

R U OK? Tackling stigma in the trades

🗣️ Video Introduction

In the trades, we take pride in being tough and hardworking. But sometimes, that “tough it out” mindset stops us from asking for help — especially when it comes to **mental health** or **substance use**. The video you’re about to watch is about breaking that stigma. It shows how asking a simple question — “**R U OK?**” — can make a big difference.

This is part of **keeping your promise**:

👉 **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://youtu.be/IRXhLyKi86s>



💡 Discussion Questions

1. What makes it hard to ask “R U OK?” on a job site?
2. Have you ever wanted to help someone but didn’t know what to say?
3. What does stigma look or sound like on the job?
4. How can we build a crew culture where it’s OK to talk about mental health or addiction?

📄 Speaker Notes

- **Set the tone:** “This is a no-judgment space. We all deal with stress, pain, and tough times differently.”
- **Normalize the topic:** “Mental health and substance use are safety issues too. Let’s treat them like we treat PPE — necessary and normal.”
- **Be honest:** “This isn’t about being perfect — it’s about not ignoring each other.”
- **Connect to values:** “We look out for our crew. That includes mental and emotional well-being.”

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

Handout: R U OK? Tackling stigma in the trades

In the trades, it can be hard to speak up about mental health or substance use — but no one should have to struggle alone. This handout gives simple ways to support a coworker who opens up or is in recovery. A small conversation can make a big difference.

If someone opens up to you...

Do:

- ✓ Listen without judging
- ✓ Thank them for trusting you
- ✓ Ask: “What would help right now?”
- ✓ Suggest talking to someone trained to help (supervisor, EAP, union, peer support)

DON'T:

- ✗ Try to fix everything yourself
- ✗ Make jokes or brush it off
- ✗ Share their story without permission



What You Can Say

- “Thanks for telling me. That takes guts.”
- “You’re not alone. Let’s figure it out together.”
- “You don’t have to go through this on your own.”



If They're in Recovery & Struggling

- Ask: “What’s helping you stay on track?”
- Offer breaks or a quieter task if they seem overwhelmed
- Don’t isolate or shame — recovery isn’t a straight line
- Be consistent and kind — that builds trust

! If You're Worried About Their Safety

- Let a supervisor, site lead, or designated support person know
- It’s not betrayal — it’s looking out for a life

Offer to help them find support if needed, and make sure they know where to go for help:

- ☎ **ConnexOntario** (24/7 mental health & addiction support): 1-866-531-2600
- ☎ **Hope for Wellness Help Line** (support for Indigenous workers): 1-855-242-3310
- ☎ **988 Suicide Crisis Hotline** (call 9-8-8, or text 9-8-8 to be connected 24/7)
- ☎ **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** (Check with your employer or union)
- ☎ **Local peer support programs** (Ask your union rep or health & safety team)



Final Message: Ask the question. Listen. Support. That’s how we fight stigma — and keep our promise to each other.

R U OK? tools: <https://www.ruok.org.au>

IHSA tools + support: www.ihsa.ca/workplacementalhealth

Video Link: <https://ihsa-marketing-team.box.com/s/zaafqr2zrpzswe80ex6armx4vkg0xfqo>