



**Workplace Mental Health:
Stepping up to the Challenges through
COVID-19**

MATES IN CONSTRUCTION

- An independent construction industry charity
- Supported by employers and unions in the industry
- Working on suicide prevention in construction



THE STORY SO FAR

- 200,000 + workers
- 15,000 + volunteers
- 10,000 + cases managed
- Mining
- Energy
- NZ

MATES IN CONSTRUCTION

- Practical steps to take in the workplace to promote good mental health
- How to identify when a staff member is not coping, and what steps you should take
- What to do if a staff member is suicidal. What to say. What action to take.
- What support mechanisms are available.
- Where to seek help.

THE STATE OF PLAY WHEN WE STARTED



BERT DEATH CLAIMS 1999–2007

399

DEATHS



BERT DEATH CLAIMS 1999–2007

88

SUICIDES

SUICIDE OVERVIEW



New Zealand 2018
SUICIDES

668

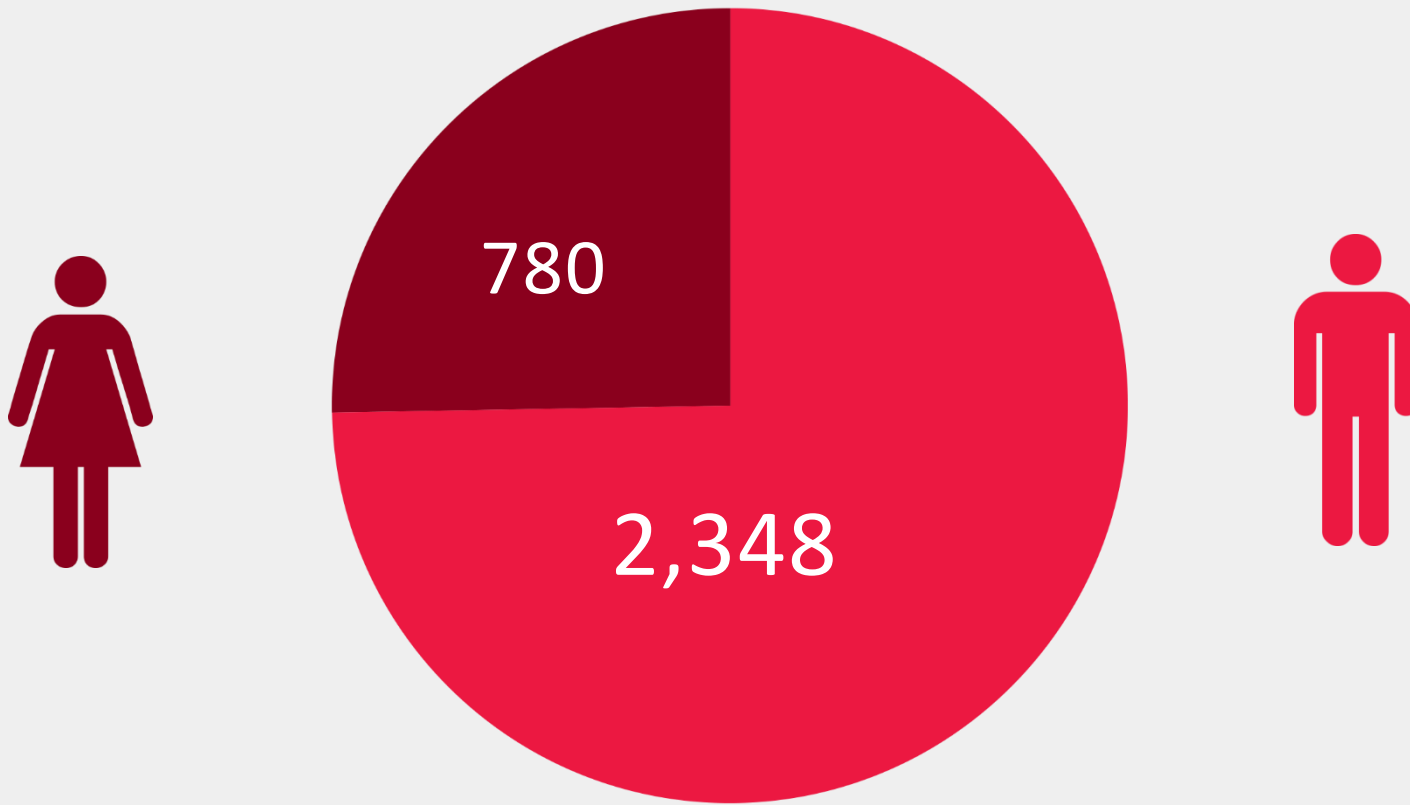
Population
4,700,000



ABS – 2018 SUICIDE RATES



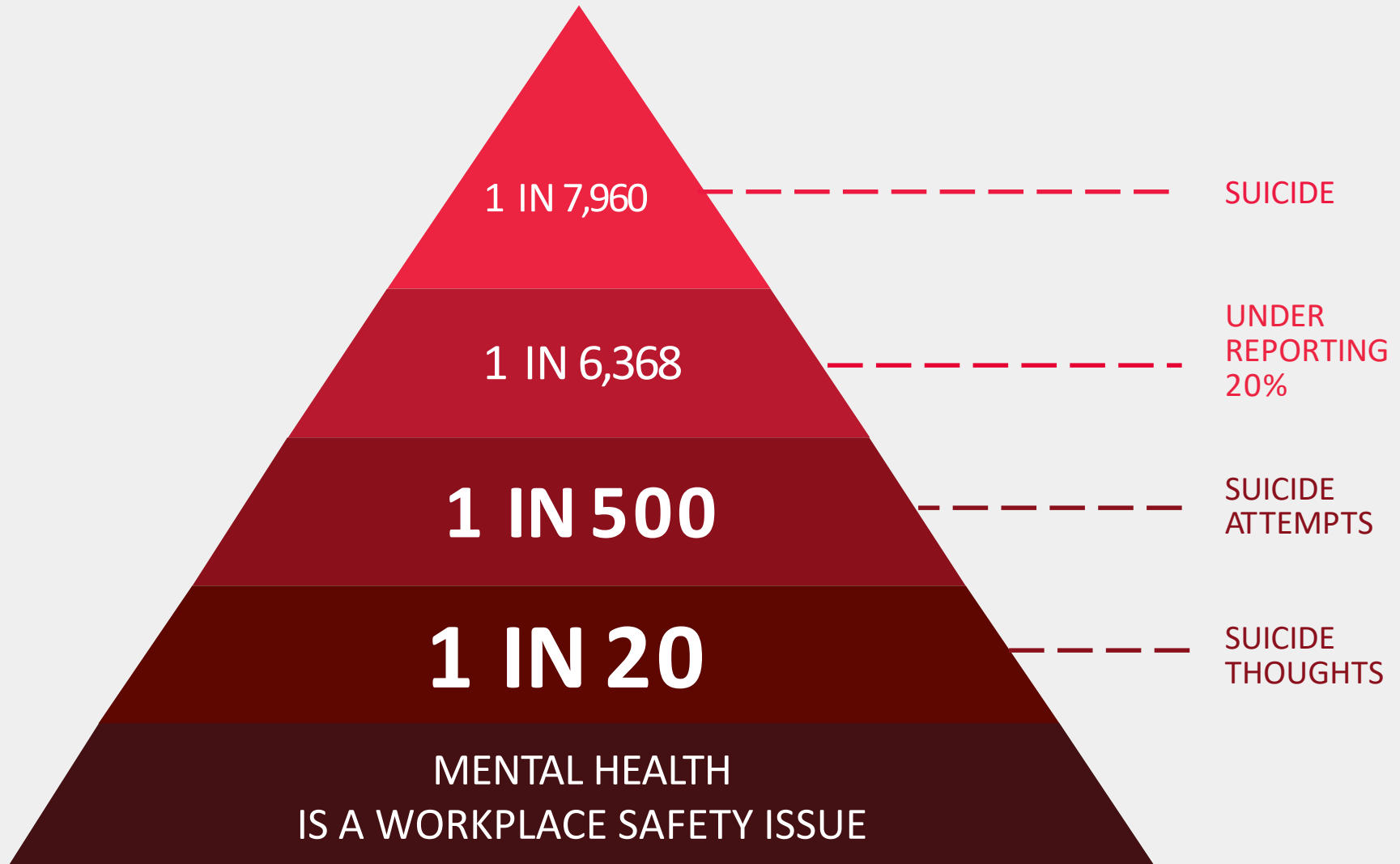
SUICIDE OVERVIEW



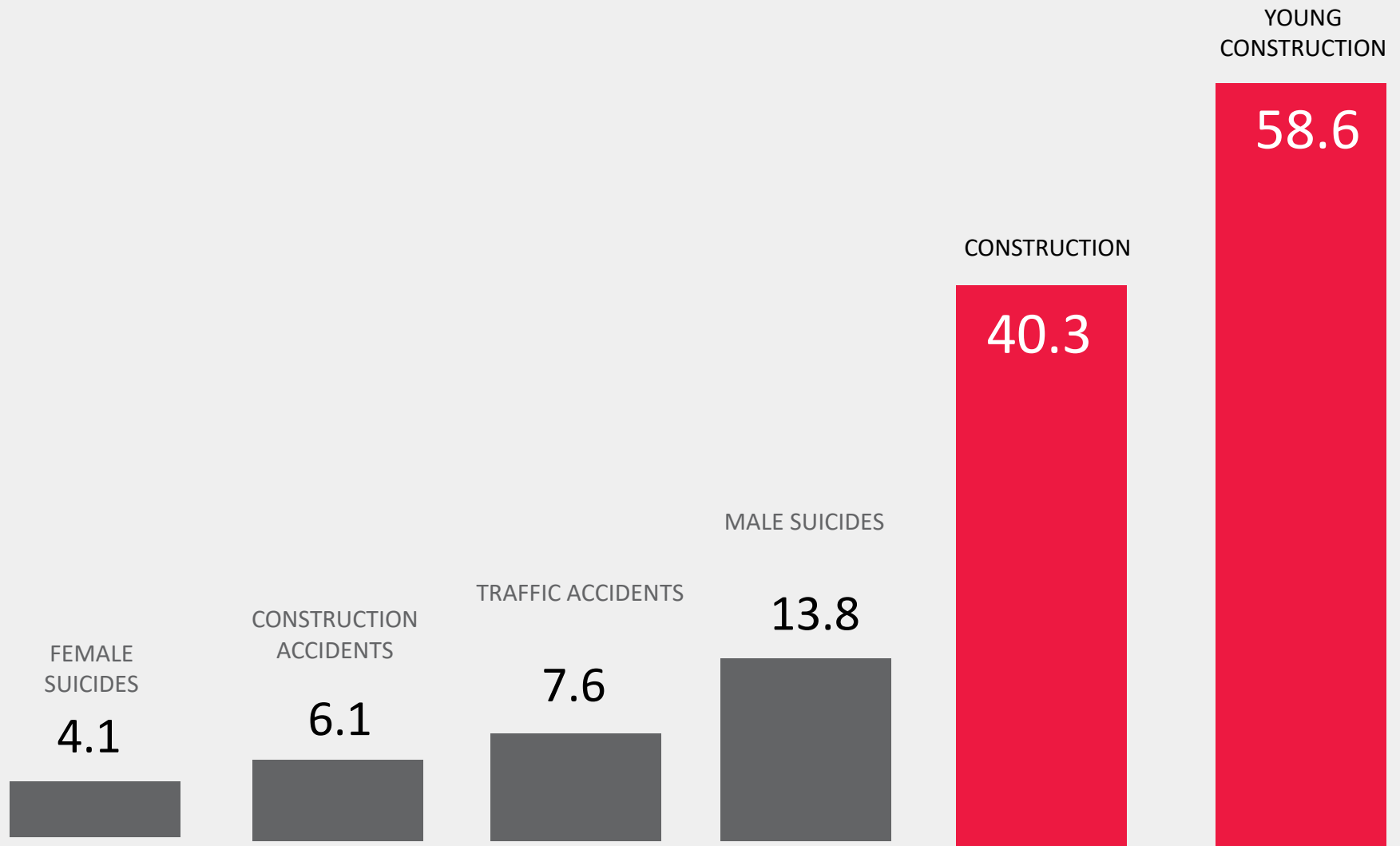
ABS – 2017 SUICIDE RATES



SUICIDE OVERVIEW



IS THERE A PROBLEM?



DEATH RATES OUT OF 100,000
Stats 2007



MORE FACTS



1 IN 2 HAD TOLD SOMEONE

FROM AISRAP REPORT

MORE FACTS



1 IN 4 ATTEMPTED BEFORE

FROM AISRAP REPORT

MORE FACTS



ONLY 7 IN 100 SOUGHT PROFESSIONAL HELP

FROM AISRAP REPORT



WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?



“TRIGGER” LIFE EVENTS

LIFE EVENT	QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES
Relationship problems	Long working hours
Pending legal matters	A culture of heavy alcohol use
Financial problems	Bullying behaviours
Conflict	A culture of not allowing discussion of problems with peers
Recent/pending unemployment	
Work problems	A male dominated industry
Grief	Financial management issues
Child custody disputes	Lack of job security
Other life events	

WHAT LIFE EVENTS CAUSE STRESS?

Family crisis

Relationship
breakdown

Death of
friend/family
member

IT'S OFTEN ABOUT
LOSS

Anniversary of
death of
friend/family
member

Financial stress

Recent self-harm
or suicide attempt

Constant stress

TIPPING POINT



WHAT CHANGES MIGHT YOU SEE?

Moody

Numb/careless

Distant

Attitude

Alcohol or
drug misuse

Gambling

Giving away
possessions

Putting affairs
in order

WHAT CHANGES MIGHT YOU SEE?

Moody

Numb/careless

Distant

LOOK FOR
CHANGES

Gambling

Giving away
possessions

Putting affairs
in order

THINGS YOU MIGHT SENSE OR HEAR

Loneliness

OFTEN SUBTLE

Joblessness

Escape

A GUT FEELING

Depressed

Burden



WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

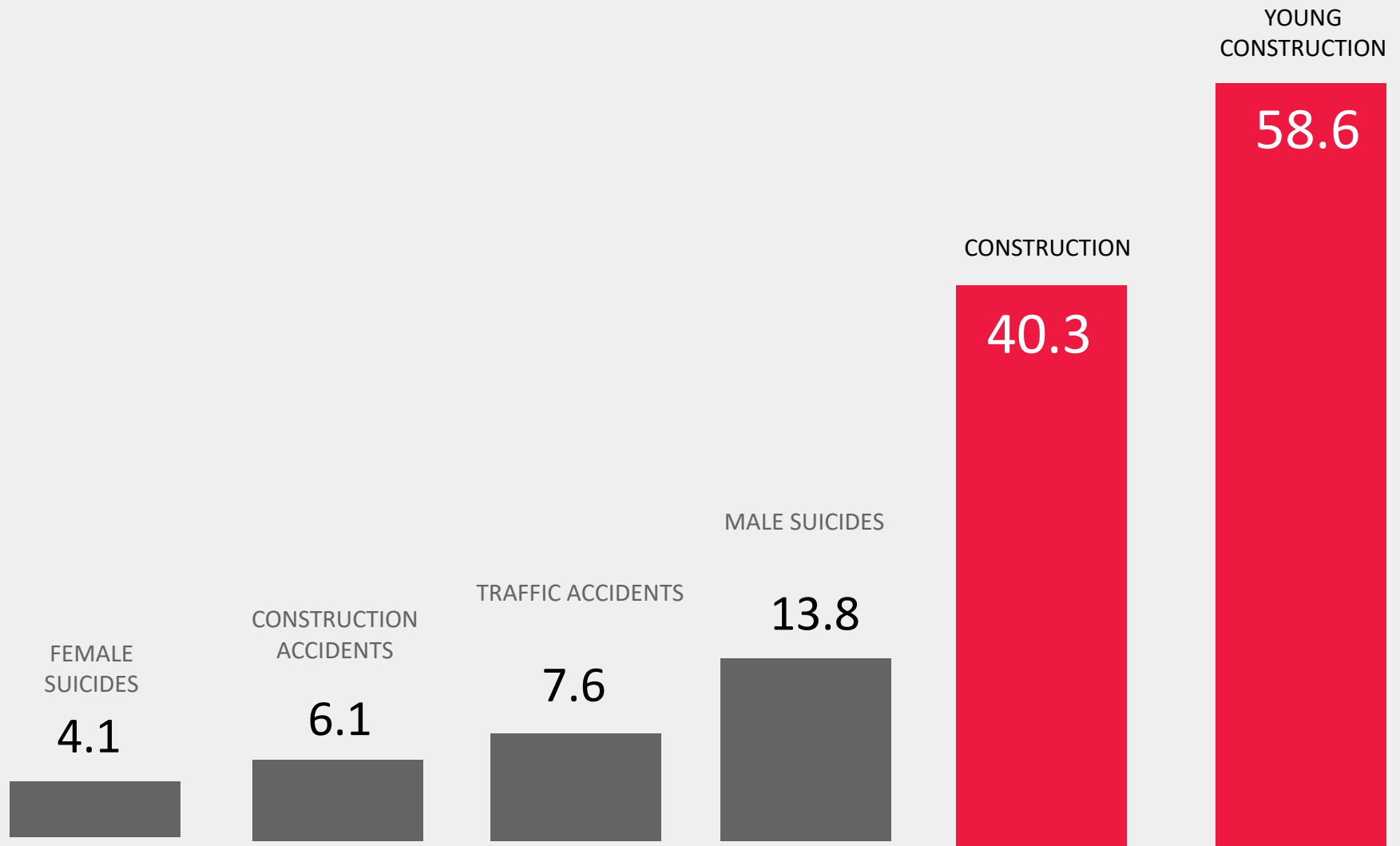


**DO
NOTHING**

**DO
SOMETHING**



WHEN WE DID NOTHING – IS THIS OKAY?



DEATH RATES OUT OF 100,000
Stats 2007



WHAT DO WE DO

LOOK FOR THE SIGNS

TELL
SOMEONE



CONNECTOR



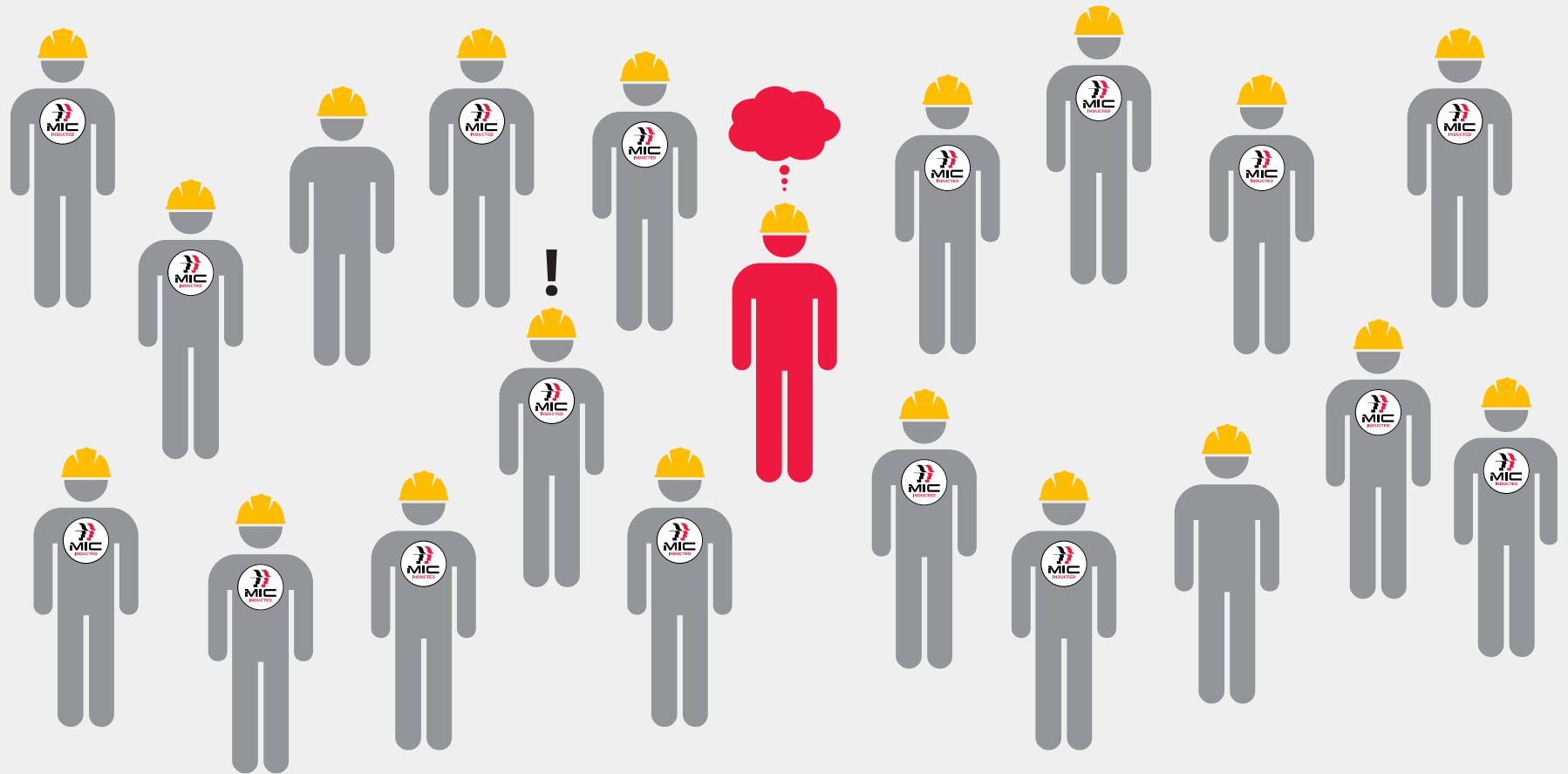
A MATE WHO CAN KEEP YOU SAFE WHILE
CONNECTING YOU TO HELP

A PATHWAY TO HELP



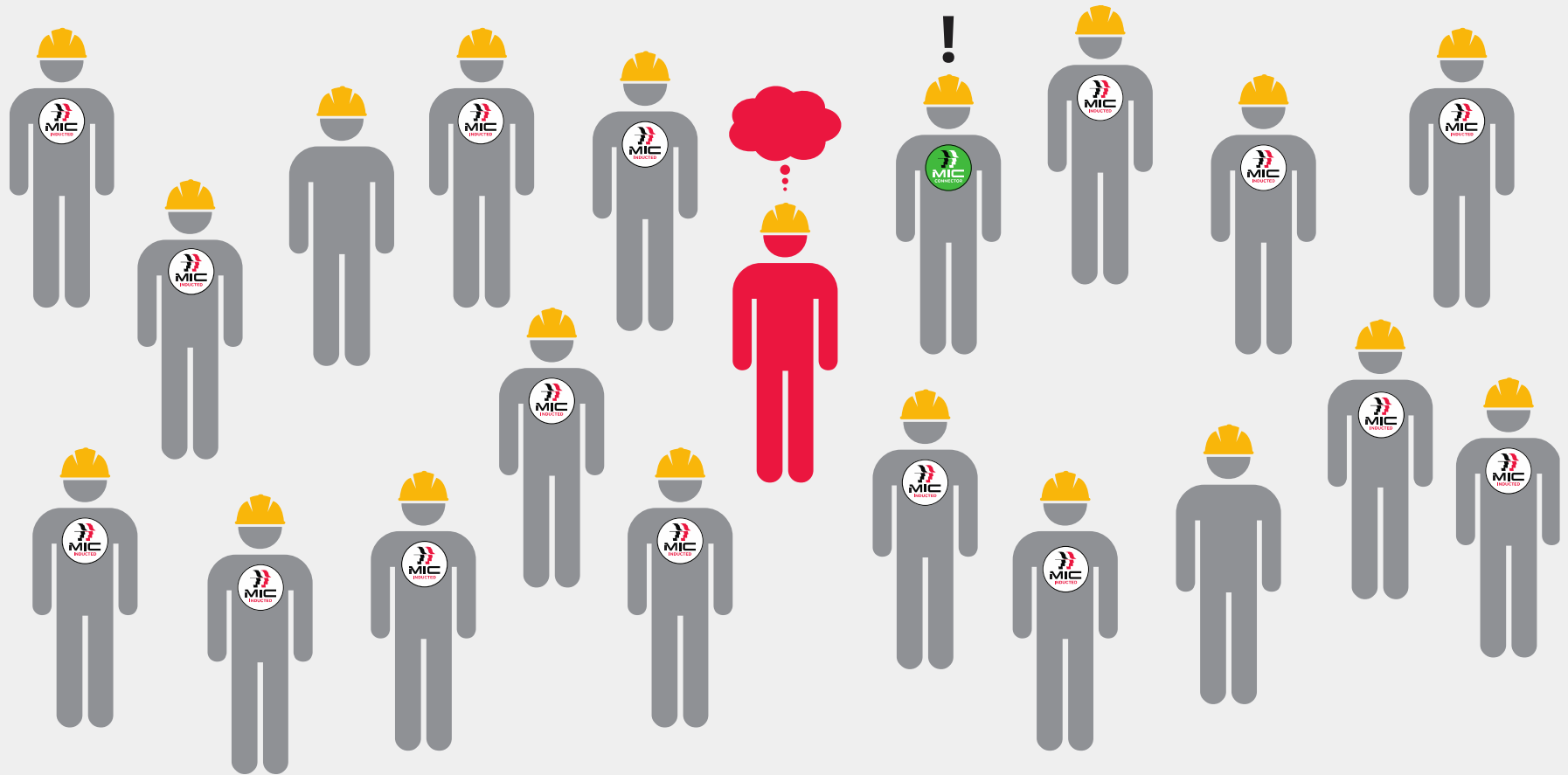
1 IN 20 WORKERS MAY HAVE
SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

A PATHWAY TO HELP



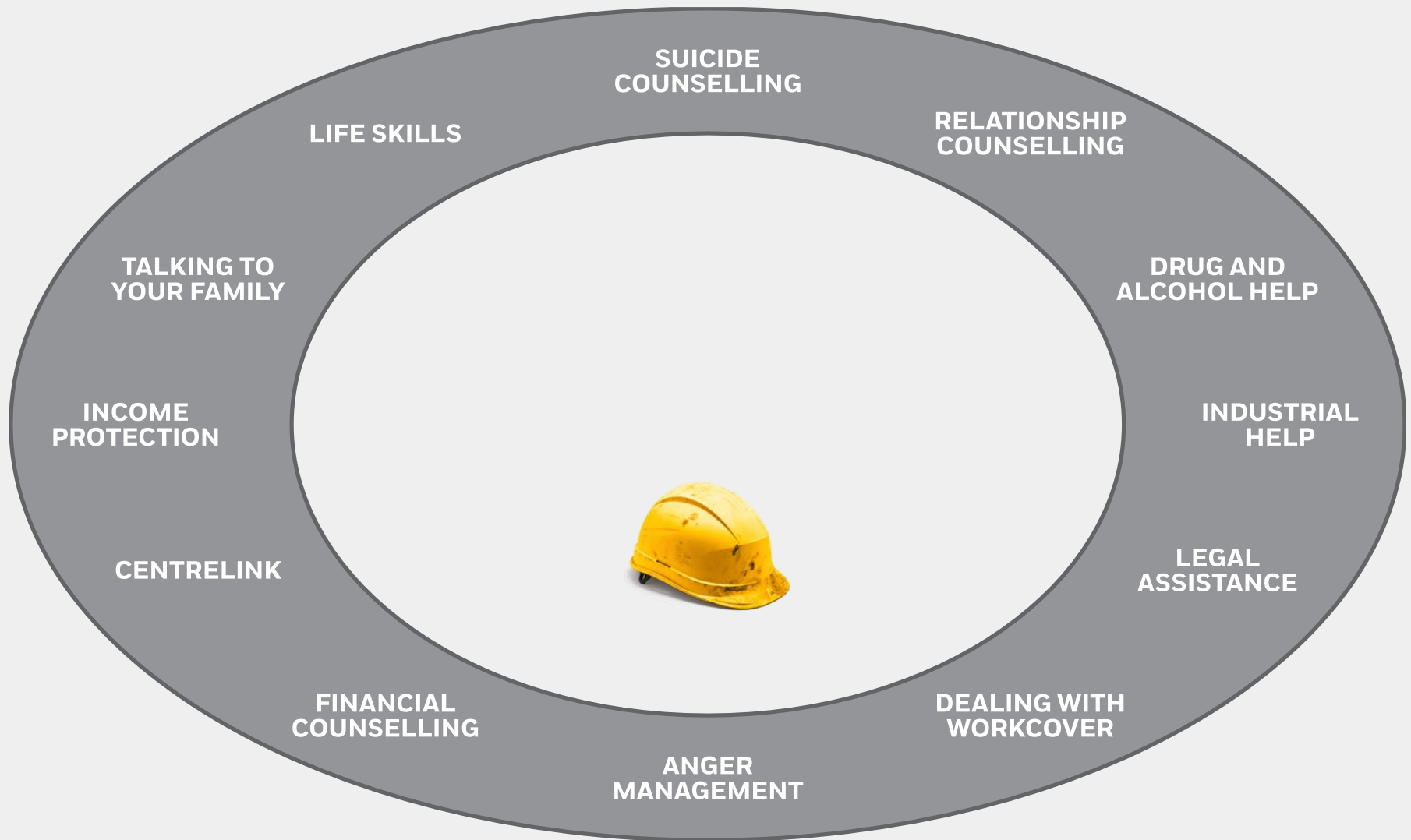
GENERAL AWARENESS ON SITE SHOULD
HELP SOMEONE TO NOTICE

A PATHWAY TO HELP

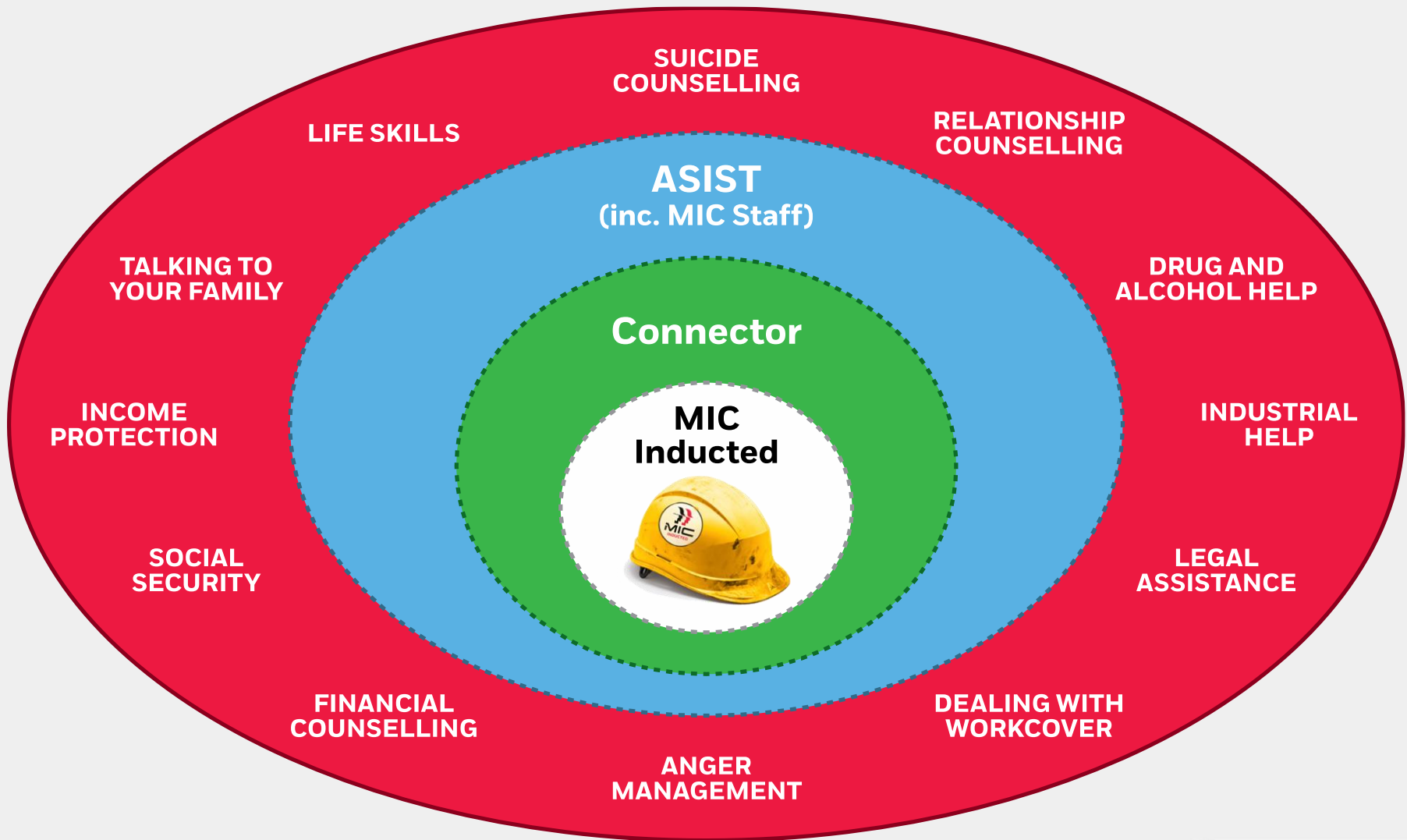


TRAINED CONNECTORS PROVIDE
A PATHWAY TO HELP

HOW DOES IT WORK?



HOW DOES IT WORK?



PRACTICAL STEPS

The Australian Construction Industry Blueprint For Better Mental Health And Suicide Prevention

www.constructionblueprint.com.au



PRACTICAL STEPS – THE BLUEPRINT PILLARS



WHAT TO SAY (OR NOT TO SAY)

- Give advice e.g. fixing problems
- Evaluate or judge behavior
- Interpret or counsel
- Rushing or impatient
- Closed or negative body language

WHAT TO SAY (OR NOT TO SAY)

- Be natural, yourself
- Find a connector, or trusted peer
- Listen
- Keep Safe and connect to help
- Limit interruptions
- Open and affirming body language
- Calm / Don't panic
- Be patient

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

- MATES Helpline or MATES staff
- Lifeline
- ASIST trained worker
- Employee Assistance Program
- Family
- Friends
- Priest/Religious Leader
- Local GP
- 000 - Emergency Services
- Hospital
- Others?





Mates in Construction Suicide Prevention Program: A Five Year Review

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The Impact of a Suicide Prevention Strategy on Reducing the Economic Cost of Suicide in the New South Wales Construction Industry

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