



Governor Dan McKee's Overdose Task Force

August 14, 2024

Richard Leclerc, Director, Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals
Philip Chan, MD, MPH; Consultant Medical Director, Rhode Island Department of Health
Ana Novais, MA; Assistant Secretary, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Richard Charest, MBA; Secretary, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Thomas Joyce, LCDP, CPRS; Task Force Community Co-Chair
Cathy Schultz, MPH; Task Force Director, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services

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Welcome and Announcements

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Rhode Island Overdose Fatality Review: Recommendations for Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations

August 14, 2024

Governor Dan McKee's Overdose Task Force

Goals of the Overdose Fatality Review (OFR)

- Examine emerging trends in the overdose epidemic
- Identify points for prevention and gaps in current policies, systems, and operations

Quick Facts

- Quarterly case reviews, plus additional meetings focused on recommendations
- Reports: quarterly and annual
- Active members: 30

Membership



Rhode Island Department of Health

- Coordination Team
- Center for Emergency Medical Services*
- Office of State Medical Examiners*/State Health Laboratories
- Prescription Drug Monitoring Program*
- Task Force Racial Equity Work Group

Other Rhode Island State Agencies

- Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals*
- Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families
- Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services*
- Heroin-Opioid Prevention Effort (HOPE) Initiative*

Community Partners

- College Community First Responder Program
- Family Representation
- Harm Reduction/Recovery Support Agencies
- New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)
- Rhode Island Regional Prevention Coalition
- Treatment Providers/Hospitals/Community Health Center

Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations



Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations can include, but are not limited to:

Farming, Fishing, Forestry

- Fishermen/women
- Dairy workers
- Farmers
- Lumberjacks/loggers
- Forest and conservation workers

Installation, Maintenance, Repair

- Utility workers
- Mechanics
- Locksmiths
- HVAC technicians
- Automotive repair technicians
- Security systems installers

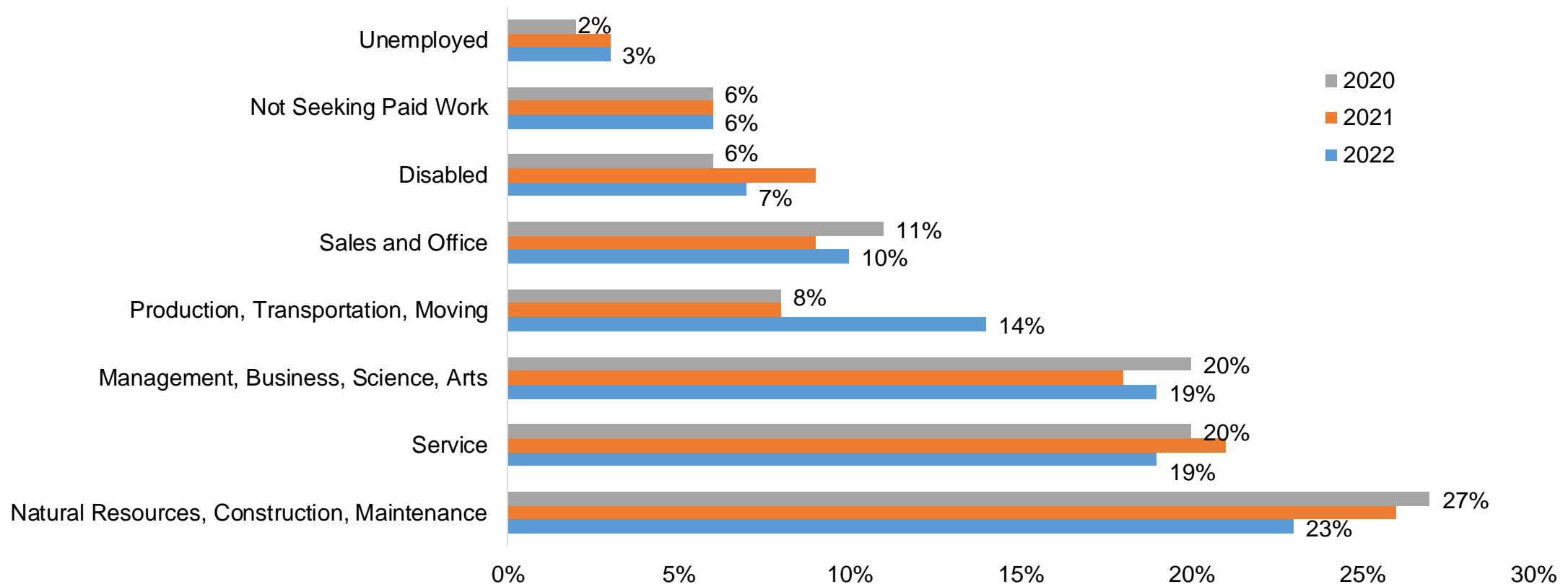
Construction, Extraction

- Carpenters
- Construction workers
- Demolition workers
- Stonemasons
- Plumbers
- Electricians

Fatal Overdose by Usual Occupation, 2020-2022



From 2020 to 2022, the most common type of occupation category among overdose decedents was Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance.



Source: State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH). Data updated as of November 14, 2023. Note: Data reflect accidental and undetermined drug overdose deaths and do not include suicides or homicides. Excludes decedents with unknown or missing usual occupation. Occupation categorized using the 2018 Bureau of Labor Statistics Standard Occupational Classification System.

May 2024 Case Review



- Topic: Individuals in the Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance occupations who lost their lives to an accidental overdose between January 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023
- Four decedents
- Guests joined the OFR Team to provide expertise
 - Building Futures
 - New England Laborers' Health & Safety Fund
 - Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
 - Rhode Island Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative

Key Recommendations: Prevention



- Expand the availability of, access to, and information about existing substance use and overdose prevention education among the construction and maintenance industries in Rhode Island by:
 - Encouraging all local unions and apprenticeship programs for laborers to provide education focused on injury, substance use, and overdose prevention.
 - Encouraging local business managers and contractors to arrange brief injury prevention discussions and overdose prevention education at job sites.
 - Utilizing policies, standards, and training within the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to promote substance use and overdose prevention education.

Key Recommendations: Recovery



- Continue to disseminate information about Rhode Island's Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative to expand the number of employers providing substance use resources, particularly among those in industries most impacted by overdose and substance use.
- Support and expand programs with initiatives to create a system of peers in recovery among the laborers' unions to serve as a source of support and resources for individuals involved in the construction and maintenance industries.

Key Recommendations: Recovery



- Expand current practices within these industries that encourage laborers to seek treatment and recovery support. Consider:
 - Creating a change within the culture of these occupations that decreases a “tough” exterior, normalizes seeking help, and promotes all paths to recovery.
 - Expanding paid time off (PTO) policies within labor unions and employers.
 - Increasing guidance and support on accessing Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI).
 - Expanding access to and information about Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and other benefits provided to laborers by their unions.

Next Steps



- Continue to share OFR recommendations
- Continue to collaborate with the Governor's Overdose Task Force Director and Overdose Prevention Evaluator to ensure recommendations are incorporated and aligned with the Task Force Strategic Plan
- Support collaboration opportunities to put recommendations into action

How You Can Get Involved



Use the OFR as
a Data Source

Suggest Case
Review Topics

Fill an Open
Voluntary
Position on the
OFR Team

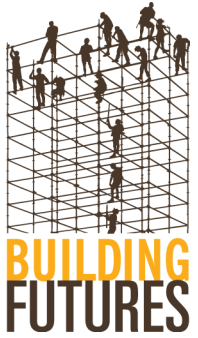


Heather Coia, MSW, LICSW

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Heidi Weidele, MPH

Lead Fatal Overdose Epidemiologist
Substance Use Epidemiology Program
Rhode Island Department of Health
Heidi.Weidele@health.ri.gov



RHODE ISLAND



BUILDING TRADES

WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK.

Addressing Substance Use Disorders and Suicide in the
Rhode Island Construction Industry

Michael Currier, LICSW
Building Futures

WHO ARE WE?

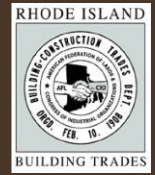


MISSION

At Building Futures, our mission is to meet employer and industry needs for skilled workers through the Registered Apprenticeship system while creating family-sustaining career opportunities for low-income, diverse residents.

- Building Futures, started in 2007
- 200 hour pre-apprenticeship program
 - 44 graduating classes/ 549 individuals
 - 100% Low income/ 9% Female
 - 78 % BIPOC/ 31% Latinx
 - 46% Justice Involved/37% Formerly Incarcerated
- Building Green Futures (60 grads since 2021)
- Building Futures Inside (24 Grads since 2023)

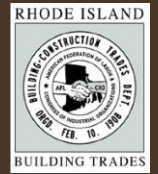
Construction's Twin Epidemics



In 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) finds:

1. Construction industry has one of the highest rates of suicide.
2. Construction industry workers are more likely to die of overdose than workers in any other occupation.

Suicide is an Industry Epidemic



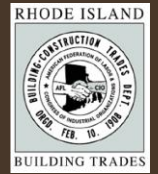
In Rhode Island, from 2017–2021,
547 people died by suicide.

55.7% were men age 25-64

1 in 7 were men in construction

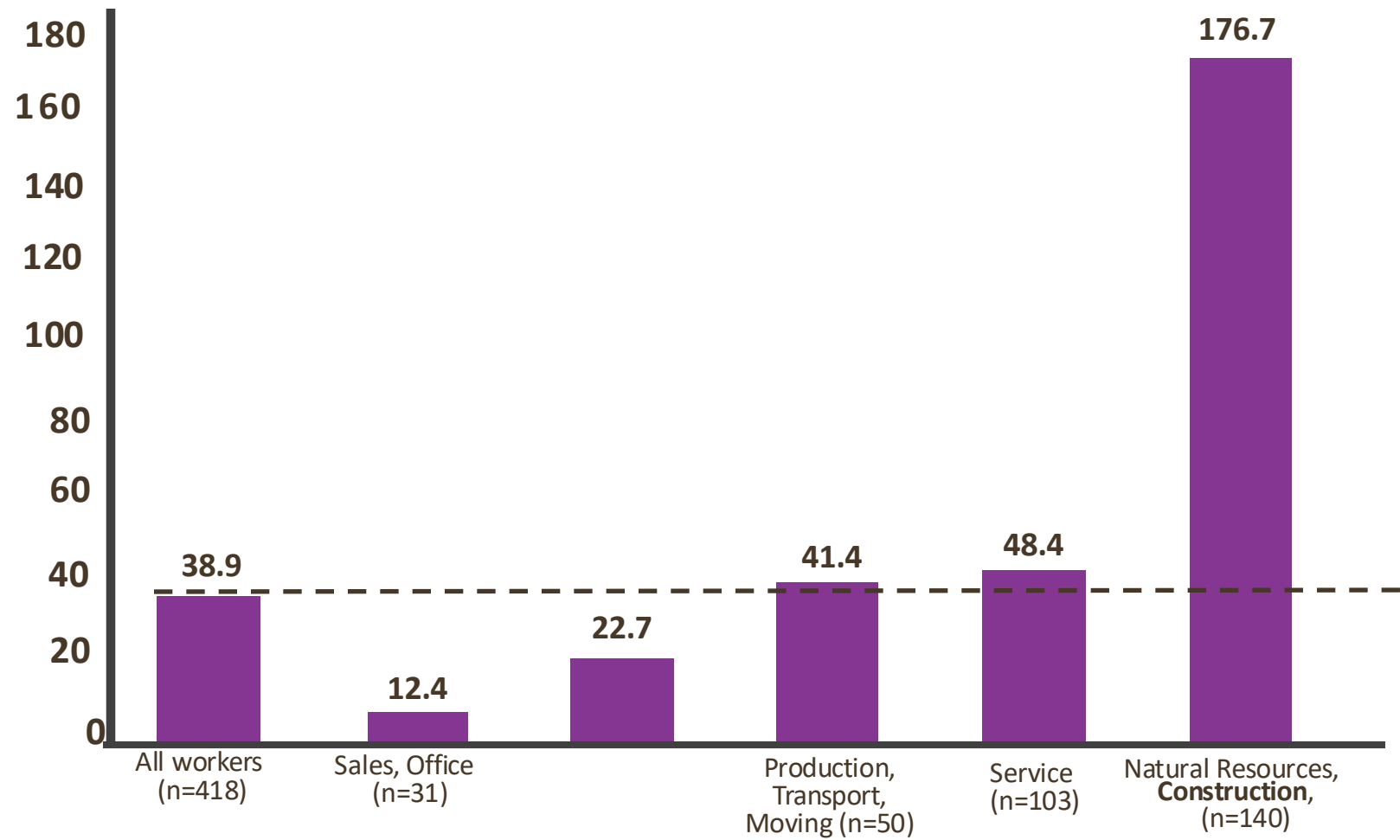


Overdose is an Industry Epidemic

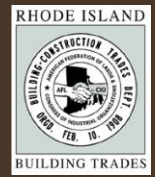


Opioid
overdose
deaths per
100,000
RI workers

2008 – 2012 data



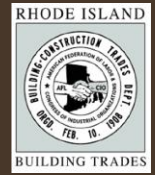
1 in 5



20% of overdose deaths in Rhode Island are in building and construction



Why Construction?



A perfect storm of risk factors:

- Demographics
- Cultural
- Economic
- Psychosocial
- Physical Injury & Strain
- Drug-related





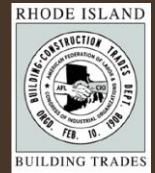
INDUSTRY EXPECTATIONS

- **Hours, Hours, Hours**
- **Attendance**
- **Pace**
- **Output**
- **No Time Off**

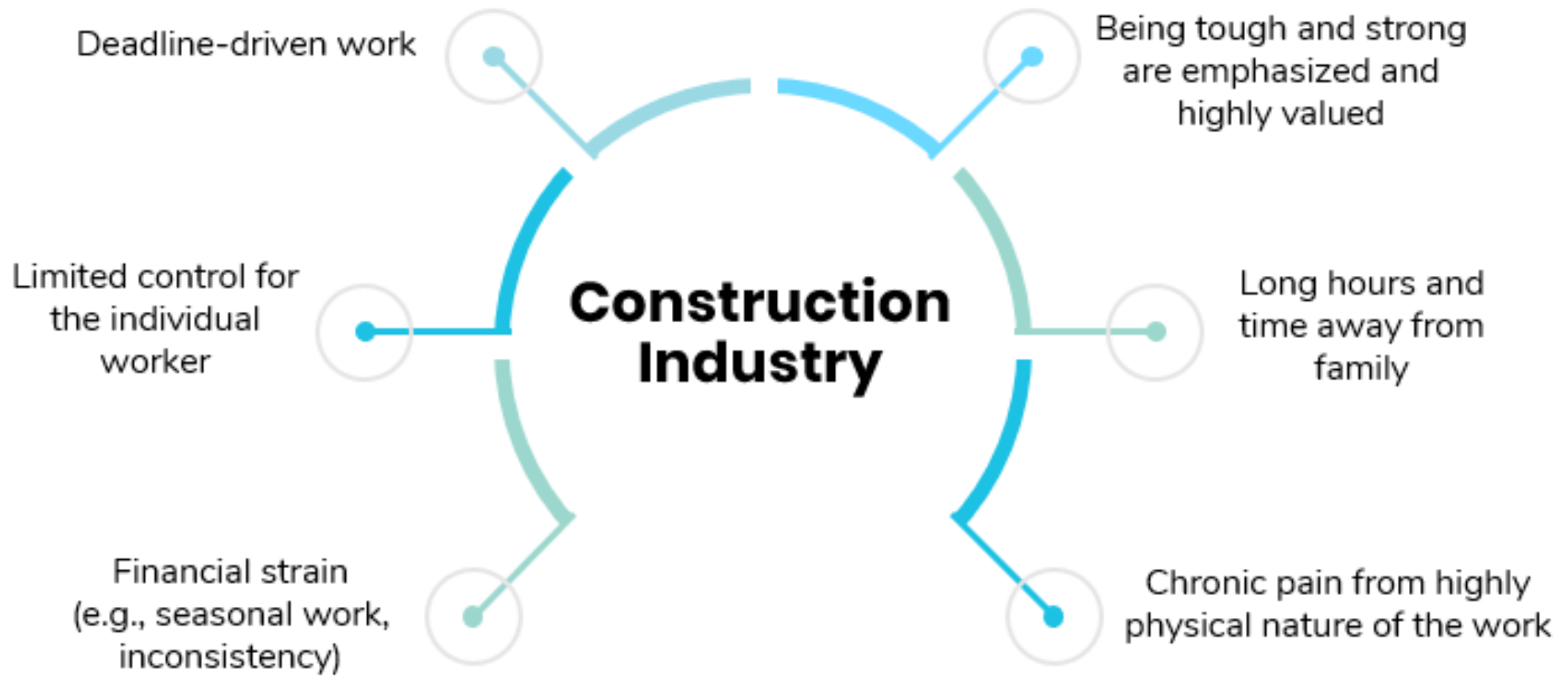
Sources: Manzo, F. (2018). Addressing the Opioid Epidemic among Midwest Construction Workers. <https://midwestepi.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/opioids-and-construction-final2.pdf> CPWR (2018). The Construction Chart Book, 6th edition. <https://www.cpwr.com/chart-book-6th-edition-hazards-and-exposures-exposure-risks-work-related-musculoskeletal-disorders>. CPWR (2018). Hazard Alert: Opioid Deaths in Construction. <https://www.cpwr.com/sites/default/files/publications/Opioids-Hazard-Alert.pdf>



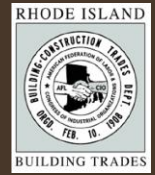
Lack of Control/Autonomy



Cultural Influences



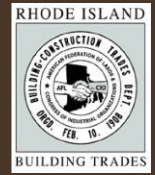
Industry Assessments



- Key informants
 - ✓ *Contractors*
 - ✓ *Rank and file union members*
 - ✓ *Union leadership*
 - ✓ *Peers*
- Resource mapping
- Survey with Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH)
- Ongoing



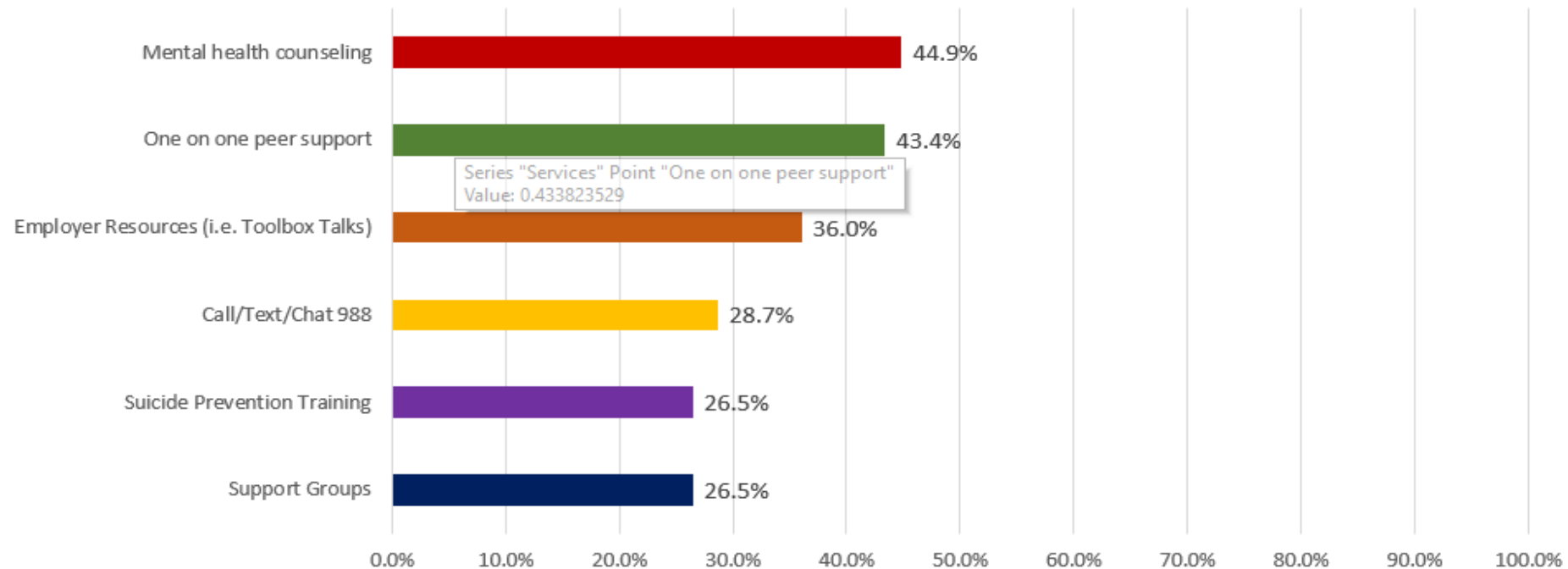
RIDOH Survey



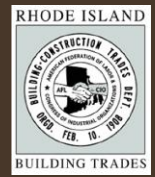
Which of the following services would you be most interested in?



44.9% of Male construction workers were interested in Mental health counseling, followed by **43.4%** were interested in One-on-one peer support. A need for one-on-one peer support aligns with the goals of Building Future's Peer Training program.



Protective Factors/Resources



- Union culture/solidarity
- Insurance
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Member Assistance Program (MAP)



CARPENTERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MAP



Member Assistance Program

UNITED STATES and CANADA
1-833-MAP TALK
1-833-627-8255 (toll-free)

WHATEVER THE PROBLEM, THERE IS A SOLUTION

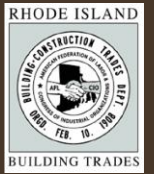
We understand that the current time can be difficult in many ways; physically, financially, mentally and emotionally. Help is available through our benefits funds. There are also outside resources available to help you or someone you care about navigate these challenges.

We know from experience that it is nearly impossible to overcome addiction without the right support network, so we are here to help. Alcohol and substance addictions are lifelong burdens that affect so many of our members, their spouses, children, friends and co-workers. The good news is that we have helped make many success stories possible. If you are suffering as part of this epidemic, then let us help.

For confidential support in the coordination and continuation of care – as well as experienced members in your corner – contact Paul Greeley and Jeff Smith at 978-752-1160.



What Stops People From Getting Help When They Need it Most?



- Cultural stigma/shame
- Industry expectations and culture:
 - Self-reliance
 - Asking for help viewed as weak
- Balancing long hours, family, and life
- Don't know where to get help



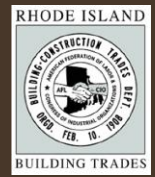
What Can We Do?

Australian study of construction workers who died by suicide found:

- *7% had sought help previously*
- *93% had not sought help previously*



Help Seeking vs. Help Offering



Create culture shift from “help seeking” to “help offering”

Summer Campaign kick-off

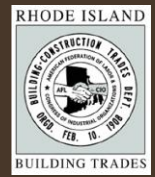
- Jobsite banners
- Hard hat stickers
- Website: www.bfri.org/recovery

More trained people on the jobsite and in the union hall

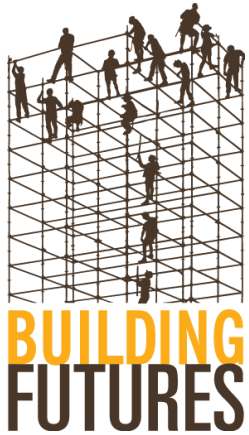
- Recovery allies
- Recovery peers
- Site leads



Solutions



Building Futures partners with the Rhode Island Building & Construction Trades Council (RIBCTC) and contractors to promote industry-wide solutions.



Help offering website – www.bfri.org/recovery

“We’ve Got Your Back” jobsite campaign

Peer Recovery Training

Recovery Ally Training

Mental Health First Aid/Vital Cog

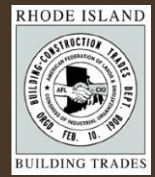
Clinical Services and Treatment referrals

Naloxone (Narcan) Training and Distribution

Opioid Training “We all have a role”

Toolbox Talks

Opioids Curriculum



BUILDING FUTURES Apprenticeship RHODE ISLAND

RI OPIOIDS CRISIS

Our **Response.** Our **Recovery.**

Icons: Gear with person, Hammer, Red cross, Green cross with hands, Yellow cross with arrows, Blue pill bottle.

BUILDING FUTURES
Prepared by Jill Treacy, LICSW 2020

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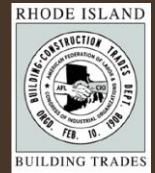
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Train the trainer curriculum developed in 2020

From 2020-2023:
Over 900 people trained

Oct. 2023-present:
48 Ironworkers and
90 pre-apprenticeship
participants received opioid
training

Help Offering Website



RI Building Trades Recovery Resources

www.bfri.org/recovery

All Rhode Island union resources

One home on the web

TAKE THE MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY

BECOME A RECOVERY PEER

BECOME A RECOVERY ALLY

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR RECOVERY WORK

Help is here.

If you are worried about your mental health or substance use — you are not alone. We can help.

We've got your back.

Your union offers help — find details below or, scroll down to the bottom of the page to find a local 12-step meeting or other recovery group.

Recovery is possible.

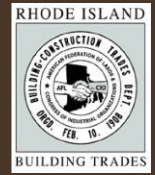
For private and confidential help, contact Michael Currier at 401-426-2470 or at mcurrier@bfri.org

Michael is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and is in long-term recovery. He can answer questions, lend support, and help you make a plan that works.

Sometimes, things feel really hard, but you are not alone. You can recover and you can get back to work afterwards.

Suicide and Crisis Hotline

Campaign



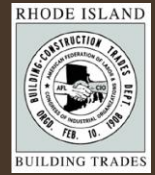
Summer Campaign kick-off

Create a visual landscape of help offering

- Jobsite banners
- Hard hat stickers Website: www.bfri.org/recovery



Campaign



More trained people on the jobsite and in the union hall

Self identified:

- Recovery Allies
- Recovery Peers
- Site leads/forepersons



**GENERAL
STICKER**



**GENERAL
STICKER**

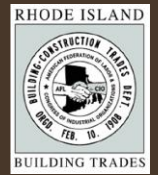


**RECOVERY
PEER**



**RECOVERY
ALLY**

More Trained People on the Jobsite



Peer Recovery Training

For people in long-term recovery

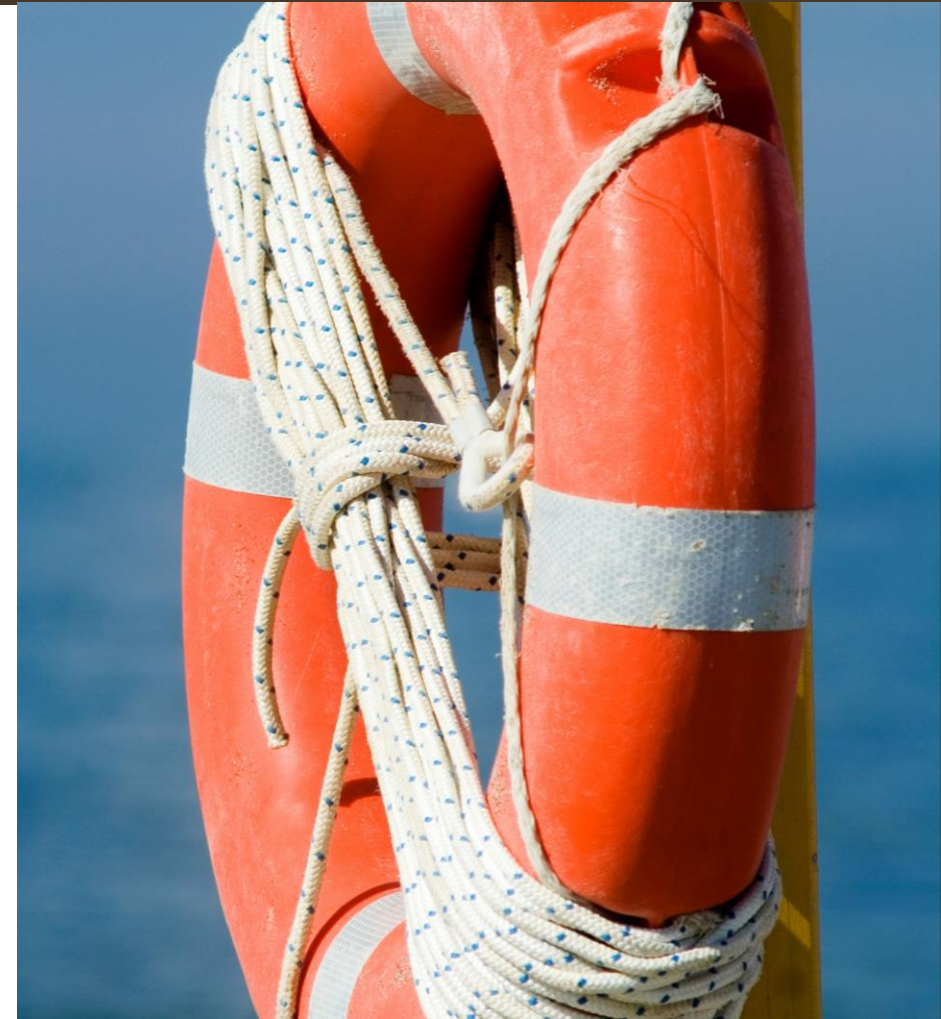
First group: March 6, 2024; 8 peers

Next Training:

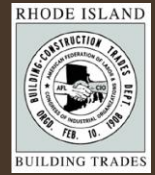
September 7, 2024, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Recovery Ally Training

October 9, 2024, 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.



Access to Life-saving Naloxone (Narcan)



Since October 2023, Building Futures has trained over 700 tradespeople on jobsites and distributed over 800 kits of naloxone (Narcan) throughout Rhode Island.



How to Respond to an Overdose



Try to wake the person up

Call their name and rub the middle of their chest with a closed fist



Call 911

The Good Samaritan law protects you from arrest for possession



Give naloxone

Follow the directions for nasal or intra-muscular naloxone kits.



Start rescue ventilation

Move the person to their back, tilt their chin up to open their airway,



Recovery position

Put the person on their side supported by a bent knee.

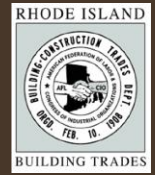


WWW.BFRI.ORG



Source:
Prevent Overdose RI

Clinical Resources and Treatment Referrals



Referral Sources

- Peer referrals
- Jobsite visits
- Union halls

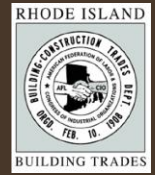
Clinical Services

- 15 individuals
- Scaling up
- Jobsite interventions/post-vention

Treatment referrals

- 7 referrals
- 7 referrals to mental health and substance use disorder treatment
- 4 people are currently abstinent or receiving recovery supports

Extended Training Offerings



RI OPIOIDS CRISIS
Our **Response.** Our **Recovery.**

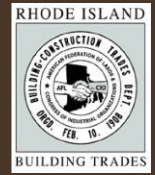


Mental Health FIRST AID
from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING



VitalCog
suicide prevention in the workplace

Next Steps/Areas for Exploration



Scale up current services

Ongoing assessment/Recovery Roundtables/Recovery Council

Continue to build relationship with unions and apprentice training programs

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) access and stigma access to benefits

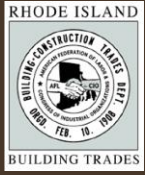
What does harm reduction look like on jobsites and in the union halls?

Member Assistance Professional in every union?





QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU.

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617-680-6083

Public Comment

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