



In 2018, 1,008 construction workers died on-the-job.

That same year, **5,432** construction workers died by suicide (over **5x** higher).

Are you investing in psychological safety as you are preventing the fatal four?



Construction companies choose to work with Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas—actively pursuing suicide prevention and helping employees living with mental health conditions and suicidal thoughts.

CONSTRUCTION-SPECIFIC SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENHANCE MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

- LEADERSHIP BRIEFING AND STRATEGIC SUPPORT
- NEEDS AND STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT
- COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
- TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS
- ★ **NEW! ADVANCED SKILLS FOR MANAGERS TRAINING**
- TRAIN-THE-TRAINER CERTIFICATION COURSE
- PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
- MENTAL HEALTH AND CRISIS RESOURCES AUDIT



Engage Dr. Sally as a keynote speaker, trainer or consultant:
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Making a Difference

Why is Suicide Prevention a Health and Safety Priority in Construction?

Many construction workers die by suicide. In fact, a study published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)¹ found men in construction die by suicide at a rate 3.5x higher than the general population of adults.

When workers feel psychologically healthy and safe, they are more likely to be fully present - knowing their employer has their back. Not surprisingly, organizations that create a caring culture experience:²

- 40% reduction in safety incidents
- 27% reduction in turnover
- 12% increase in productivity

“In the past, when we had tradespeople that didn’t show up for work or that were late, we would press the hard to get to work or show up on time. That is still important, but we changed our tone to be more aware of them personally and to meet them where they are at. We now ask them “is everything okay?” and other probing questions to understand them holistically and to see if we can help them get the help they need, if appropriate.”

Jon Kinning Co-Owner, RK Industries LLC

Being Proactive Saves Lives and Money

It’s often difficult for workplaces to see the value in addressing mental health issues and suicide prevention. Business investments require returns that positively impact the bottom line. Helping people in pain actually does improve performance and profitability.

Workplace direct and indirect costs related to depression:

- Average healthcare costs for employees with depression are \$6,252 higher than those without depression. (People with diabetes have average healthcare costs \$2,000 to \$5,000 higher than those without depression.)³
- Costs unrelated to healthcare are even higher:
 - Not treating depression and related challenges is approximately eight times more expensive than treatment.
 - Productivity loss is the most expensive. Employees struggling with depression miss 6 to 25 work days each year, and 13% to 29% of their work is impaired.⁴

Need a Speaker?



Dr. Sally has given hundreds of talks—virtually and in person—to construction

audiences globally. From briefings at Executive Board Rooms to Keynotes at International Conferences, she connects, inspires and gives actionable recommendations.

Here are some of her topics:

- YOU CAN'T FIX YOUR MENTAL HEALTH WITH DUCT TAPE: WORKPLACE WELLBEING & CONSTRUCTION
- WHY SUICIDE PREVENTION IS A CONSTRUCTION HEALTH AND SAFETY PRIORITY
- WORKPLACE SUICIDE PREVENTION: IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL GUIDELINES
- IT'S NOT "WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?", IT'S "WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?"—UNDERSTANDING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TRAUMA AND ADDICTION
- PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CONSTRUCTION SAFETY
- CONSTRUCTION WORKING MINDS: TRAIN-THE-TRAINER CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP (CONSTRUCTION-SPECIFIC SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM)
- ADVANCED TRAINING FOR MANAGERS IN CONSTRUCTION

¹ Peterson C, Sussell A, Li J, Schumacher PK, Yeoman K, Stone DM. Suicide Rates by Industry and Occupation — National Violent Death Reporting System, 32 States, 2016. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:57–62. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6903a1>

² <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236198/create-culture-psychological-safety.aspx>

³ Understanding The Evidence: Transforming How Employers Make The Case For Mental Health, paragraph 3

⁴ Understanding The Evidence: Transforming How Employers Make The Case For Mental Health, paragraph 4

Dr. Sally's International Team Offers Services To Build Your Comprehensive Strategy

NOTE: Some of these services and deliverables can be offered in Spanish and other languages, if needed.

LEADERSHIP BRIEFING AND STRATEGIC SUPPORT: Empower leaders to integrate suicide prevention and mental health promotion into a long-term strategy that is “baked in” to other health and safety priorities.

NEEDS AND STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT: Conduct surveys, focus groups, interviews and other forms of data collection to ascertain environmental aspects of job strain, stress, trauma and life disruption that negatively impact employee vibrancy as well as perceptions of mental health/suicide and access to resources.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: Develop long-term messaging plan around suicide prevention, mental health promotion and resilience wherever health and safety messaging is happening; and cultivate stories of recovery, resilience, making meaning and support to create a more powerful tale and humanize the issues.

TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS: Increase knowledge, decrease bias and develop skills in resilience, mental health literacy and suicide prevention, including basic skills and advanced training for managers and supervisors (Construction Working Minds).

TRAIN-THE-TRAINER CERTIFICATION COURSE: Build internal capacity by developing a cohort of trainers certified to deliver the Construction Working Minds Suicide Prevention Training.

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Enroll peers, ombudsmen and ambassadors to increase awareness of and comfort with mental health and suicide prevention resources, improve positive co-worker assistance, and normalize help-seeking and help-giving behavior with an emphasis on least restrictive peer support, collaboration and empowerment.

MENTAL HEALTH AND CRISIS RESOURCES AUDIT: Evaluate and promote culturally relevant mental health/addiction/crisis services well-versed in state-of-the-art suicide prevention best practices.

Ask about our mental health toolbox talks!



INSERT YOUR LOGO HERE!

“Sally is passionate and an expert in this mission critical profession. She is a brilliant strategist and communicator on all things pertaining to mental health promotion and suicide prevention. She is innovative and a catalyst for personal, organizational, industry and societal change.”

Cal Beyer, CWP, SCTPP, Vice President

Workforce Risk & Worker Wellbeing at CSDZ, a Holmes Murphy Company

Early Adopters

ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE USED OUR SERVICES

Name of Organization	Year Partnership Began	Leadership Briefing and Strategic Support	Needs and Strengths Assessment	Trainings and Workshops	Train-the-Trainer Certification Course	Communication Strategy	Peer Support Program Development	Mental Health Services Audit
RK Industries, LLC	2013	X	X	X	X	X		X
International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers (SMART) Union	2013	X		X		X		X
Hensel Phelps	2015	X		X		X		X
Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA) & Construction Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP)	2016	X		X		X		
Lakeside Industries, Inc.	2016			X				
Lendlease	2016			X	X*			
AGC of Washington	2016			X		X		
International Risk Management Institute (IRMI)	2016	X						
Office of Natural Resources of Revenue (ONRR)	2017			X				
Multinational Client (NDA)	2018	X	X	X		X	X*	X
Sundt	2018	X			X			
LPR Construction	2018			X				
Edison Electric Institute (EEI)	2018			X				
Quanta Services	2018	X		X				
Behind the Scenes Foundation	2019	X	X					X
Washington Construction Center of Excellence	2019			X				
United Association of Plumbers, Fitters, Welders & Service Technicians (UA) Veterans In Piping (VIP)	2019	X		X	X	X	X*	X
Aldridge Electric	2020	X						
Stacy and Witbeck	2020				X			
JD Eckman	2020				X	X		
National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)	2020	X	X*			X*		
Salt River Project (SRP)	2020	X		X		X		
Independent Electrical Contractors	2020			X				
Great Western Petroleum	2020			X				
Coalition for Construction Safety	2020			X				

*Pending work for 2021

Trusted Experience



Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas

Sally Spencer-Thomas is a clinical psychologist, inspirational international keynote speaker, podcaster and an impact entrepreneur. Dr. Spencer-Thomas was moved to work in suicide prevention after her younger brother, a Denver entrepreneur, died of suicide after a difficult battle with bipolar condition.

Within the construction industry she is a frequent speaker, trainer and consultant for large companies, professional associations and unions.

Spencer-Thomas has held leadership positions for the International Association for Suicide Prevention, the American Association for Suicidology, and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. She has won multiple awards for her advocacy including the 2014 Survivor of the Year from the American Association of Suicidology, the 2014 Invisible Disabilities Association Impact Honors Award, and the 2012 Alumni Master Scholar from the University of Denver, the 2015 Farbarow Award from the International Association for Suicide Prevention and the 2016 Career Achievement Alumni Award from the University of Denver's Graduate School of Professional Psychology. She is the author of four books related to suicide prevention and holds a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Denver.

- 2007:** The new “Working Minds” program is launched and is the first national program to focus on exclusively suicide prevention for the workplace
- 2014:** RK Industries LLC is first company to begin suicide prevention needs and strengths assessment
- 2015:** SMART Union begins suicide prevention training
Keynote at MATES in Construction “Construction Mental Health Summit” (Australia)
Publish and disseminate “Construction Industry Blueprint for Suicide Prevention” with Cal Beyer and begin partnership with Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA)
- 2016:** Launch “Construction Working Minds” website
Dr. Sally is invited speaker at the White House, shares construction suicide prevention efforts
CDC publishes first data ranking industry by suicide rates
- 2017:** Accept IRMI innovation in safety award on behalf of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention
- 2019:** Launch “National Guidelines for Workplace Suicide Prevention”
- 2020:** COVID-19 increases many employers’ engagement with suicide prevention efforts
- 2020:** Translate/Transculturrate “Construction Working Minds” website into 8 languages for 9 countries
Develop workplace playbooks for 1) building a peer support program, and 2) conducting a construction mental health resource audit.
Develop 54 toolbox talks for construction
- 2021:** Launch “Construction Working Minds” Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training (1-hour construction-specific with train-the-trainer certification course) & “Construction Working Minds Manager Training” (2-hour course)

“When I heard Sally speak about her work on suicide in construction at IRMI, I immediately thought of my friend Eric who recently passed away (by suicide)—way too young. Sally and I met and I was taken with her passion for saving the lives of sons and daughters we do not know and she will never meet.”

Thomas (TJ) Lyons, DPR Construction



CASE STUDY: RK Industries LLC



RK Industries LLC saw the challenges and resolved to do something about it. “It’s a crisis in our country. It’s a crisis in our business,” RK Industries LLC co-owner, Jon Kinning says. And it required rethinking the entire business. “If somebody didn’t show up in the past, we’d be like, ‘You’ve got a job to do—get in here,’” he says. “We’ve just changed our tone and our culture. I talk about mental health nearly every time I have a group of employees.”⁵

The company developed what is now regarded as a model for suicide prevention in the construction industry. It includes 24-hour access to counselling services, lenient leave policies, and crisis training for managers. Kinning asserts that the program helped avert over 15 suicides in the program’s first five years.⁶

Dr. Sally first held an international construction industry leadership roundtable at RK in 2014, and credits RK’s leadership for being “vocal, visible and visionary” in their continued advocacy for mental health.

RK Lessons Learned

- **The Challenge:** Reduce risk factors for suicide among employees and remove bias surrounding mental health issues.
- **The Solution:** Embrace lots of open talk about mental health and improve company tone and culture.
- **The Outcome:** More workers getting help through therapy and other benefits, and over 15 suicides averted.



CASE STUDY: SMART Union (Sheet Metal Air Rail Transportation)

When Smart Union realized the toll mental health issues and suicide were impacting their members, they decided to take action. They developed vision and mission statements and a program called SMART MAP (Member Assistance Program).

Their mission is to “build awareness around the national health epidemic of substance use disorder and other mental health problems including thoughts of suicide and to construct a network of support by compassionate union members and mental health experts for our members and their families who are facing these life challenging difficulties.”⁷

SMART MAP achieves this through a three-pronged approach of 1) awareness based training for respected and empathetic union members, 2) solutions-based discussions with local unions exploring intervention and treatment options and emphasizing insurance avenues, and 3) support for members in treatment and back at work, with an eye to long-term recovery.

Dr. Sally has been training SMART Union and SMACNA leaders since 2013 and is grateful for their continued investment in a comprehensive approach for suicide prevention. SMART MAP members are the first group to complete the “train-the-trainer” certification course for the 1-hour Construction Working Minds training.



SMART Union Lessons Learned

- **The Challenge:** Develop and foster a culture of well-being throughout SMART Union.
- **The Solution:** The SMART MAP program.
- **The Outcome:** Increased chances of full recovery and reduced likelihood of relapsing and/or returning to an unsuccessful and unhappy lifestyle.

5 <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/12/12/783300736/a-construction-company-embraces-frank-talk-about-mental-health-to-reduce-suicide>

6 <https://www.abcactionnews.com/news/national/construction-company-serves-as-national-model-for-suicide-prevention>

7 <https://smart-union.org/smart-map/>, paragraph 2