

TOOLBOX TALK #2

Recognizing the Signs



Today's Toolbox Talk is focusing on something that impacts us all - mental health. While we are accustomed to discussing physical safety, it is equally vital to address the mental well-being of our crew members. Let's delve into why recognizing signs of mental health challenges is essential, what those signs might be, and how we can contribute to a supportive environment.

Recognizing Signs and Symptoms

Mental health challenges can manifest in various ways. It is important to be observant and recognize signs early on that may indicate a colleague is facing mental health challenges. On the construction site, stressors are abundant. Look out for signs such as increased irritability, decreased productivity, or persistent worry. Substance abuse or risky behaviors can also be red flags. Additional signs to be aware of include:

1. **Changes in Behavior:** Noticeable changes in behavior such as increased irritability, excessive worry or fear, feeling sad or low, or having frequent anger outbursts.
2. **Decreased Productivity:** Decreased job performance, missed deadlines, consistently showing up late or increased errors.
3. **Physical Symptoms:** Signs such as constant fatigue, changes in sleep patterns, or unexplained physical discomfort.
4. **Isolation:** Withdrawing from social activities or spending excessive time alone and avoiding interactions.
5. **Neglecting Personal Care:** Drastic changes in physical appearance such as significant weight loss or gain, lack of personal hygiene, and changes in personal style.

**REMEMBER, A SUDDEN CHANGE IN A COLLEAGUE'S USUAL BEHAVIOR
MIGHT BE A CALL FOR HELP.**

GROUP DISCUSSION:

How can we, as a crew, be more proactive when recognizing the signs of someone who may be struggling with mental health challenges?

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Importance of Recognition

Recognizing signs of mental health challenges is not just about empathy, it's a matter of safety. Untreated mental health issues can lead to crisis situations, affecting not only the individual but also the entire team. Early intervention can prevent accidents, enhance productivity, and save lives.

How to Respond

If you become concerned about a crew member, don't hesitate to reach out. It is crucial to act.

1. **Approach Privately:** Have a conversation with the individual in a distraction-free, private space in a non-judgmental manner. Simply asking "How are you doing" can make a significant impact.
2. **Express Concern:** Share your observations and express genuine concern.
3. **Listen Empathetically:** Allow them to open up and share their feelings.
4. **Offer Support:** Encourage seeking professional help and provide additional resources.

Early Intervention

Recognizing signs allows for early intervention. Just as we respond swiftly to physical injuries on the job site, addressing mental health concerns promptly is crucial. Early intervention can prevent situations from escalating, promoting overall well-being and a healthier work environment.

Daily Practices for Prevention

Creating a mentally healthy workplace involves daily practices. Foster open communication, destigmatize mental health discussions, and promote a supportive environment. Encourage breaks, physical activity, and team-building activities. Regularly check in on one another. A simple "How are you doing?" can make a significant impact.

Suicide Prevention

Addressing mental health also involves suicide prevention. Recognizing signs of someone in crisis, such as expressing feelings of hopelessness or talking about self-harm, is vital. If you encounter these signs, don't hesitate to seek immediate assistance through our employee assistance program or emergency services.

988 Lifeline

TEAM 1-800-634-7710

Additional resources can be found at www.northcountrycarpenter.org/mental-health