It’s Good to Talk: Kirk’s Story (social support)

📽 Video Introduction

Hey everyone, today we will watch a short but important video called *Good to Talk: Kirk’s Story*. This video shares the real experience of a worker in the trades who faced struggles with mental health and substance use. Kirk talks about the challenges he faced and how reaching out for help made a difference.

The trades can be a tough job—not just physically, but mentally. Long hours, high stress, and job pressures can take a toll. That’s why it’s essential to look out for each other. This video connects with the *Keep Your Promise* message: *If you see something, say something*. You could make all the difference.

After we watch the video, we’ll briefly discuss what stood out to you and how we can better support each other on-site.

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: Good to Talk Kirk’s story: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjLXO9woNaw (2:09 minutes)

🗣 Discussion Questions

1. What part of Kirk’s story stood out to you the most?
2. What are some barriers that stop workers from reaching out for help? How can we break those barriers down?
3. How does the message “If you see something, say something” apply to mental health and substance use in our industry?

Speaker Notes

- **Before the video:** Emphasize that this is a real story from a trade worker. The goal is to recognize signs of struggle and encourage open conversations.
- **After the video:** Encourage open discussion, but remind the group that it should be a safe space and that what is said in the group should remain confidential—remind them that no one has to share personal experiences unless they want to.
- **Suggest action**: Encourage each participant to check in with a colleague this week and be mindful of signs of struggle.
- **Wrap-up:** Reinforce the *Keep Your Promise* message—***speaking up and offering support can save a life*.** Highlight the available resources for the people you are speaking to. (e.g., Employee Assistance Programs, mental health hotlines, peer support programs). Consider giving an additional handout with this information provided as well.

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

Handout: Good to Talk: Kirk's Story

LOOKING OUT FOR EACH OTHER ON THE JOB

In the trades, we care for our tools, vehicles, worksites, and safety. But we also need to take care of each other. Stress, injuries, and personal struggles can take a toll. A simple conversation could make all the difference if you notice a co-worker struggling.

Signs a Co-Worker May Be Struggling

✅ Showing up late or missing work more often
✅ Seeming withdrawn, quiet, or disconnected
✅ Mood swings, anger, or frustration that seem unusual
✅ Working unsafely or making more mistakes than usual
✅ Changes in appearance, like looking exhausted or unwell

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

How to Start the Conversation

Talking to someone about their struggles can feel awkward, but it doesn't have to be. Keep it simple:
👷 *"Hey, I've noticed you don't seem yourself lately. Everything okay?"*
👷 *"You've been missing work a lot—if you need to talk, I'm here."*
👷 *"I'm worried about you. Let's grab a coffee and talk."*

You don't need to have all the answers—just listening can help.

Where to Get Help

If you or someone you know needs support, here are some resources:
📞 **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)

🛠 **Real strength is looking out for each other.**
Let's build a safer jobsite—physically and mentally
We work as a team. Looking out for each other isn't just about safety gear and heads down getting the job done—it's about speaking up when something doesn't seem right. Learn more about mental health in the workplace at www.ihsa.ca/workplacementalhealth