

# TOOLBOX TALK #3

## Reducing the Stigma



*Today, we are addressing a critical aspect of our well-being - the need to break down the barriers and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health in the construction industry. We prioritize safety every day on the job site, it is time to extend that commitment to our mental health. Let's explore why reducing the stigma is essential, how it impacts construction workers and the industry, and ways we can collectively foster a culture of understanding and support.*

### Reducing the Stigma

Reducing the stigma of mental health means creating an environment where open conversations about well-being are welcomed, and seeking help is seen as a sign of strength, not weakness. It is about breaking down barriers that prevent our construction family from reaching out for support.

### Why it Matters to Construction Workers

- 1. Promotes Well-being:** Reducing stigma encourages individuals to prioritize their mental well-being, leading to healthier and happier lives.
- 2. Strengthens Team Dynamics:** Fostering a culture of understanding and support strengthens the bonds within our construction family, creating a more resilient and cohesive team.
- 3. Prioritize Safety:** Just as we prioritize safety on the job site, prioritizing mental health ensures that we are all making it back home not just physically, but mentally sound.

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

**What are some specific barriers or challenges that you believe exist within the construction industry that prevents individuals from openly discussing mental health or seeking help? How can we collectively identify and overcome these barriers to create a more supportive environment?**

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### Common Barriers to Seeking Help

1. **Tough Guy Culture:** The construction industry often glorifies toughness, making it challenging for individuals to express vulnerability.
2. **Fear of Judgment:** There is a fear that acknowledging mental health challenges will lead to judgment from colleagues and supervisors.
3. **Job Insecurity:** Concerns about job security may deter individuals from seeking help, fearing it could impact their professional standing.

### Ways to Reduce the Stigma

1. **Educate the Team:** Share information about mental health, emphasizing that it is as crucial as physical health. Education reduces myths and misunderstandings.
2. **Lead by Example:** Openly discuss your own experiences with mental health challenges or seeking support. By leading by example, you normalize the conversation.
3. **Promote a Supportive Culture:** Foster a work culture where colleagues feel comfortable discussing mental health. Encourage open conversations during team meetings.
4. **Provide Resources:** Make information about mental health resources readily available on the job site. Ensure everyone knows where to turn for support.
5. **Use Inclusive Language:** Be mindful of the language used. Using inclusive and non-stigmatizing language helps create a more supportive atmosphere.

### A Collective Commitment:

1. **Safety Beyond the Hard Hat:** Recognize that safety extends beyond physical hazards. Prioritize mental well-being as an integral part of our commitment to returning home safely.
2. **Check-in Regularly:** Take the time to check in on your colleagues. A simple question about how they are doing can make a significant difference.
3. **Encourage Support Networks:** Establish peer support networks where team members can share their experiences, challenges, and provide support to one another.

**988 Lifeline**

**TEAM 1-800-634-7710**

*Additional resources can be found at [www.northcountrycarpenter.org/mental-health](http://www.northcountrycarpenter.org/mental-health)*