

# **THINK SAFETY**



## **IBEW L.U.613 HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE NEWS LETTER**

Hope everyone is having a safe and happy New Year! You are receiving the first IBEW LU 613 safety newsletter "Think Safety". The Health & Safety committee hopes this will begin real discussion as well as give you helpful information on safe work practices and attitudes in the construction industry, specifically our trade.

We also would like to make this communication as interactive as we possibly can. Please if you have any questions, concerns or comments, do not hesitate to email Mike Bell at [mikebell@ibew613.org](mailto:mikebell@ibew613.org).

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## **SUICIDE PREVENTION**

Many of us have experienced relationships where both drug abuse and suicide occurred. Today, more than ever, opioid addiction is at an all-time high.

No other industry has been hit harder with this epidemic than the construction industry. More often than not each of us have been effected by this and its unfortunate effects.

Knowing the causes and environment that foster Suicide is the first step in prevention. Just like understanding hazards on the job, educating ourselves to the signs and symptoms will go a long way to possibly saving someone's life or even our own.

At the 2017 IBEW Fall Safety Caucus, it was reported that 6 out of 10 IBEW members have had some form of addiction. 1 out of 5 IBEW members will attempt suicide. Approximately 150,000 IBEW members will be effected by mental health issues.

These numbers are staggering.

## CLOSER LOOK

To understand why this issue hits close to home for our organization, one must take a closer look to the cause and effect.

Work place injuries do happen. Our industry is dangerous, point blank. Not only do we face system hazards on the job, the job itself is physical. Over time our bodies break down. When injuries occur many physicians compare muscle and bone injuries to that of a professional athlete. Often times we work through the pain and do not receive the proper preventative treatment for an issue with our body.

Once our pain reaches the level to where we cannot perform our job duties, then is when we seek medical attention. This often times after injury has become so bad that surgery is necessary and sometime permanent damage has been done. It is then that physicians prescribe the medications that contain opioids. The injured Brother / Sister will take the medication as prescribed, but what happens when treatment is over. Unfortunately, we can become addicted to the very medication we are prescribed legally.

This story happens times and time again. What happens next can be tragic IF we do not get help. Addiction leads to so many challenges from family and financial problems to mental health issues that can lead to suicide. Too many times these stories end with someone taking his/her own life. We must be tough enough to talk about our issues.

## THERE IS HOPE

The Good News is this does not have to be **OUR STORY!!** There is help. By educating ourselves on safe work practices, healthy living and preventative care, we can stop the cycle.

Your Local Union is here for you. We have resources that will keep you anonymous and direct you to the help you need. Counseling Resources are also available for helping your family and Brothers/Sisters. Just like any illness or injury, you will get the treatment to get better. Mental illness is no different. Our lives are important and worth something. There is no shame in getting the help and care we need.

How do you remember the Warning Signs of Suicide? Here's an Easy-to-Remember Mnemonic:

## ***IS PATH WARM?***

I - Ideation

S - Substance Abuse

P - Purposelessness

A - Anxiety

T - Trapped

H - Hopelessness

W - Withdrawal

A - Anger

R - Recklessness

M - Mood Change

A person in acute risk for suicidal behavior most often will show: Warning Signs of Acute Risk: • Threatening to hurt or kill him or herself, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill him/herself; and/or, • Looking for ways to kill him/herself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means; and/or, • Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary. These might be remembered as expressed or communicated **IDEATION**. If observed, seek help as soon as possible by contacting a mental health professional or calling 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for a referral.

Additional Warning Signs: Increased **SUBSTANCE** (alcohol or drug) use No reason for living; no sense of **PURPOSE** in life **ANXIETY**, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time Feeling **TRAPPED** - like there's no way out **HOPELESSNESS WITHDRAWING** from friends, family and society Rage, uncontrolled **ANGER**, seeking revenge Acting **RECKLESS** or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking Dramatic **MOOD** changes If observed, seek help as soon as possible by contacting a mental health professional or calling

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)** for a referral.

**These warning signs were compiled by a task force of expert clinical-researchers and 'translated' for the general public.**

**NATIONAL**

**SUICIDE**  
**PREVENTION**  
**LIFELINE**<sup>TM</sup>

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)



**CCI**

**EMPLOYEE HELPLINE**

**Atlanta 770-516-0941**

**Outside Atlanta 800-516-0941**