

# Building Hope: Substance Use in the Trades

## 🗣️ Video Introduction

Hi everyone, today we are going to watch an important video called *Building Hope: Substance Use in the Trades*. This video highlights the real challenges workers in the trades face when it comes to mental health and substance use. It also shows how support from coworkers and speaking up when we see someone struggling can make a big difference.

In trade industries, we look out for each other's physical safety every day—whether it's making sure a harness is secured or pointing out a trip and road hazard. But safety isn't just about the tools we use; it's also about taking care of each other's well-being. That's what the IHSA's *Keep Your Promise: If you see something, say something* message is all about. If you notice a coworker struggling, don't stay silent. A simple conversation could save a life.

**Trigger Warning (to be read out loud):** The aim of this conversation is to learn and share our experiences and thoughts with honesty. Because of this, some comments may trigger a negative reaction. If a comment or topic starts to upset you, I advise that you please talk to your support team. That could include your supervisor, union representative, HR personnel, Employee and Family Assistance Program provider (*if you have one*), friends, family, or a close colleague.

Remember: If you are in distress, you can call or text **9-8-8** anytime. Call 9-1-1 or go to your local emergency department if it is an emergency.

Let's watch the video and then have a quick discussion about what we saw.

**Video Link:** Building Hope Trades: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BFiCM1Qlmk>



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## 🗣️ Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you in the video? Was there anything that surprised you or felt familiar?
2. Have you seen or experienced challenges like the ones in the video?
3. How can we apply the *Keep Your Promise* message in our daily work to look out for each other?

 **Speaker Notes**

- **Keep it real:** This is an important but tough topic. Make it a conversation, not a lecture.
- **Encourage participation:** If workers don't feel comfortable speaking up, that's okay. You can share examples or ask general questions like, "Have you ever seen someone struggling and not know what to do?"
- **Emphasize peer support:** Remind everyone that they don't have to have all the answers—just being there for a coworker and pointing them to resources can make a big difference.
- **Connect to safety culture:** Mental health and substance use are just as much a safety issue as fall protection or PPE. We look out for each other in all ways.

Keep your Promise: <https://www.ihsa.ca/keepyourpromise>

# Handout: Building Hope (Substance Use in the Trades)

## LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER ON THE JOB

Working in the trades can be tough, both physically and mentally. Stress, injuries, and long hours can take a toll. Sometimes, our coworkers struggle with mental health or substance use, but they don't have to face it alone. Looking out for each other is part of staying safe on the job.

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### Signs a Coworker Might Be Struggling

- ✔ Showing up late or missing work more often
- ✔ Mood changes (irritability, sadness, withdrawal)
- ✔ Increased risk-taking or careless mistakes
- ✔ Talking about feeling overwhelmed or hopeless
- ✔ Using substances more frequently or in risky ways





If you see any of these signs, don't ignore them. Trust your gut and reach out.

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### What You Can Do

-  **Check In** – Ask, “Hey, you doing okay?” Sometimes, just knowing someone cares makes a difference.
  -  **Listen Without Judgment** – You don't have to fix the problem, just listen and show support.
  -  **Encourage Help** – Suggest they talk to someone, whether it's a friend, supervisor, or support service.
  -  **Know It's a Safety Issue** – If someone's struggling with a substance use disorder, it can affect their safety and the safety of others.
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### Where to Find Support

-  **Company Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** – Free, confidential support for workers and families. (ask your union or employer about if available)
  -  **Community Mental Health & Addiction Services** – Find local help ([www.connexontario.ca](http://www.connexontario.ca))
  -  **IHSA Mental Health Resources** – Information on keeping yourself and coworkers safe. ([www.ihsa/workplacementalhealth](http://www.ihsa/workplacementalhealth))
  -  **Peer Support Networks** – Talking to someone who's been there can make a difference. Check out what is available in your community.
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**Keep Your Promise** We don't ignore physical hazards, like unsafe equipment, so let's not ignore when a coworker is struggling. **If You See Something, Say Something. You Could Make All the Difference.**