or application of these materials nor how they are presented.

For additional permissions or licensing inquiries, please contact the copyright owner Lyn Learning Inc.

Introduction

Suicide prevention is a topic that can be hard to talk about. But, it is a necessary one. We are losing 14 people a day in the construction industry to suicide. It is estimated that every suicide impacts 135 people. And, if you lose someone on your job site to suicide, it will have an impact on your people and your project.

The 5-minute video and this guide have been designed to make it as easy as possible for you to start the conversation about suicide prevention. You may feel uncomfortable and that is ok. It isn't important to be perfect when speaking about this topic. What is most important is to start the conversation and to raise awareness. We have provided sample scripts to make it easier along with tips for facilitating conversations and a resources list.

We have provided a page of resources you can post in this guide to make it easier for people on your job sites to get help if they need it. The national 988 hotline is available in English and Spanish and is an important resource to help people get professional help 24-7. There are many organizations that can support you in providing education about this topic including The Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention. Reach out to get additional information and resources.

Using the *Stepping Up To Save Lives* Video

The video can be used in a variety of ways including:

- A stand-alone video shared with employees, contractors and vendors as a way to promote information about suicide prevention via a text message, email link or a learning management system
- Presenting the video and information at a small group meeting at a job site or office as part of a stand down focusing on suicide prevention.
- Incorporating the video as part of larger mental health strategies across the organization about suicide prevention.

Preparing for Using the Video

- **Stand Alone:** If using the video as a stand alone, this guide provides a sample email/text script to use to introduce the video and to follow-up. If using a project management platform, these intro/outro scripts can be embedded into the platform.
- **Stand-Down:** If using the video as part of a stand-down, there is a script to use as an introduction and there is a discussion guide with sample discussion questions and guidelines to help you as a facilitator. Take time to review these materials as part of your preparation.
- **Larger Mental Health Awareness:** If you are incorporating the video into a larger awareness program, the companion guide for organizations includes best practices for how to integrate it effectively and ways to incorporate suicide prevention into your other work.



988 | SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Using the Video as a Stand Alone Tool via Email or in a Platform

Using An Introduction Before the Video

If you are going to be requesting people view the video on their own, either by a text link on their phone, or through having it on a platform, it will be most effective with context before and after the video is watched. The scripts below can be used to explain what the people will be watching before and then following up after the video.

Sample Introduction Script

While we've made significant progress addressing physical safety hazards on job sites, we're now expanding our attention to support mental health and wellbeing too. We are doing this because we realize that every day we lose 14 people to suicide in the construction industry. As a company, we're participating in a Suicide Prevention Awareness campaign because we believe in taking care of our whole team. We know that mental health challenges can affect anyone. This is an important conversation, and we want everyone to feel comfortable discussing mental health just like we do physical safety. Every team member is an important part of our team and we want to create a stronger support system for each other..

Please watch this 5-minute video to learn about what warning signs to look for and ways you can support a coworker who might be struggling. Remember: small actions can make a big difference.

If you need help, please call or text the national hotline for help 988, which is available in English and Spanish 24-7 or reach out to:

Insert company contact/Employee Assistance Program

Follow Up Text After the Video

Paying attention to mental health isn't something that happens for just one day or one week once a year. It is something that we need to pay attention to all year long. We all have challenging days, weeks, even months. And, we can all look out for each other. Sometimes that is just a friendly smile or a quick nod. Sometimes what people need is something more. If you need help, please call or text the national 988 hotline for help 24-7 in English or Spanish. If you want to talk about this video or have questions, please reach out to:

Insert company contact



Using the Video in a Stand Down or Group Setting

10 Minute Stand Down

1 Minute: Opening Script
5 Minutes: Show the video
4 Minutes: Wrap up using closing script

20 Minute Stand Down

1 Minute: Opening Script
5 Minutes: Show the video
10 Minutes: Discussion
4 Minutes: Wrap up using closing script

Preparation Ahead of Time:

- Review the sample scripts
- Let everyone know the time and place
- Check that the technology works
- Print out poster example

On the Day

- Pull up the video link or video on a flat screen or provide the video link via email or text message to watch the video.
- Ask people to give their full attention for 15 -20 minutes for this important topic.
- Remind people that this is a serious topic and one that does not include joking around and to show respect when others are speaking is important.

Opening Script:

While we've made significant progress addressing physical safety hazards on job sites, we're now expanding our attention to support mental health and wellbeing too. We are doing this because we realize that every day we lose 14 people to suicide in the construction industry. As a company, we're participating in a Suicide Prevention Awareness campaign because we believe in taking care of our whole team. We know that mental health challenges can affect anyone. This is an important conversation, and we want everyone to feel comfortable discussing mental health just like we do physical safety. By learning together, we can create an even stronger support system for each other.

Insert a personal story, connection or link to the work.

We are going to watch a five-minute video that explains what signs we need to watch for and ways that we can help.

Post Video Script

That was a powerful video and it provided us with some helpful tips. The most important one being the national hotline number 988 which is available in English and Spanish and it can be used for mental health support, suicide prevention and alcohol and drug challenges.

Resources that are available through our company are: Provide information about company resources and Employee Assistance Program

Discussion Questions

If time allows, here are some discussion questions you can use:

- Does anyone have any questions from the video?
- What were you thinking about during the video?
- What are some ways that we can help each other when we see that someone is struggling?
- What is happening on the job site that could contribute to mental health struggles? How might we change them?
- How do our long hours, physical demands and project deadlines affect our mental health?

Closing Script

Thank you all for your time and attention today. This is an important topic which is having a huge impact on our industry. You will see posters up around the job site reminding us of the national hotline number 988 and I urge everyone to remember this and to use this resource for yourself or to help others. They can help in English and Spanish.

Paying attention to mental health isn't something that happens for just one day or one discussion. It is something that we need to pay attention to all year long. We all have challenging days, weeks, even months. And, we can all look out for each other. Sometimes that is just a friendly smile. Sometimes what people need is something more.

Each one of you is important to us here on the job and to those that care about you in your life. Each one of us can help each other. If you have concerns for a colleague and you don't feel comfortable saying anything yourself, please come and talk to me or another foreman or reach out to:

Provide information about company resources and Employee Assistance Program

Facilitator Tips

When facilitating conversations on uncomfortable topics such as suicide prevention it helps to put others at ease and to create a sense of what's known as psychological safety within the group. Psychological safety is when people feel comfortable being themselves and expressing their thoughts openly. To help to create this, here are some tips to help you with the facilitation. Do the best you can, you don't need to be perfect. Just lead the presentation with empathy and compassion and it will come across to those in the group. If no-one speaks up that is ok, just raising awareness is an important first step.

Respect Others: Remind people to be respectful of other experiences and ideas. Everyone has their own lived experiences that may, or may not, be the same as other people's. Two people who have the same experience can still view it differently.

Don't Interrupt: Let people finish speaking, even if they pause. People may reveal things that are hard to share and it is important to give people the space they need. If someone interrupts, ask them to wait until the person finishes and encourage the person to finish what they were saying.

Pause: Don't be afraid to ask for a pause to reflect for a moment if needed. Sometimes the group needs a few moments of reflection if someone says something serious, emotional or powerful.

Watch Assumptions: Be careful that people don't jump to conclusions about what people mean, ask questions to clarify if it is unclear.

Encourage The Use of "I" Statements: Watch if people make broad general statements such as "All____ feel this way." For any community or group, there are many different perspectives to take into account. Encourage people to speak from their own personal perspective by saying "I feel..."

Use Open-Ended Questions: Instead of yes/no questions, use open-ended questions to gain insight and to deepen a discussion:

- "Can you tell me more about how you came to that conclusion?"
- "Can you share what that meant to you?"
- "Are you willing to share any more details so that we understand better?"
- "Are there any resources that you or others need?"

Don't Push: Let others share at their own comfort level. Don't push people to share if they don't want to.

Shift Your Language: Use "Yes, and..." instead of "Yes, but..." This allows conversations to build using a both/and mindset.

Use Active and Empathetic Listening Techniques: Showing people that they are being actively listened to promotes better understanding and engagement in conversations.

Active listening: You give the speaker your undivided attention. You pick up on key themes and messages and can repeat those back. The people speaking feel understood and valued.

Example: "Key points that I hear you making are: _____, did I miss anything?"

Empathetic listening: In addition to active listening, you are also paying attention to the emotions that are being conveyed. People feel that you understand what something means to them.

Example: "I can hear the frustration in your voice."

For hard conversations, it is important to practice active and empathetic listening so that you can fully understand different perspectives and can share without injuring someone's dignity.

In summary:

Ask respectfully.

Listen carefully.

Support openly.



988

SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Facilitator Tips cont.

What do I do if someone has an emotional reaction?

It is important to remember (and to remind others) that this topic can bring up emotions such as lived experiences, fear, past memories of loved ones that have been lost or feelings of being overwhelmed. If someone's emotions bubble over or become high, it is good to check in and ask "would you like to take a moment to collect yourself?" If they nod/say yes, allow a moment of silence for them to gather their thoughts before checking to see if they want to continue speaking. If someone is really distraught, you can use "It is clear this is an intense/hard discussion/topic for you. Please take the time you need to collect yourself. I will check back at the end of the discussion to see if there is anything else you would like to add. Is that ok?" Asking their permission puts them in a sense of control which will help them to feel more grounded. People may have emotions come up just listening to the conversation. Let people know ahead of time that if they need to, they are welcome to step outside at any time.

What do I say/do if someone jokes around?

"I would like to remind you that this is no joking matter. We are losing people every day in construction to suicide and we have to make changes so that this can stop."

Making Change in the Industry

The construction industry is facing a serious challenge when it comes to suicide risk. Our job site cultures have often made it hard for people to ask for help or talk about what they're going through. When job site pressures combine with personal struggles-feeling isolated, dealing with money problems, or facing mental health challenges-workers can find themselves at real risk. That's why prevention can't just focus on the individual. We have to look at the bigger picture too: how we support people, how we shape the job site culture, and how the industry as a whole can change. It takes addressing all three together to make a real difference—and to save lives in our construction community.

Next Steps

Here are next steps you can do to help promote mental wellness and suicide prevention:

- Post the resources page, the 988 poster and information about your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Reach out to your Employee Assistance Program to learn what resources they have and how they can support employees
- Shut down any comments or jokes that belittle mental health and people concerned over mental health.
- Share resources for people who have lost someone to suicide such as Suicide Grief Support from the Samaritans:
Losing someone to suicide is a painful and difficult experience. Samaritans offers free in-person and virtual programs to support suicide loss survivors in their grieving. Learn more at SamaritansHope.org/gss



988 | SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Resources for Help You are not alone.

Emergency Services Contacts

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline	Call or text 988 Available 24/7 Chat: 988lifeline.org English & Spanish	Trained counselors for immediate support for suicide, mental health, drug and alcohol and other issues
Crisis Text Line	Text HOME to 741741	Trained crisis counselors 24/7
SAMHSA National Helpline	1-800-662-4357 Available 24/7, 365 days a year	Free and confidential Substance Abuse and Mental Health Hotline: FindTreatment.gov
Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255, Press 1 Specifically for veterans	24/7 support Chat and text options available
Emergency Services	Call 911 for immediate physical danger	

Construction-Specific Individual Resources

Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention	PreventConstructionSuicide.com	Individual educational resources, personal stories and recovery resources
Construction Working Minds	ConstructionWorkingMinds.org	Individual support and resources, industry-specific mental health information

Mental Health Resources for Individuals and Families

American Federation for Suicide Prevention	AFSP.org HardHatCourage.com	Resources for individuals, families and organizations to prevent suicides and to cope after a suicide.
Samaritans	SamaritansHope.org	Hotline, suicide prevention, grief counseling (free and virtual for access from anywhere)
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)	NAMI.org	Support groups for individuals and families, educational resources, local chapters, peer support programs
Mental Health America	MHANational.org	Mental health screening tools (anonymous and free), local resources



988 | SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Need Help?

Call or text for yourself or a friend.



988

SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE



Caring counselors to talk to 24-7

If you need to talk, the 988 Lifeline can help if you are facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns.

You are not alone.

For additional resources for suicide prevention and mental health in the construction industry:
PreventConstructionSuicide.com • ConstructionSuicidePrevention.com • HardHatCourage.com