

Help a Buddy Unmask – It Could Save a Life

🗣️ Video Introduction

Today we're going to watch a short video about spotting the signs of declining mental health in a colleague. This video isn't about PPE for your face. It's about how some people "mask" how they're really feeling. They might look okay on the outside, but inside, they're struggling. In the trades, we're tough. But being tough doesn't mean ignoring problems or hiding pain. Yet, it does mean watching out for each other.

As part of IHSA's Keep Your Promise campaign, remember this: If you see something, say something. You could make all the difference.

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.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REm7Hp6wc0c>



🗣️ Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. Why do you think people "mask" what they're going through?
3. What are some things you can say or do if you notice someone might be struggling?

Speaker Notes

- Let workers speak freely—look for mentions of how people can look fine but still be struggling.
- Remind the group that noticing changes and reaching out is part of looking after each other and can save a life.
- Guide the discussion toward stigma, fear of judgment, or feeling like they have to “tough it out.”
- Focus on simple, everyday actions: asking “How are you really doing?”, checking in, or connecting them with a peer support person.

Keep Your Promise: If You See Something, Say Something. You could make all the difference.

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

Handout: Help a Buddy Unmask – It Could Save a Life

Masking: What You Don't See Could Hurt Someone

In the video, we learn that people often hide pain behind a smile. In the trades, we're trained to push through. But pain—especially mental health struggles—doesn't just go away. It builds up.

Look Out for These Signs in those you feel might be struggling:

- ✔ Changes in mood or attitude
- ✔ Not showing up or being late more often
- ✔ Quiet, withdrawn, or easily frustrated
- ✔ Taking more risks or using substances more heavily

Keep Your Promise: See Something, Say Something

When you notice something that doesn't feel right—**don't ignore it**. You don't have to fix it. Just say something.

- 🧑 “Hey, you don't seem like yourself lately. You good?”
- 🧑 “If you ever need to talk, I've got your back.”
- 🧑 “Let's grab a coffee. You don't have to go through stuff alone.”

You could make all the difference.

Need Support?

- ☎ Talk to a peer support worker if your site has one
- ☎ Call a helpline (e.g., 988 Suicide Crisis Helpline)
- ☎ Use your union or employer assistance program
- ☎ Talk to a supervisor to see what is available through work.

✂ **Real strength is looking out for each other.**

Let's build a safer jobsite—physically and mentally.

Learn more about mental health and substance use health at www.ihsa.ca/workplacementalhealth