A work culture that values mental health supports the success of all workers, including those in skilled trade and industrial jobs. Physically demanding labor, such as construction and mining, puts workers at a higher risk for both physical and mental health conditions. In fact, the construction industry has the second-highest suicide rate in the U.S. Industry leaders and employers have a responsibility to raise awareness and encourage supportive work environments that address all workers’ mental health needs.

**Workplace Mental Health Statistics:**

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov) (CDC) mental health webpage:

- **1 in 5** adults in the U.S. live with a mental illness.
- **1 in 25** adults in the U.S. live with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression.

Mental health-friendly workplace supports also benefit employers. The [American Psychiatric Association Foundation's Center for Workplace Mental Health](https://www.psych.org) notes the return on investment (ROI):

- **80%** of employees treated for mental illness report improved levels of work efficacy and satisfaction.
- When employees receive effective treatment for mental illness, results include:
  - lower total medical costs
  - increased productivity
  - lower absenteeism
  - decreased disability costs
Mental Health in Skilled Trade and Industrial Occupations:

- The suicide rate among all U.S. workers, including those in industrial and skilled trade occupations, has increased by 40% in under two decades.\textsuperscript{i}
- Construction workers are at a greater risk for drug overdose. Studies in both Massachusetts and Ohio show that they are seven times more likely to die of opioid-related overdoses than the average worker.\textsuperscript{ii}
- 47% of industrial workers—a term that includes employees in such trades as transportation services and warehousing—report being stressed at work.\textsuperscript{iii}
- 24% of industrial workers say the strain has a negative effect on their mental health, while 29% say it takes a toll on their physical health as well.\textsuperscript{iv}

A recent survey asked workers and employers in the trades, construction, manufacturing, and agriculture industries about how their mental health impacts them and their work.\textsuperscript{v} Among respondents:

- 33% reported experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress.
- 54% reported experiencing feelings of hopelessness.
- 51% reported feelings of extreme sadness.
- 48% reported feelings of worthlessness.

Understanding Stigma:

Stigma around mental illness, which exists in all communities but is more common in some populations, can be a major barrier to individuals accessing mental health services and supports.\textsuperscript{vi}

- Stigma often comes from a lack of understanding or fear of the unknown.\textsuperscript{vii}
- Eight in ten workers say shame and stigma prevent them from seeking treatment for a mental health condition.\textsuperscript{viii}
- Supporting positive mental health and reducing stigma are key to fostering a mental health-friendly workplace.
Quick tips for employers to foster a mental health-friendly workplace culture:

- **Allow** for flexibility in workplace policies and practices (e.g., expanded benefits, disclosure processes, hybrid work schedules, accommodations).
- **Ensure** that employees know how to access support and care, even if they do not wish to disclose their condition.
- **Provide** opportunities for employee input (e.g., listening sessions, employee resource groups).
- **Make** wellness a priority—if you prioritize your own self-care, others in your organization likely will too.
- **Offer** organization-wide mental health and well-being training and awareness events.

Resources to Help Support a Mental Health-Friendly Workplace

**EARN Mental Health Resources:**

- [Mental Health Toolkit](#): Explore resources for fostering a mentally healthy workplace.
- [Self-Paced Training on Creating a Mental Health-Friendly Workplace](#): Find strategies employers can use to support their employees’ mental health and well-being.
- [Mentally Healthy Workplaces Checklist](#): Implement strategies to create mentally healthy workplaces.
- [EARN Research to Practice Brief: Impact of COVID-19 on Employee Mental Health and the Experiences of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Professionals](#): Learn how employers used EAPs to support worker mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic and how these practices can be used by employers of all sizes.
- [Model Successful Programs](#): Learn more about effective workplace mental health programs.
**U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Mental Health Resources:**

- [Mental Health at Work | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov)](https://www.dol.gov): Provides resources to help employers follow the law and create workplaces that prioritize mental health.

- DOL’s Blog, “Getting the Word Out on Preventing Suicides”: This blog post raises awareness about suicide prevention in the workplace and provides resources available to support employees.

- [The Campaign for Disability Employment’s “Mental Health at Work: What Can / Do” Campaign](https://www.disabilityemployment.org/mental-health-at-work): This public education campaign explores the roles we all play in promoting workplace well-being—from company leaders and coworkers to people with mental health conditions themselves. Watch the PSA and [find resources](https://www.disabilityemployment.org/) and related campaign materials including a workplace guide and posters.

- [The Office of Disability Employment Policy's Mental Health Webpage](https://www.dol.gov/oa/med): Find information, resources, and tools to help employers, people with mental health conditions, service providers, policymakers, and others understand how to foster a mental health-friendly workplace culture.

- The Job Accommodation Network's [Publications and Articles on Workplace Mental Health](https://www.jan.wpac pooled.net/): Explore a list of publications, blog posts, and articles on the topic of workplace supports for people with mental health conditions.

- [Workplace Stress—Overview | Occupational Safety and Health Administration (osha.gov)](https://www.osha.gov): Discusses how although workplace stress can negatively affect workers through their job performance and productivity, workplaces can also be a key place for resources, solutions, and activities designed to improve mental health and well-being.

**Additional Resources:**

- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: Mental Health Resources for Underrepresented Communities](https://www.afsp.org)
- [American Psychiatric Association: Mental Health Disparities: Diverse Populations](https://www.psychiatry.org)
- [American Psychiatric Association Foundation’s Center for Workplace Mental Health](https://www.psychiatry.org)
- [W Forefront Suicide Prevention: Suicide Prevention Training for the Construction Industry](https://www.wforefront.org)
- [Central Washington University: Best-Practices Guide for Mental Health Intervention in Construction (PDF)](https://www.cwu.edu)
- [The Center for Construction Research and Training: Handouts, Planning Tools, and Training Programs for Mental Health & Addiction](https://www.cctr.org)
- [The Center for Construction Research and Training: Mental Health and Addiction, Suicide Prevention Resources](https://www.cctr.org)
- [North America’s Building Trades Unions Opioid Task Force](https://www.nabtu.org)
- [NAMI: StigmaFree Company](https://www.nami.org)
- [Southern Careers Institute: How to Support Mental Health While Working in a Skilled Trade](https://www.southern.edu)
- [Thomas: Improving Mental Health in the Industrial Workplace](https://www.thomasnet.com)
- [American Psychiatric Association Foundation, Construction Financial Management Association, CSDZ, and Holmes Murphy's 2021 Pulse Survey Results and Report: Mental Health and Well-being in the Construction Industry](https://www.afsp.org)
Endnotes

i https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6903a1.htm
ii https://www.cpwr.com/research/research-to-practice-r2p/r2p-library/other-resources-for-stakeholders/mental-health-addiction/opioid-resources/
vi https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/stigma-and-discrimination
vii https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/stigma-and-discrimination
viii https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Pledge-to-Be-StigmaFree/StigmaFree-Company

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