



The New COMPASS Playbook for Preventing Suicides in Construction

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Moderator: MK Fletcher, Deputy Director, CPWR

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Housekeeping

- Today's webinar will be recorded and automatically shared via follow-up email.
- The recording and slides will also be posted on cpwr.com/webinars.
- Attendees are automatically muted! Please submit panelist questions via the Q&A box.
- Spanish audio is available via simultaneous interpretation

Simultaneous Interpretation

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2. Haga clic en el idioma que desee escuchar.
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The New COMPASS Playbook for Preventing Suicides in Construction

Bradley Evanoff, MD, MPH

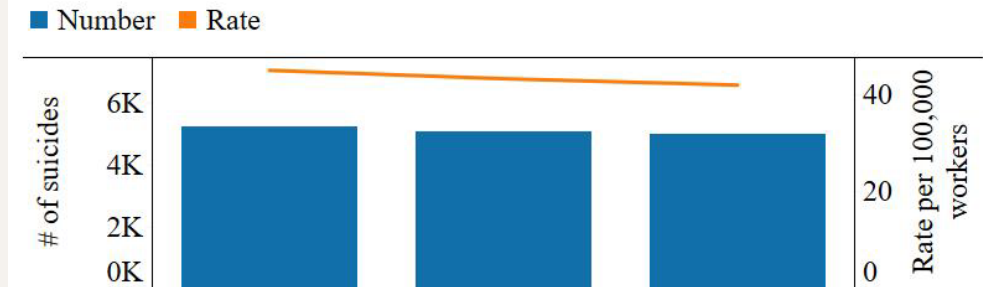
Sami Tayeb, MA

Study Rationale

Addressing an Urgent Need in Construction

- Construction workers are more than twice as likely at risk of suicide compared to other male workers
- Construction workers account for ~20% of suicides among working men
- Construction workers are ~five times more likely to die from suicide than from a workplace injury
- Organizational and cultural factors in construction increase the risk of mental health problems:
 - Long working hours, precarious work, high injury rates
 - Cultural norms and stigma inhibit help-seeking
 - Complex nature of construction projects creates additional psychological stress and job strain
 - Highly fragmented health care offerings

Suicide and overdose deaths among construction workers aged 16 to 64 years old (2022-2024)



Source(s): : National Center for Health Statistics, 2022-2024 Mortality Multiple Cause File and IPUMS, 2022-2024 Current Population Survey. Calculations by CPWR's Data Center.

This project builds on long-running efforts to decrease addiction and improve mental health

Annual St. Louis “Stand down for suicide prevention” in construction since 2019

Created toolbox talks and other materials to improve awareness

YOU OKAY?

Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

Toolbox Talks and Facilitator Guide



Change cultural and organizational factors to increase help-seeking & help-offering by construction workers

- **Increase utilization of existing mental health resources** such as EAPs, MAPs, and health benefits
 - Stigma
 - Lack of knowledge of available resources, quality of resources
 - Concerns about confidentiality
- **Increase willingness to seek help** (increase awareness, decrease stigma, normalize help-seeking)
- **Improve help-offering:** Ensure that workers and supervisors know how to direct their co-workers to help (When I talk to a worker in crisis, what should I do?)

Multi-level, multi-component programs are needed to effectively change risk

- Effective workplace mental health programs:
 - address both personal and organizational determinants of workplace mental health
 - identify those most at risk
 - provide timely referral
- MATES in construction: successful, multi-level, multi-component program from Australia
- MATES includes three levels of training: General Awareness (all workers); Peer Connectors (5% of workers), Advanced Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) plus case management and referral

Study Aims

- **Adapt** key elements of the Australian suicide prevention program “MATES in Construction” for application in the US construction industry to improve awareness, help-seeking, help-offering, & referral (differences in health care system & industry structure require changes to content, context, organization)
- **Implement** the program in six regional construction companies
- **Evaluate** implementation of the adapted intervention, resulting changes in attitudes and behaviors regarding suicide and mental health, and changes in mental health service access and use
- **Disseminate** the program to reach a wide audience in the industry

Challenges in Adapting MATES to the USA

MATES Australia	USA
Labour	Labor

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Universal health care system	Fragmented; different programs and benefits for different populations

Challenges in Adapting MATES to the USA

MATES Australia	USA
Labour	Labor
Universal health care system	Fragmented; different programs and benefits for different populations
Well-funded independent trust provides training and case management	YOYO



COMPASS

Construction Organizations Mobilizing for Peer Support & Suicide Safety

- A suicide prevention and mental health promotion framework that addresses the unique needs of the US construction industry
- Inspired by the Australian “MATES in Construction” program; adapts key elements of this program

10 Steps to Implementing the COMPASS Framework

1

Commit to Prevention

Pledge to support mental health and suicide prevention.



2

Engage Union Partners

Engage unions to support and participate in the program.



3

Assess Readiness

Determine if the organization is prepared for implementation.



4

Evaluate Current Program

Assess current efforts and identify gaps.



5

Review Postvention Plan

Ensure a plan is in place for responding to suicide events.



6

Evaluate EAP/MAP and Health Benefits

Assess the effectiveness and utilization of the Employee Assistance Program.



7

Train Navigators and Peer Connectors

Arrange safe TALK and ASIST training for employees.



8

Develop Navigation Resources

Create and distribute materials to promote the programs.



9

Conduct General Awareness Training

Deliver awareness training to all employees.



10

Review and Maintain

Regularly assess and update the program for effectiveness.



Training, peer support network, and referral

Level 1: General Awareness Training (GAT)

1-hour annual training to all workers on site or a series of short toolbox talks: increase awareness, willingness to seek help

Level 2: Peer Connector Training

5% of workforce receives 4-hour training – train peers to increase help-seeking, help-offering; warm hand off to workers in crisis

Level 3: Navigator Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

2-day training for navigators to directly refer workers to care

Three Levels of Suicide Prevention Training



Tarlton Pilot Program Overview

- Two-day ASIST training for HR & safety managers — August '23
- Half-day safeTALK Training for Peer Connectors in — October '23
- GAT for all workers: Five days of TBTs in — September '23
- Hard Hat Stickers; resource cards
- Final TBT promoting the program — January '24
- Interviews with trained personnel — March-May '24



*Supported by CPWR small grant

Semi-structured Interviews: HR, Workforce management, Superintendents, Safety Managers (n=11)

Value of training:

- Increased awareness of mental health, suicide, and substance use
- Enabled people to talk openly about mental health, in a way they had not been able to before
- Promoted cultural shift within the industry toward more accepting and understanding climate for workers struggling with mental health concerns
- SafeTALK and ASIST seen as valuable and useful; increased confidence and perceived skills - many had already used skills
- Program seen as an acceptable solution to an unmet need in the industry; addressed stigma and promoted mental health awareness in a way that stakeholders felt was congruent with industry culture

Where We Are Today

- We've partnered with three regional contractors.
- Worked closely with their safety teams and HR benefits personnel
- All three have completed LivingWorks ASIST and safeTALK trainings
- 800+ workers have received the GAT
- Currently in talks with several contractors to partner with us on COMPASS for implementation and evaluation – we're looking for more!

Evaluation

- Collected and analyzed Organizational Readiness for Implementing Change (ORIC) survey data
- Collected worker surveys from three contractors:
 - 10 question mobile phone survey before GAT, then again at 1 week and 3 months after training
 - Document changes in attitudes, help offering and help seeking
- Analyzed high-level company provided EAP utilization data
- Have conducted 17 post-implementation evaluation interviews

Dissemination

- We've presented the COMPASS framework to local, regional, and national audiences
- Version 2 of COMPASS PDF Framework is available to download from the CPWR website
- AGC featured COMPASS in their Safety Spotlight
- CIASP will feature COMPASS in their *Above and Below* podcast
- COMPASS featured in the NIOSH Science Bulletin

Download the COMPASS framework here:
cpwr.com/COMPASS



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**Reach out to us to further discuss the
COMPASS framework**

