

Hello from Local 18

“Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man.”
— Benjamin Franklin

Happy New Year Brothers and Sisters, 2018 just flew right by us and it's hard to believe that it's already 2019. This time of year it is customary for us to make New Year's resolutions and this year I would hope that all of us make a resolution to work safe on a daily basis. Last year we sadly lost five of our brothers and I have faith that in 2019 we can make that number zero. This is a time for us to not only make resolutions or set goals for the coming year but to also reflect on the past year. Let's remember the good times and also learn from the bad times or decisions we made so that 2019 can truly be the best.

Brothers and Sisters, there is something I would like to talk about that may be hard for some of us to talk about but I think it deserves a conversation. Suicide has come to be a topic we hear about more frequently lately and I want to share some information that will enlighten and maybe even help you save the life of a friend or family member.

It's hard to believe but each year we lose 44,965 (123/day) to suicide which makes it the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. The leading demographic being middle-aged white males. Even more disturbing is that men die by suicide 3.5 times more often than women and that firearms account for 51% of all suicides.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention there is not one single cause but yet it is a culmination of many factors such as depression, substance abuse, and life events. Changes in behavior or new behaviors following a painful event, loss or change are most often early warning signs that someone may be suicidal. Behaviors to look out for include, increased use of alcohol or drugs, looking for a way to end their lives, withdrawing from activities, isolating from family and friends, sleeping too much or too little, visiting or calling people to say goodbye, giving away prized possessions, aggression, and fatigue. Other warning signs may be presented through certain language such as talking about killing themselves, feeling hopeless, having no reason to live, being a burden to others, feeling trapped, or having unbearable pains. Moods that may be exhibited include depression, anxiety, loss of interest, irritability, humiliation or shame, and agitation or anger.

Often times there may be underlying risk factors that lead a person towards suicide. Examples of this are people who suffer from mental health conditions, serious physical health conditions, and traumatic brain injuries. Aside from health conditions other environmental factors such as access to firearms and drugs, prolonged stress, stressful life events, and exposure to another's suicide may lead to increased risk.

In conclusion, we can see that there are many factors that cause a person to turn toward suicide. Some are easier to understand than others but, I ask you, Brothers and Sisters, to please keep an eye on each other and know that there are many resources and treatments available for those that may need help. I urge anyone who needs assistance to call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text to 741741, they are available 24/7.

In Solidarity,

- Chris "Puddin'" Crha

local18journal@gmail.com