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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Construction Industry Leaders Gather to Take Action on Workplace Well-being  
Efforts Aimed at Reducing Suicide, Addiction, and Overdose**  
*Construction Working Minds Summit to be held February 28-29 in Kansas City, Missouri*

**KANSAS CITY, Mo. (December 6, 2023)** – Tragic mental health trends in construction are captivating the attention of people responsible for health and safety. Just last week, the CDC reported overdoses killed 163 of every 100,000 people in construction and extraction in 2020, making it by far the most dangerous major occupation for fatal drug outcomes. This recent data confirms what many already know – construction is plagued with the highest rates of suicide, addiction, and overdose of any industry, and those working to reverse this are focusing on broadening their impact industrywide.

A large group of industry leaders is gathering to do something about this concerning trend on February 26-29, 2024 in Kansas City, Missouri.

<http://constructionworkingminds.com/summit>

"Scaffolding and Scaling: Reaching All with Construction Mental Health Promotion, Suicide Prevention, and Addiction Recovery" is the theme of the third annual international [Construction Working Minds](http://constructionworkingminds.com/summit) Summit. National nonprofit organizations United Suicide Survivors International (US) and the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP) are the hosts and dozens of construction contractors, unions and professional associations have stepped in to [sponsor](#) the event including the presenting sponsors JE Dunn, the United Association of Piping Trades, and Milwaukee Tool.

"We are inspired to see the construction industry stand in solidarity to face these daunting mental health concerns. Our scope and attendance have grown significantly since our inaugural summit in 2022, and this is an exciting and hopeful time in our movement," said Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas, US president and Summit co-founder and co-chair.

Indeed, the momentum for the mental health movement in construction is remarkable. [A recent study found a high level of interest within the industry in worker well-being. Fifty-two percent of contractors reported wanting more resources for managing mental health, suicide, and opioid use.](#) Findings revealed an increase in integrating mental health into safety and health strategies and a need for greater adoption across the industry.

Since 2022, the Construction Working Minds Summit has aimed to bring construction mental health advocates together to take action. Attendance doubled from 200 to 400 in the second year of the summit in 2023, a trend expected to continue in 2024 with 600 attendees anticipated, according to organizers.

Content offerings have expanded from a two-day event in 2022 to four days of programming for 2024, including a storytelling training to help workers who have been personally impacted by suicide, addiction, or overdose craft their narratives to reduce isolation and stigma.

"It is important to let others know that we all have a story, and that we can create a great life regardless of what we have been through. It is essential that we remove negative feelings about therapy and take care of mental health. Positively addressing our mental health will increase our performance in ways that we never imagined," said summit keynote speaker C. David Moody Jr. He is the owner/CEO of C. D. Moody Construction Company, Inc., one of the largest African-American-owned construction companies nationally, founded in 1988. Moody will talk about surviving childhood sexual abuse in his speech titled, "Trauma to Triumph."

"Our goals are to connect the dots among other wellbeing, health and safety priorities and mental health including diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and physical health. Also to share lessons learned in building industry capacity and scaling implementation, and strengthen strategic alliances across the movement and establish collaborative partnerships," said Spencer-Thomas.

"Promoting a mentally health work environment is beneficial for the entire team. When one person is suffering it has an indirect impact on everyone," said summit keynote speaker John Dahunsi, directorate of technical support and emergency management for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Representatives from construction companies that are the first in the nation to have proven implementation of the National Guidelines for Workplace Suicide Prevention through the [H.O.P.E. Certification](#), will also present on lessons learned.

Generational differences around mental health will be discussed in part by organizational psychologist and author Melissa Doman, MA in a fireside chat. "The mental health at

work conversation is a new, and critical, discussion in the construction industry. I wanted to call attention to what people bring to that conversation, instead of just encouraging them to have it. I'm looking forward to sharing that actionable education with attendees," said Doman.

"When voices are raised together, they become stronger. The summit is a rare chance to come together to exclusively discuss mental health and wellness in and around the construction industry. Participants will come away with peer contacts, strategies, tools and ideas on how to grow or strengthen their own programs," said Sonya Bohmann, Executive Director of CIASP and summit co-chair.

"Management and employees together can create a positive atmosphere of hope, trust, and optimism when dealing with issues where stigma and shame are attached. Learning the right language to talk with people is super important. The summit will help people add that language into their communications with employees and fellow coworkers who may be struggling," said summit keynote speaker Dana Piscopo, Oracle Corporation's Senior Manager of Sales Operations in the Americas for the Construction and Engineering Global Business Unit and Mental Health Committee Chair for the Construction Safety Research Alliance.

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### **About United Suicide Survivors International, Inc. (501c3)**

United Suicide Survivors International (founded in 2016) is an independent international membership organization that serves as a home for people who have experienced suicide loss, suicide attempts, and suicidal thoughts and feelings, and their friends and families – collectively known as people with lived experience with suicide – to leverage their expertise for large scale change. We envision a world where lived expertise becomes the fulcrum that leverages all suicide prevention efforts. We put the lived expertise of suicide attempt and loss survivors into action through leadership, collaboration and advocacy. [www.UniteSurvivors.org](http://www.UniteSurvivors.org)

### **About the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention**

The Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP) was born out of necessity in response to statistics released in a CDC study ranking construction as the #1 industry for deaths by suicide. Established by the Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA) in 2016 to shatter the stigma surrounding mental health issues, CIASP became a stand-alone 501(c)(3) organization in 2018 to raise awareness about suicide prevention and provide resources and tools to create a zero-suicide industry by uniting and supporting the construction community. CIASP is dedicated to changing the statistics by educating and equipping organizations, industry service providers, and construction professionals to "STAND Up" for suicide prevention and address it as a health and safety priority. <https://preventconstructionsuicide.com/>