



Suicide Awareness & Prevention In The Workplace



**NIEHS WTP COVID-19 Spring Series
April 8, 2021**



What is the United Association (UA)?

- ★ The United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices Of The Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry Of The United States And Canada was founded in 1889 and has grown to a powerful, international union representing over 370,000 members in more than 300 local unions throughout the United States and Canada, as well as our affiliates in Australia and Ireland.
- ★ The UA established the first nationally recognized, joint apprenticeship program in 1936, run by local training committees, directed by the International Training Fund.



- ★ The UA invests over \$250M per year in training, certification, and skill progression.
- ★ The UA established the first Active-Duty Transition Training Program in 2008.



United Association Veterans In Piping®

VIP prepares active duty transitioning service members for apprenticeship with the United Association. The UA VIP Program offers 18 weeks of accelerated training in one of three available disciplines: welding, HVAC/R and sprinkler fitting.

- ★ Started in 2008 with the Washington State National Guard at Camp Murray.
- ★ The Veteran Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act, November 2011, allowed participation in apprenticeship programs for transitioning service members.
- ★ Since 2008, the United Association has trained over 2,500 veterans.





COVID-19 Mitigation

- ★ Pandemic forced a pause to hands-on training.
- ★ Formulated re-opening plans with military partners.
- ★ Modified training to provide 4-weeks virtual training followed by 14-weeks hands on training.
- ★ Class sizes reduced to 50%.
- ★ COVID signage posted throughout training sites.
- ★ Student screening is performed prior to entering the building at the start of each day.
- ★ PPE (i.e. Masks, gloves, sanitizer, etc.) is issued at the start of each class.





Suicide is a Health & Safety Priority

According to the Centers for Disease Prevention, [construction occupations have the highest rate of suicide](#), as well as the highest number of suicides across all occupational groups.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death overall in the United States, claiming 48,344 lives.
- ▶ Suicide is the second leading cause of death between the ages of 10-34. Unintentional injury is number one.
- ▶ Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death between the ages of 35-54.
- ▶ There were more than two and half times as many suicides in the United States (48,344) as there were homicides (18,830).
- ▶ It is estimated that 1.38 million people attempted suicide in 2019.

Do you believe suicide is preventable?

UAVIP.ORG



VIP Culture Change

- ▶ Create safe and caring cultures where all feel secure asking for help for themselves and others.
- ▶ Remove the stigma! Normalize the conversation of mental health & suicide.
- ▶ Raise awareness with mental wellness signage in work areas.
- ▶ Proactively address mental health and ensure behaviors such as bullying, retaliation and harassment are not tolerated.
- ▶ On-going mentorship among employees, administrators and local union members.
- ▶ Promote & raise awareness of local resources.
- ▶ UA Training Coordinators Conference

Everyone has been touched by suicide in some way...



Boone Cole
2015 Camp Lejeune UA VIP Graduate



Working Minds was developed to address a gap in suicide prevention programming for those of working age. The toolkit was built on best practices and the insights of mental health service providers, human resource professionals, and top suicide prevention experts from across the country.

Program Objectives

At the end of training, Working Minds participants will have:

- ▶ Increased awareness of suicide prevention.
- ▶ Increased capacity for dialogue and critical thinking about workplace mental health challenges.
- ▶ Increased ability to promote help-seeking and help-giving in the workplace.

<https://www.coloradodepressioncenter.org/workingminds/>

UAVIP.ORG



Start the Conversation

What to say if you are worried about someone:

- ▶ I've noticed _____ (list specific behaviors), and I am concerned.
- ▶ Are you thinking of suicide?
- ▶ Thank you for telling me. You are not alone.
- ▶ I'm here to support you and I have some ideas that might help.





National Resources



American Association of Suicidology (www.suicidology.org)

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (www.AFSP.org)

Center for Workplace Mental Health (www.workplacementalhealth.org)



<https://www.sallyspencerthomas.com/>

<https://mantherapy.org/>

UAVIP.ORG



**Please feel free to
contact:**

Mike Hazard

VIP Program Manager

Mikeh@uanet.org

(310) 720-5228

UAVIP.ORG