



# Building Up Mental Health in the Construction Industry

Lea Rummel, Electrical Estimator



# Agenda

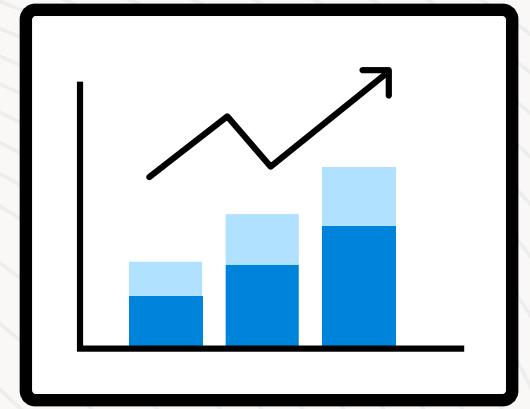
- 1. The State of Mental Health in Construction**
- 2. The Power of Story Telling**
- 3. Organizational Recommendations for Building a Culture that is Supportive of Mental Health**

# Things to Keep in Mind Today

- 1. I am not a mental health care professional! I am here to be a resource & advocate for you, and to help improve our industry.**
- 2. Some topics may be difficult. Pause, or step away if you need to.**
- 3. It is not our job to diagnose anyone. Never attempt to do so.**

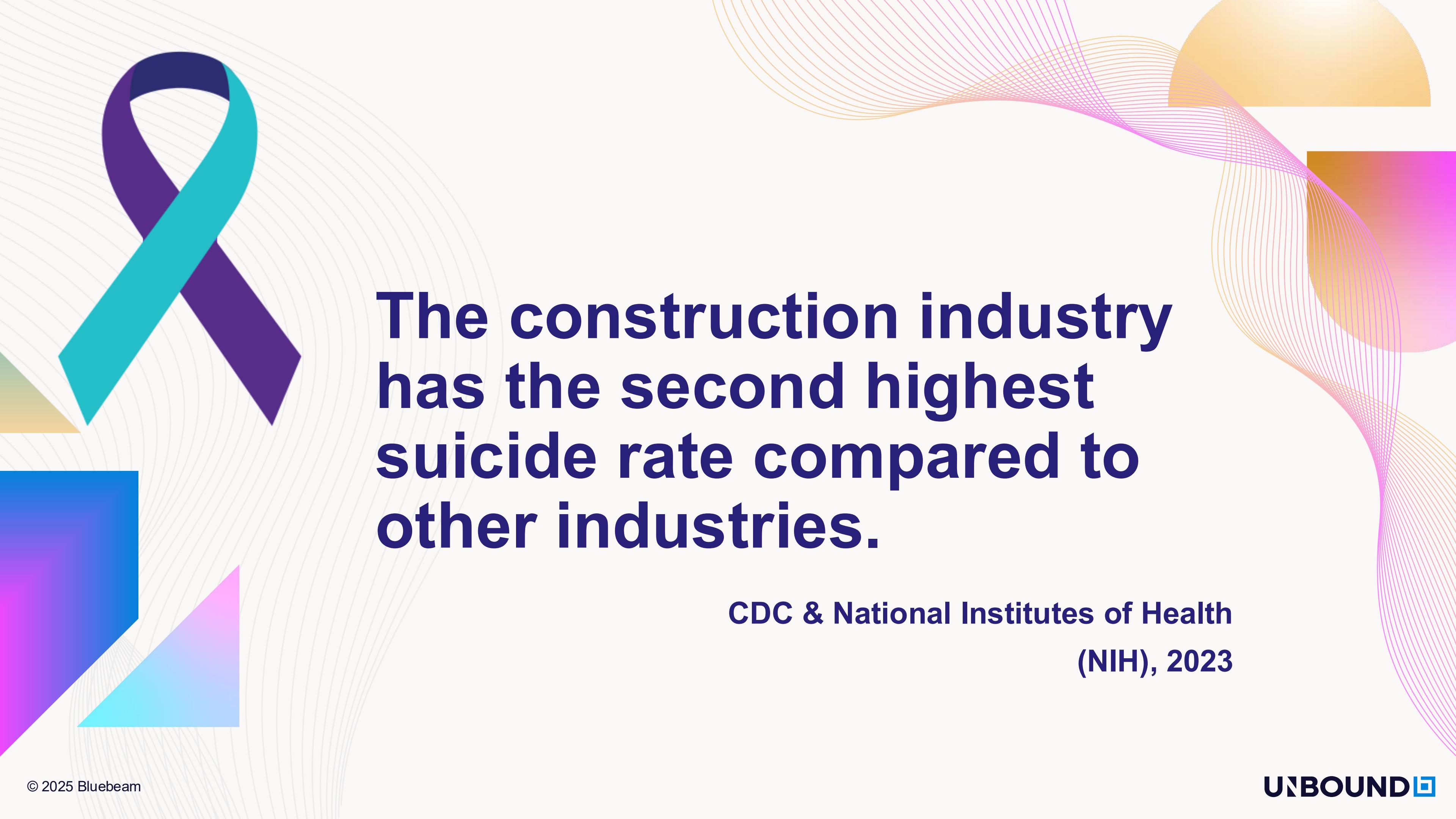
# The State of Mental Health in Construction





**Overall suicide rates increased  
by 36% from 2000 to 2022.**

**U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
(CDC)**



**The construction industry  
has the second highest  
suicide rate compared to  
other industries.**

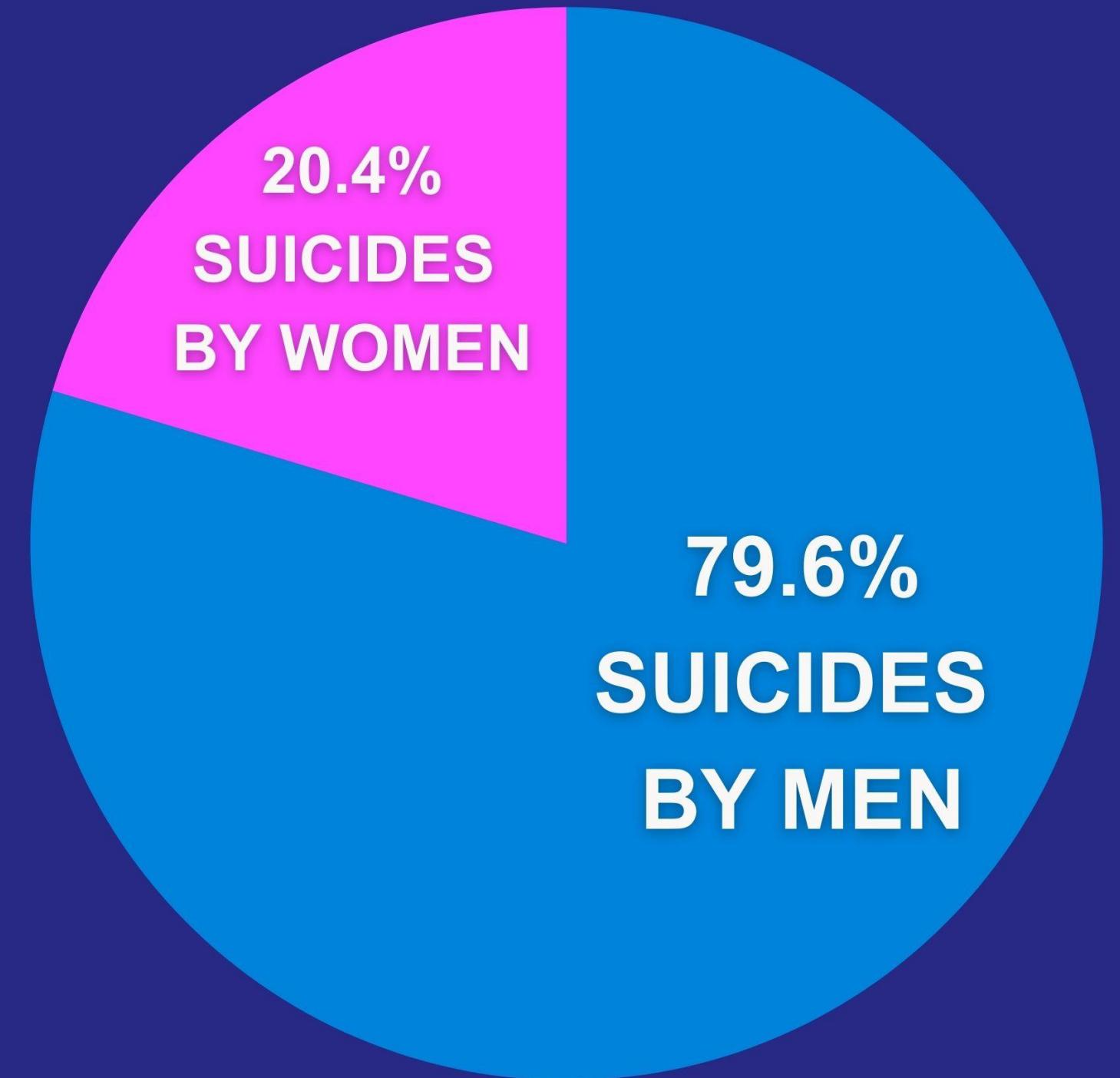
**CDC & National Institutes of Health  
(NIH), 2023**

# MASCULINITY & MENTAL HEALTH

**Women are more likely to experience mental illness than men.**

**But men are almost 4 times as likely to die by suicide than women.**

**Men are less likely to seek help for mental health challenges or mental illnesses.**



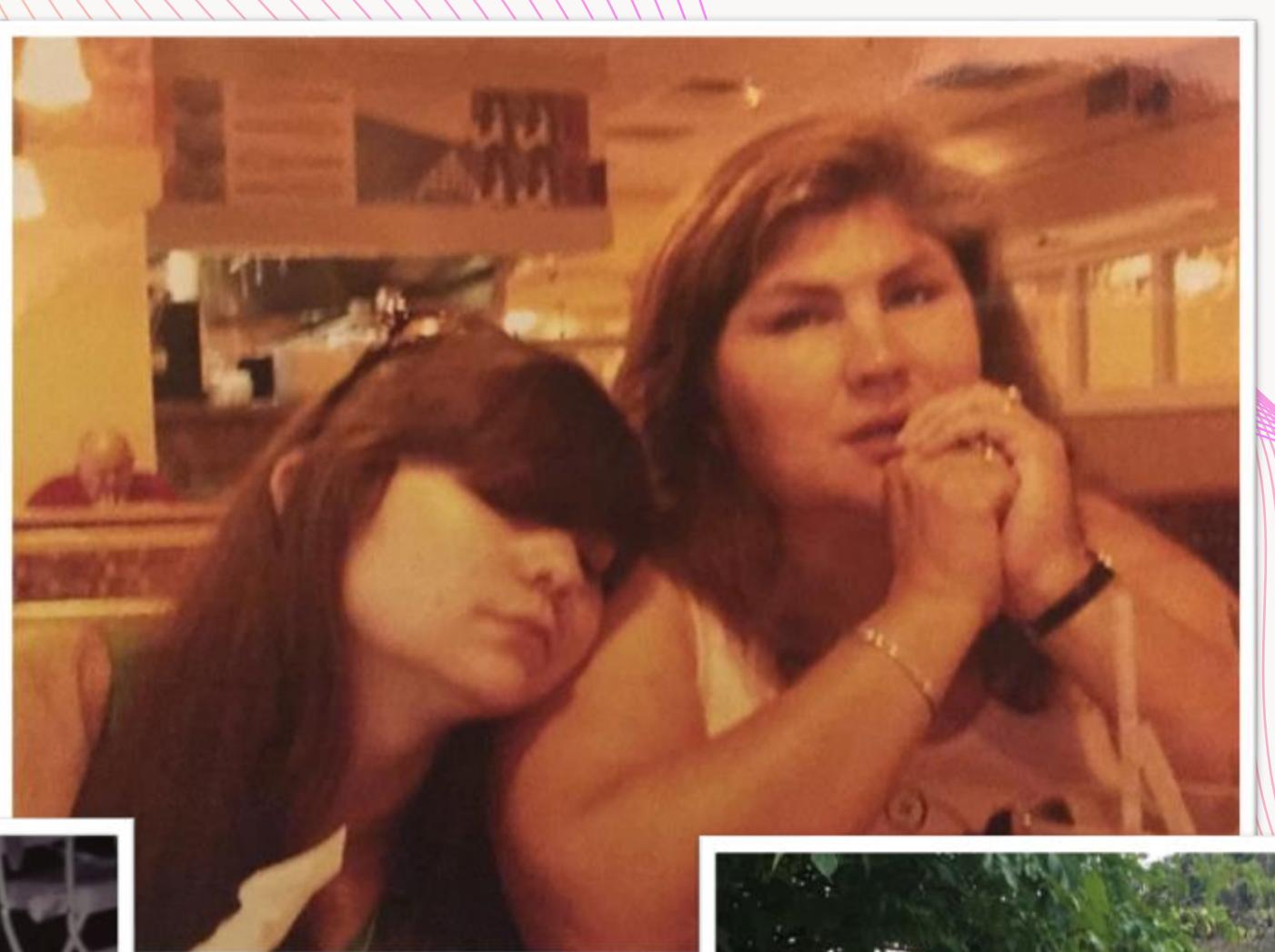
# OSHA'S Fatal/Focus Four Hazards

5 times as many construction workers die by suicide each year, than all of OSHA's Fatal 4 combined.



# The Power of Storytelling



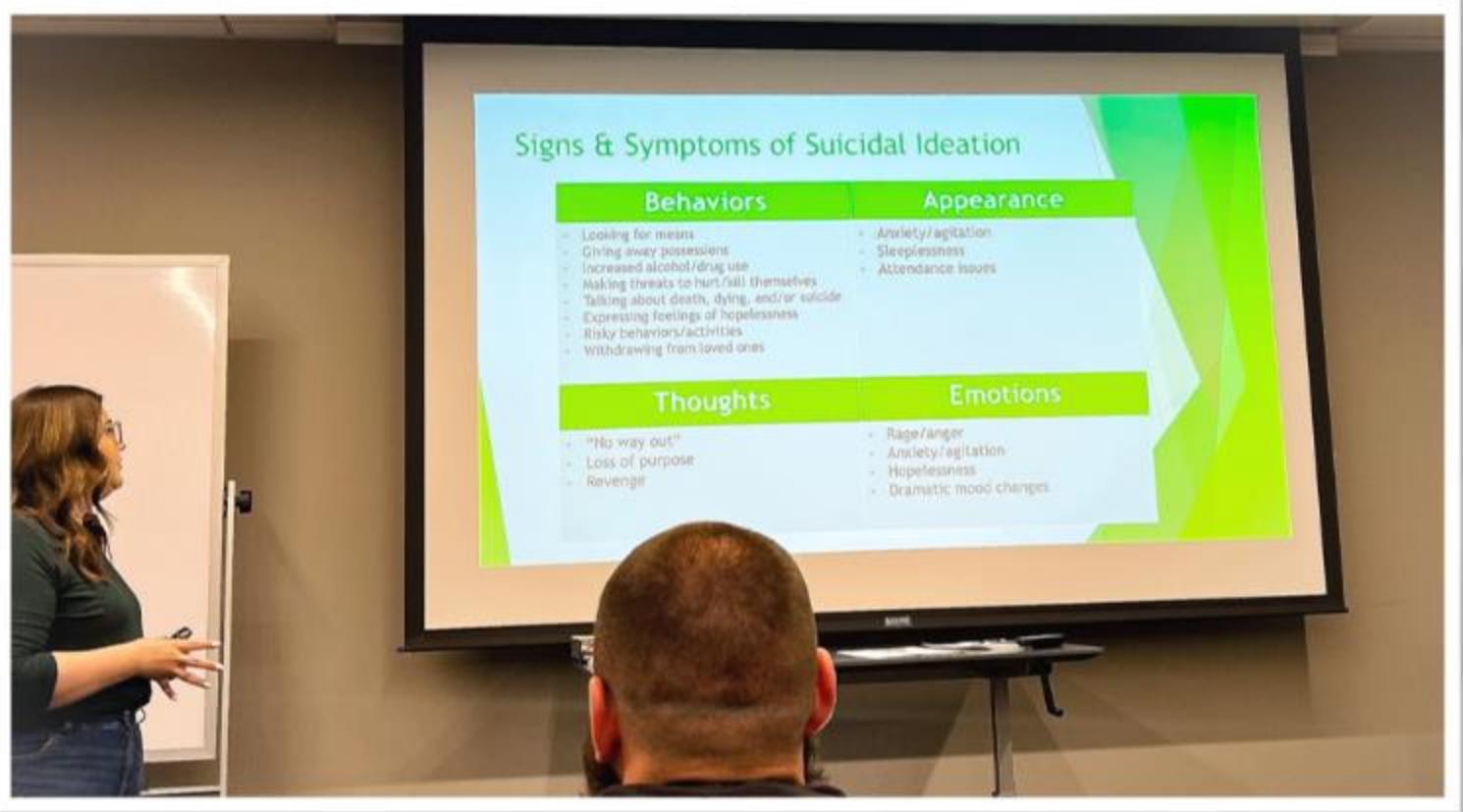


“ The only cure for grief is action.

Philosopher George Henry Lewes

England, 1846





Northern California Chapter  
National Electrical Contractors Association

# LEVEL UP FOREMAN'S DEVELOPMENT SERIES





# **Building a Culture that is Supportive of Mental Health:**

**Organizational  
Ideas/Recommendations**



# What prevents people from getting mental health support?

## Main Barriers

### Lack of Knowledge/Access

- Don't know where to start
- Difficult to find/navigate
- Don't know what benefits & resources are already available to them
- Don't know they even need or could benefit from mental health support

### Lack of Resources

- Cost
- Not enough time

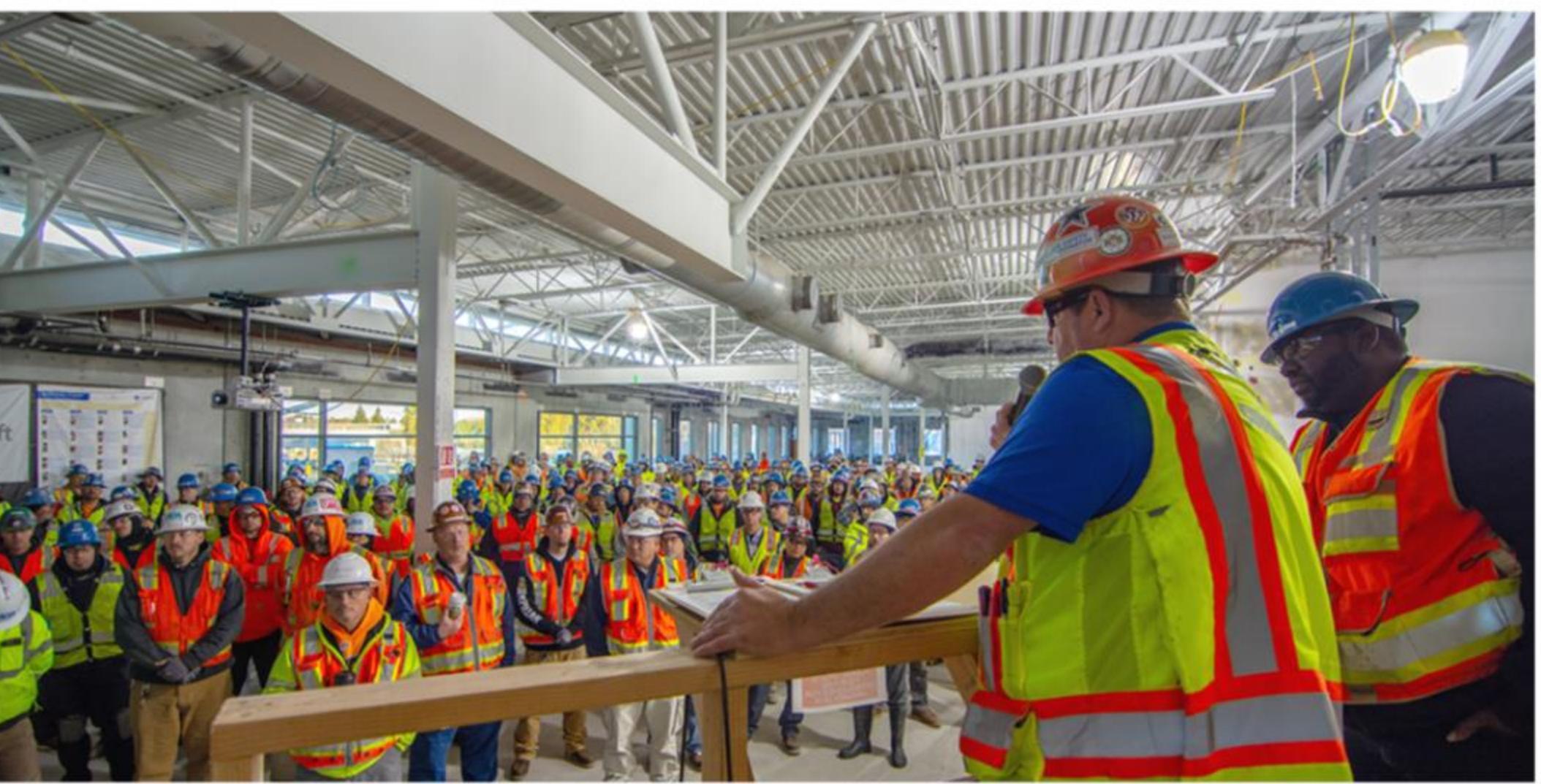
### Stigma

- Feel embarrassed or uncomfortable about seeking help
- Toxic masculinity
- Culture



# Leadership

- Buy-in from leadership & executives
- Verbal/visible support, and often
- Normalize talking about it
- Train leaders to have conversations around mental health
- Prioritize the employees in the field; do not neglect them
- Initiatives can be started by ANYONE within the organization, regardless of title



# Company Mental Health Resources

## Visible & Accessible

- **Centralized hub for mental health resources**
- **Includes employee benefits (i.e. EAP, Health Insurance Mental Health benefits, etc.)**
- **Includes crisis support information (e.g. 988)**
- **Easily accessible by all employees**
- **Ability to access in private**
- **Remind employees OFTEN where resources are available**

SharePoint  Search

INSIDE RS

R&S LIFE EMPLOYEE RESOURCES PROJECT RESOURCES DEPARTMENTS FORMS EXTERNAL SITES Edit Not following Site access

Mental Health Resources

## TOOLS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

# BUILD YOURSELF UP

Our Mental Health Resources

R&S is committed to fostering a culture that is supportive of the mental health and wellbeing of our team members, as the construction industry faces unique challenges regarding mental health. The CDC issued a 2023 report on rates of suicides by industry and reported that construction remains the second highest across all industries.

We prioritize physical health & safety in construction, and we must extend that to include mental health & safety. There remains some stigma surrounding the topic of mental health; we must rise to meet this challenge through education, resources, and a willingness to engage in conversations to find meaningful solutions for both our field and office team members.

On this resource page you can find crisis support, mental health benefits and support, and educational resources. If you think of a resource that would be helpful to add, please contact the Mental Health Awareness Committee at [rswellness@rsconst.com](mailto:rswellness@rsconst.com).

**In This Section**

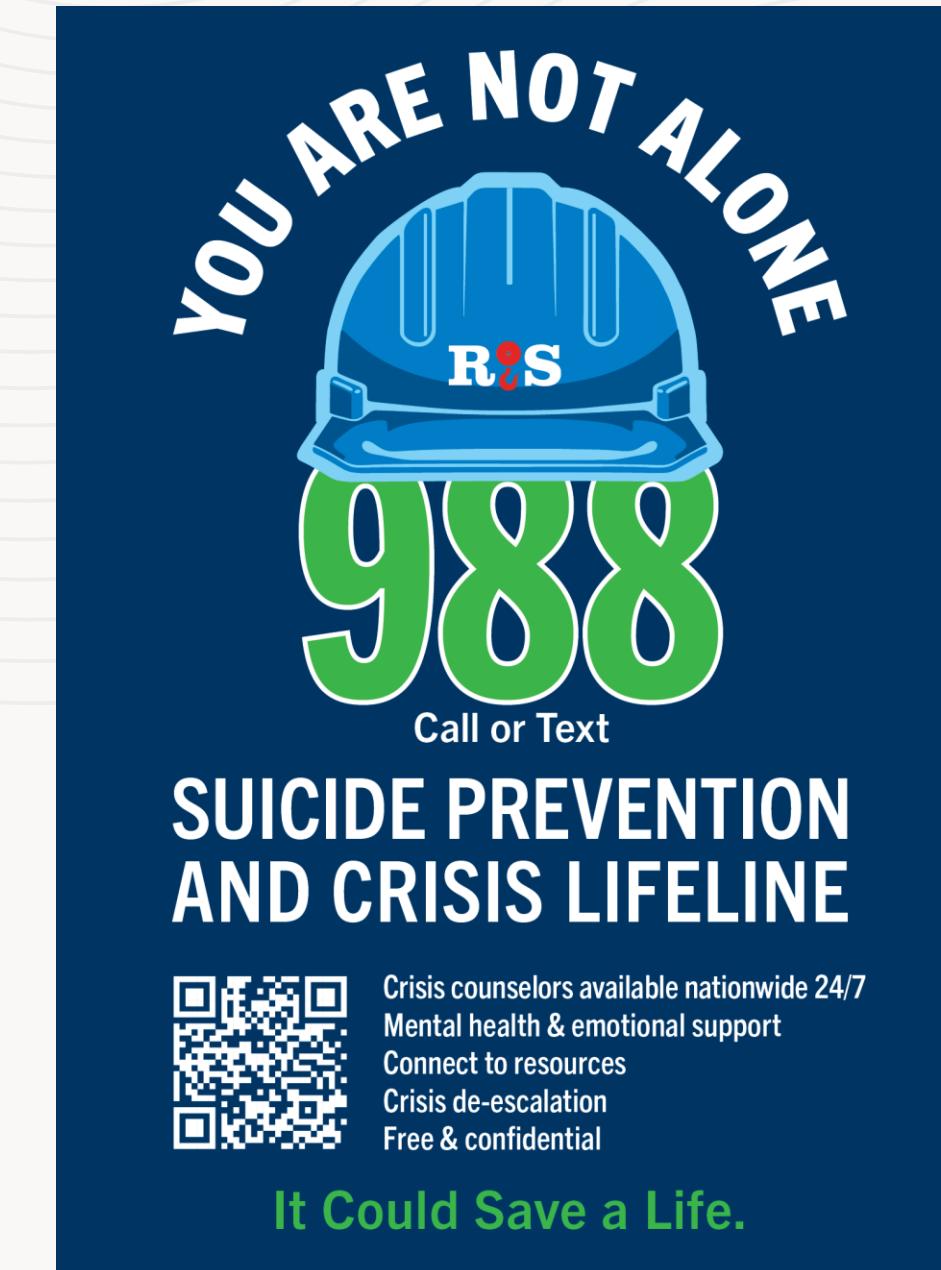
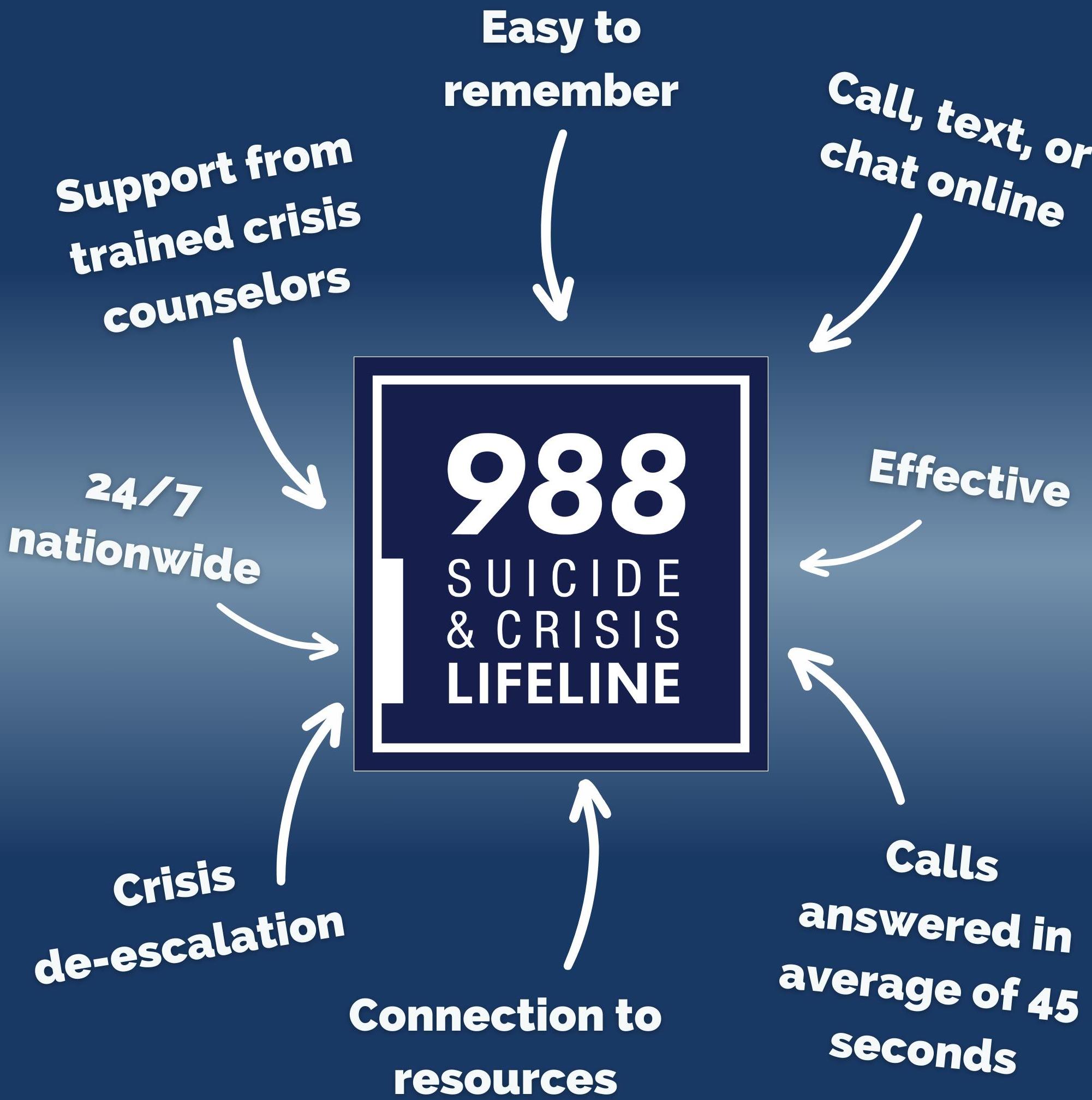
- [Crisis Support](#)
- [Benefits and Support](#)
- [Education and Tools](#)



YOU ARE NOT ALONE  
988  
Call or Text  
SUICIDE PREVENTION AND CRISIS LIFELINE

# National Stand-Down for Construction Suicide Prevention Week







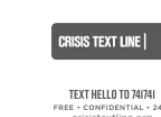
Talking about mental health and suicide can feel awkward and uncomfortable. The stigma that surrounds these topics can make us embarrassed to bring them up and sometimes what happens is we use inappropriate phrases and language to address them. The problem with this is that it increases the stigma around mental health and suicide and can make it harder for someone in need of help to ask for it.

We have the power to eliminate the stigma and make these conversations easier by adopting proper language and increasing our mental health literacy. Don't feel bad if you don't know how to properly talk about these things – most people do! But you can make the choice to change your language so that you can help others.

If we think about mental illness like any other physical illness it helps to reframe our thinking and language. We don't say somebody "is cancer" so we shouldn't say that about mental illness either. Swap out "is" for "is experiencing anxiety" or "has depression". When we say they "are depressed" it labels the whole person as the disorder and it becomes their identity – as opposed to addressing it as a health issue.

Similarly, our language around suicide can be changed to help not only those at risk, but those who may have attempted or lost someone have more dignity as well. "Committed suicide" is the common phrase we hear but "commit" implies a crime or a sin. Suicide is a death caused by the disease of mental illness, addiction, or despair. Saying "died by suicide" is a much more respectful term to use.

The most important thing is to think about what you are saying and whether it will make you seem approachable for someone who is experiencing mental illness or suicidal thoughts to talk to. Avoid using words like crazy, psycho, schizo or wacko as descriptions for anyone – even if they aren't experiencing mental illness, using those words increases the negative stigma around mental health and makes it harder for those in need to speak up.



## ARTICLES

- Workplace Stress: Make Work Better - Mental Health Matters (OSHA)
- 'Be Willing to Listen': Experts discuss suicide prevention in construction
- Why Does Mental Health Matter in Construction?
- Mental Health Programs Supporting the Construction Industry
- 10 Action Steps Companies Can Take to Save Lives

## BLOGS & NEWSLETTERS

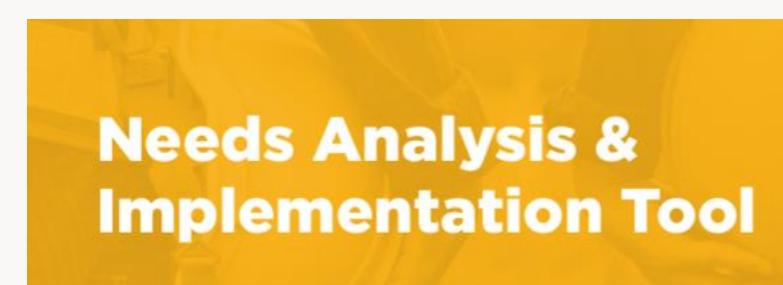
- The Invisible Construction Crisis Removing Our Emotional Masks - CSDZ
- Mental Wellbeing Becoming Increasingly Important for Construction Workers - National Association of Home Builders
- The Invisible Construction Crisis: Pledge to STAND-Up for Suicide Prevention - CSDZ
- The Invisible Construction Crisis: Why Focus on Construction Workforce Risk? - CSDZ
- Breaking the Mental Health Stigma - CSDZ

## PODCASTS

- Dig This! Podcast featuring CIASP Executive Director, Sonya Bohmann - NUCA
- Chat with the Chairman, featuring CIASP Executive Director, Sonya Bohmann - CFMA
- The Construction Industry Confronts Its Biggest Challenge - Preventing Suicide - LiveSafe Prevention
- Shining a Light on Mental Health in Construction - Coatings Pro Magazine
- ABC's Greg Sizemore Talks About the Need to Address Suicide in Construction - Digging Deeper Podcast

## VIDEOS/WEBINARS

- Start the Conversation: OSHA Safe and Sound Week, featuring CIASP Executive Director, Sonya Bohmann - NUCA
- NY Building Trades Employer's Association Mental Health Video
- Suicide Prevention Program Building Awareness in Construction - ForConstructionPros.com
- Uniting the Construction Industry Behind Suicide Prevention





**American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention**

# HARD HAT COURAGE

CONFRONTING SUICIDE *in*  
*the* CONSTRUCTION COMMUNITY



## TALK SAVES LIVES: CONSTRUCTION



An Introduction to Suicide Prevention  
in the Construction Industry

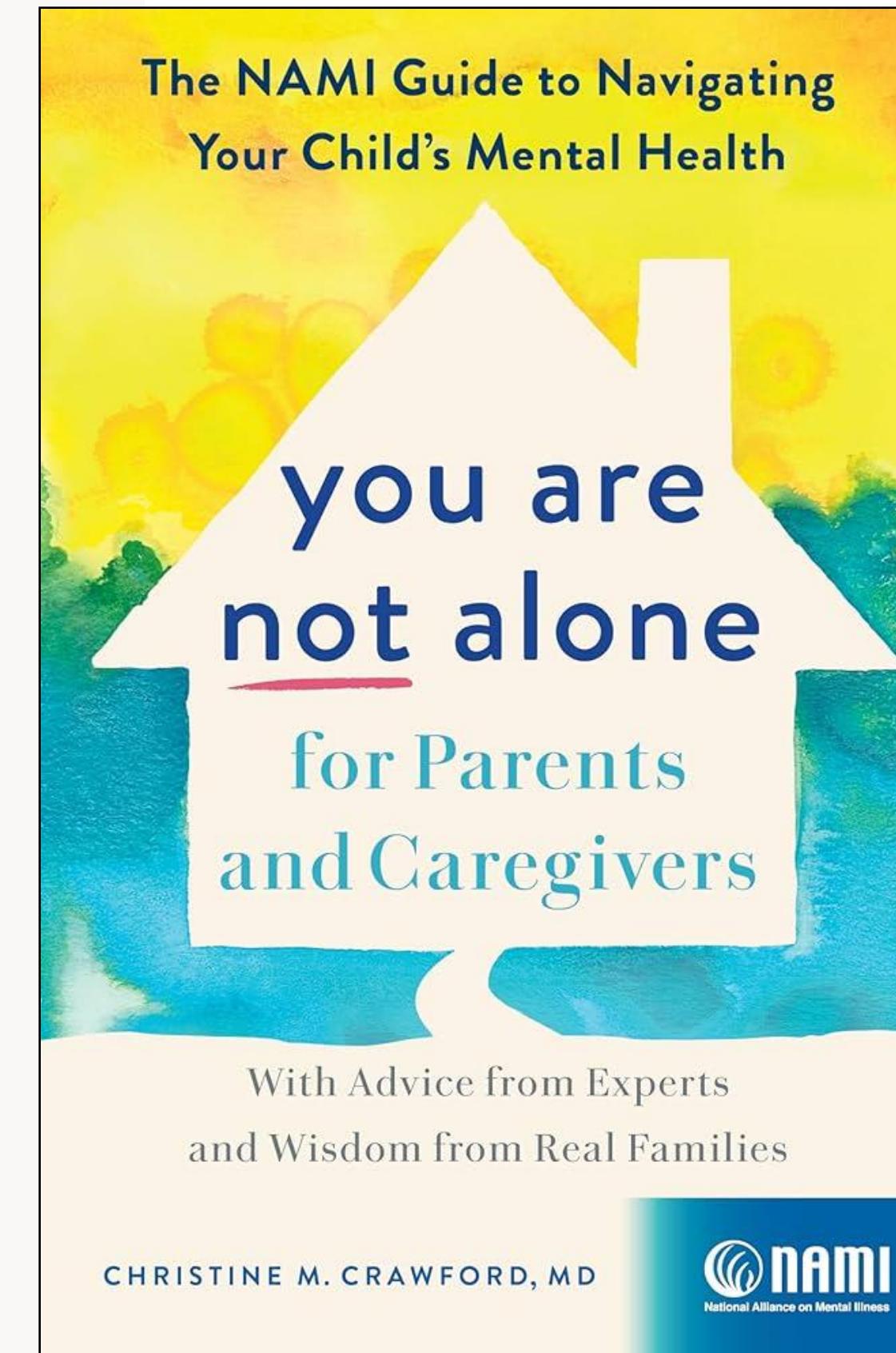
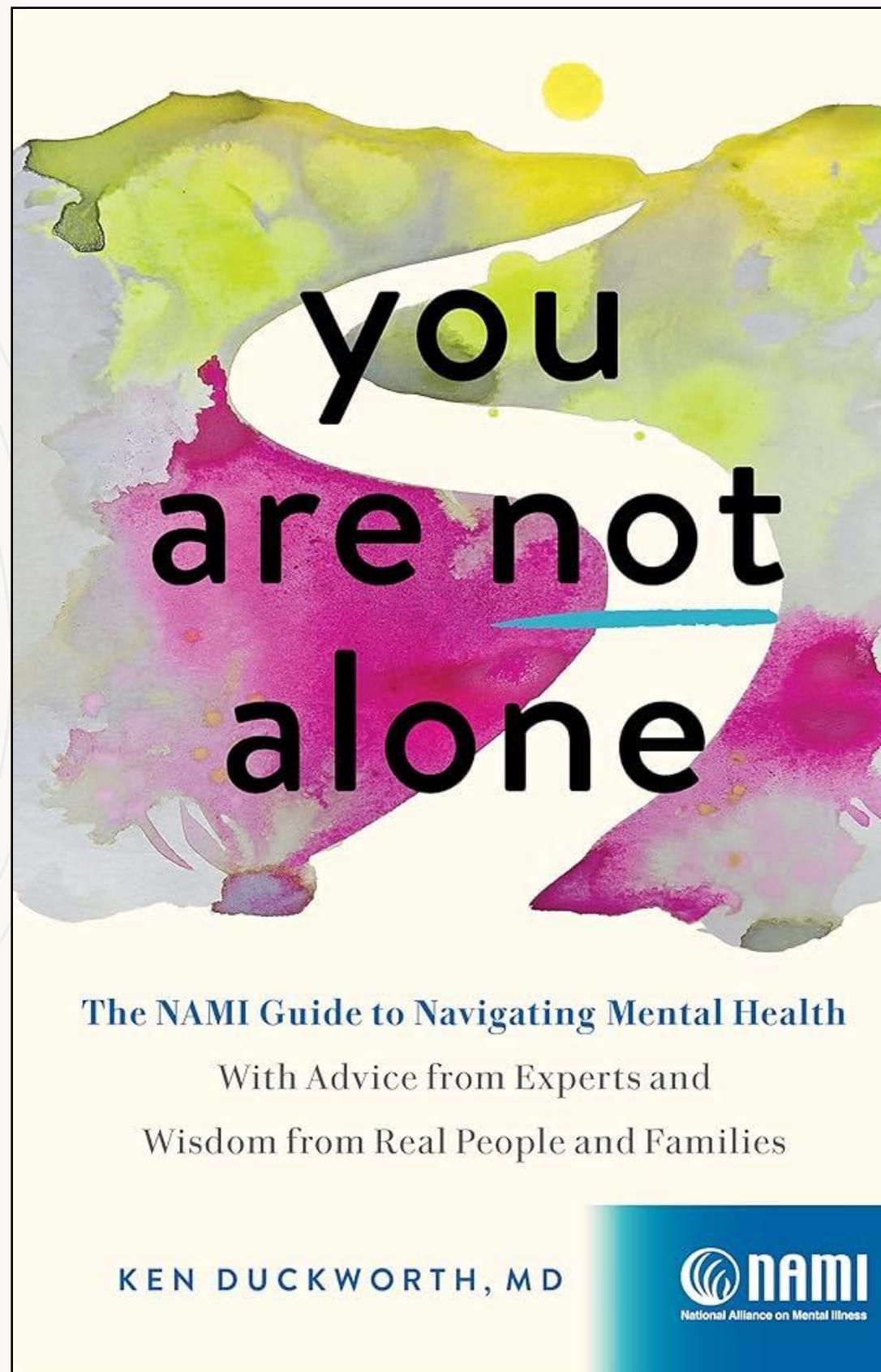


**HARD HAT  
COURAGE**



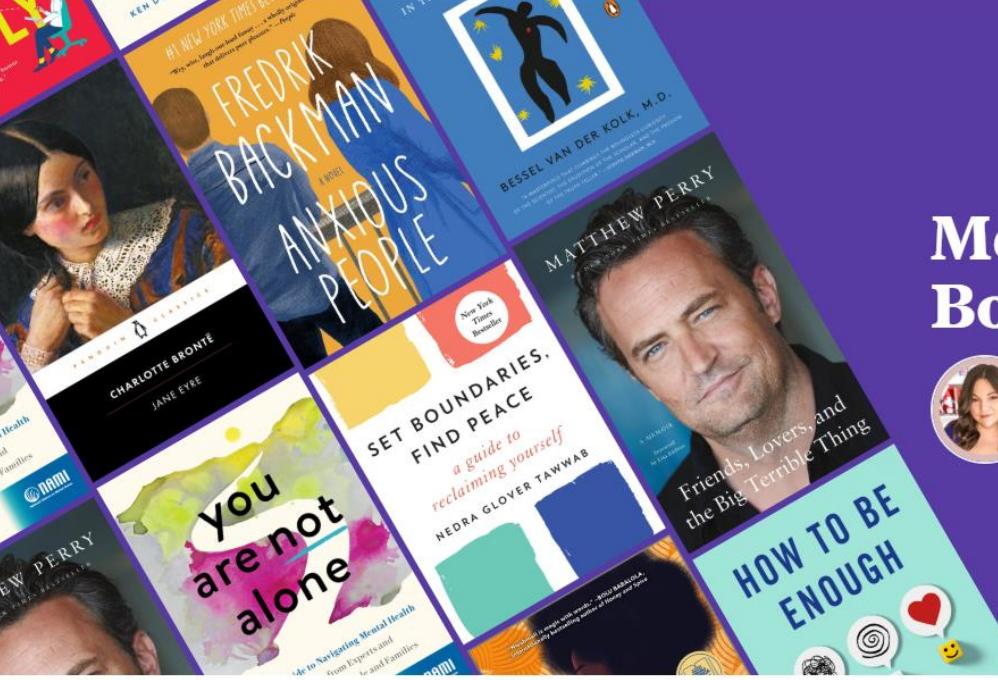
American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention

# Book Recommendations



# More Book Recommendations

**\$40,834,405.62** Raised For Local Bookstores i

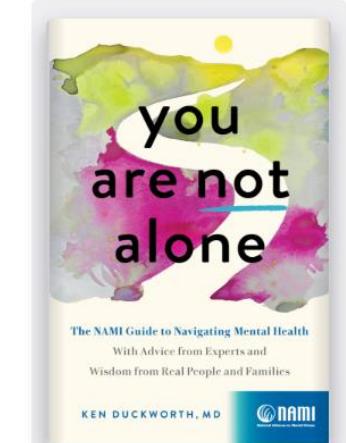


**Mental Health Awareness Books**

By Lea - LifeMeetsLiterature

[EDIT THIS LIST](#)

Join us as we call attention to the importance of mental health and wellness.



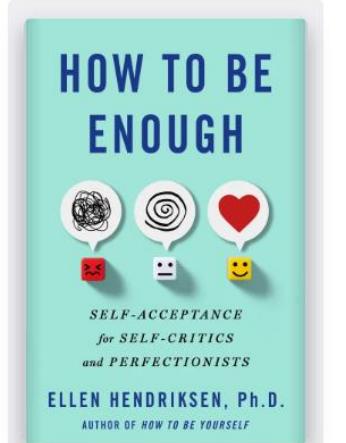
## You Are Not Alone

Ken Duckworth



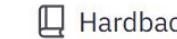
\$28.95

\$26.92



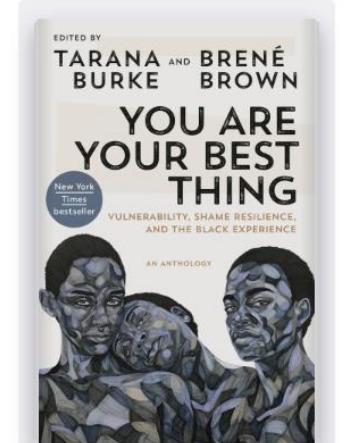
## How to Be Enough

Ellen Hendriksen



\$30.00

\$27.90



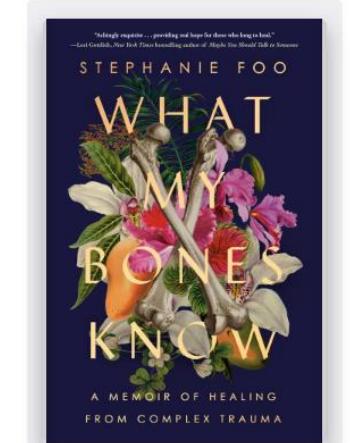
## You Are Your Best Thing

Brené Brown, Tarana Burke



\$17.00

\$15.81



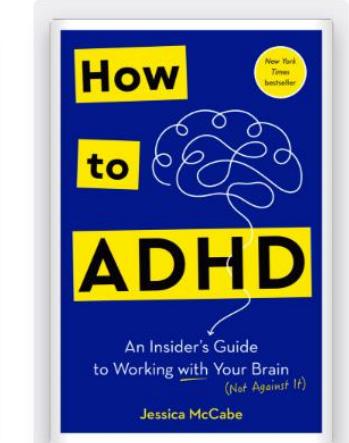
## What My Bones Know

Stephanie Foo



\$21.00

\$19.53



## How to ADHD

Jessica McCabe



\$28.00

\$26.04



# Q&A

# Thank you!



Contact Me!



[LinkedIn](#)



**Lea Rummel**  
Project Electrical Estimator  
LEA.RUMMEL@RSConst.com  
(916) 918-7205