



How To Have "THE"

Conversation

Presented by Sondra Lavoie





- **31 years in construction**
- **2 time BCSP Award of Excellence recipient**
- **ASSP
Women In Safety Excellence
Administrator**
- **Donuts are a love language**

The Invisible Crisis

- Impact and Intent
- Stigmas and Stressors
- Key Risk Factors
 - Physical
 - Behavioral
- The Signs
- Start the Conversation
- Resources





93% of Respondents

Agreed that addressing mental health is a sound business practice!

BUT

Only 18% said that they would discuss mental health with a
coworkers.

The WHY

- High job stress- demanding schedules, seasonal work, layoffs, long hours, frequent travel.
- Injuries, chronic pain; sometimes treated with or sometimes self medicated with illegal drugs.
- High rates of alcohol and drug use.
- Stigmas and Stressors!



Stigmas

Workforce culture, including the stoic “Have it together guy or gal” work ethic where feelings aren’t talked about, and the job must go on. Stigma about mental wellbeing runs high as is typical for all industries.

Company factors, including the nature of the work, location of work, amount of work, schedule and sequence of work, and the amount of overtime.

“Get’r Done” or “Do it or get out” or “Back in my day”.

My favorite
“Man-up”

Stressors

- Job stressors, including the long hours, and physically and mentally demanding working conditions in sometimes harsh environmental conditions. Family obligations, children, pets, bills, and social pressures.
- Worker lifestyle choices, including whether a worker is receptive to seeking medical care and behavioral health services; individual choices made with respect to nutrition, exercise, alcohol, and substance use; and adoption of stress management and self-care practices.



Key Risk Factors

Physical Health

Conditions

Fatigue

Sudden Change In Appearance

High Blood Pressure

Chronic Pain





Key Risk Factors

Behavioral Health

Conditions

Stress and Anxiety

Depression

Heavy Binge Drinking or Drug use

Risk Taking

Isolation



Warning Signs

It's not always obvious when an employee, friend, or coworker is struggling, but they often show signs of suicidal thoughts in subtle ways.

While some comments or threats could sound like “just talk,” they can become dangerous quickly, and it's important to step in or speak up if you see these



Warning signs you may See or Hear

- Anxiety or agitation appear nervous, shaken, or worried.
- Aggressive behavior or uncontrolled anger act overly bitter, hostile, or seek revenge.
- May engage in violence by getting into fights or punching holes in walls.
Withdrawal stop talking to friends or doing things they used to enjoy.
- Feel like a burden mention feeling like they have let down their coworkers or family; feels worthless.

Warning signs you may See or Hear

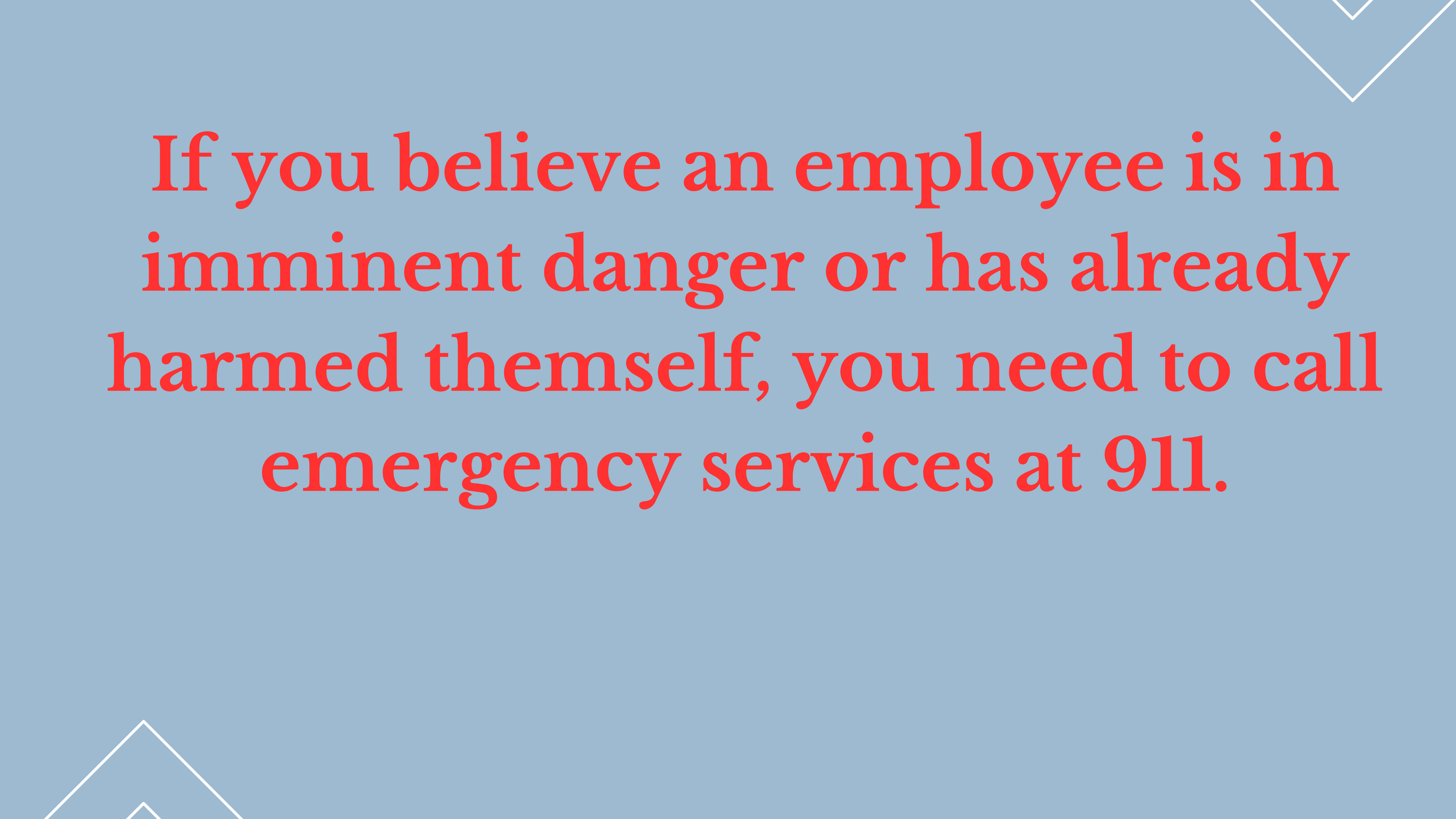
- Reckless behavior work dangerously and does not seem to care about the consequences.
- Depression mention feeling very sad or withdrawn and lasting for more than two weeks.



Imminent Danger Signs

- Feeling desperate
- Tying up loose ends
- Saying goodbye
- Sudden mood changes
- Talking about suicide or wanting to die
- Seeking access





If you believe an employee is in imminent danger or has already harmed themselves, you need to call emergency services at 911.

Starting "THE" Conversation

- **Prepare: Practice what you will say -**
 - **Be patient, understanding, and provide hope.**
- **Ask directly about suicide. Mention what prompted you to ask, making it clear you aren't asking "out of the blue." If they answer "YES," stay calm and don't leave the person alone until further help is obtained.**

Remember: YOU are in a space of trust!

Starting "THE" Conversation

BE THERE -

- **Listen**
- **Express Concern**
- **Reassure**

**Validate their feelings, let the person know
you are genuinely concerned, and that
you take their situation seriously.**

Starting "THE" Conversation

KEEP THEM SAFE - Create a Safety Plan Together

- **Ask what will help keep them safe.**
- **Get a verbal commitment.**

“Yes, please help”

“I would love for you to come over”

“Let’s dial 988 together”

Starting "THE" Conversation

KEEP THEM SAFE - Create a Safety Plan Together

- **Ask what will help keep them safe.**
- **Get a verbal commitment.**
- **988**



I did not notice that when Ernie and I put the microwave in and that is in room 103 building 5 North Tower

Ok thank you

Today 10:22 AM

I won't be coming to work no more I'm done I don't need this job anymore I quit in fact I'm even quitting my other job because I'm ending my life there's only two people that really truly care about me out there and that is Charlie and Clarence those are the only two people that really care about me but like I said I don't need this job anymore and I won't be there tomorrow or ever again

Continuing "THE" Conversation

HELP THEM CONNECT - Get Help

Resources, Resources, Resources

Give them a “warm hand off” to someone who can help. Help them call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or connect them with a mental health professional. Stay connected.**

If you feel the situation is critical, take the person to a nearby Emergency Room or call 911.

Don't promise secrecy. Instead, you can say: "I care about you too much to keep a secret like this. You need help and I am here."

What NOT To Say

REMEMBER “WORDS” MATTER

Don't ask about suicide in a way that indicates you want a dismissive answer.

Don't tell the person to do it.

IMPORTANT:

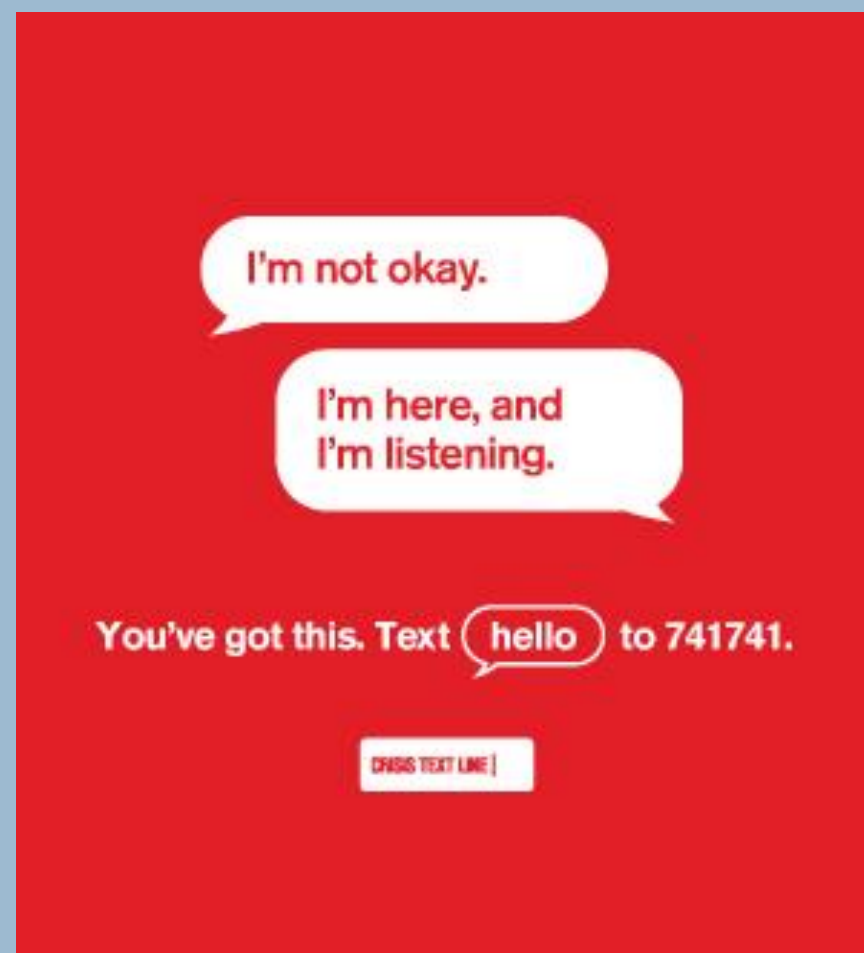
Talking about suicide does ***NOT*** put the idea into someone's head.

It gives people permission to talk about their feelings

and brings much needed relief.

Resource

If you're or know of someone having trouble coping with work-related stress, talk with someone who can help.

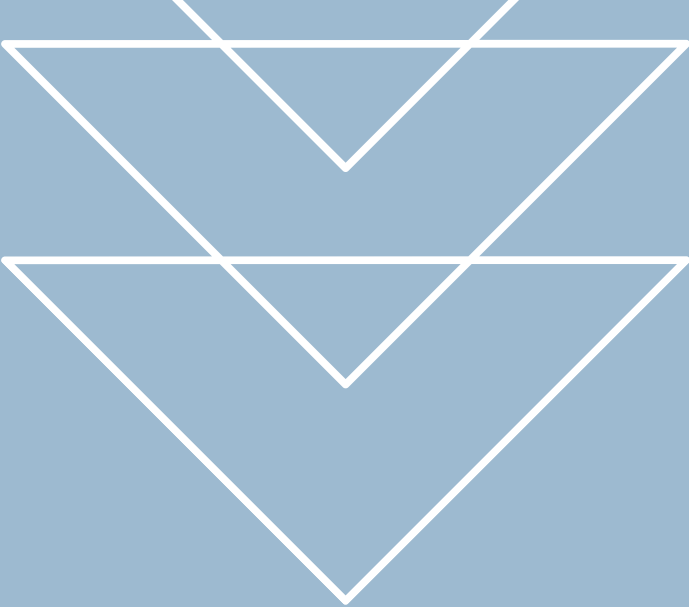


NAMI Help Line



Call 1-800-950-NAMI (6264), text "HelpLine" to 62640 or email us at
helpline@nami.org

- An Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP): Provides resources, articles, and websites.
<https://www.preventconstructionsuicide.com/>
- 988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.
<https://988lifeline.org/>
- Text HELLO to 741741. Every person is connected with a crisis counselor, who is trained to listen and offer sound advice. Online chat suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: Provides resources and aid to those affected by suicide, including Risk Factors and Warning Signs. <https://afsp.org/>



“Imagine if we
measured success by
the amount of safety
that people felt in
our presence.”

