

TOOLBOX TALK #1

Mental Health 101



Today, we are going to talk about an important aspect of our lives that doesn't always get the attention it deserves - mental health. We all know that working in construction comes with its unique challenges, and taking care of our mental well-being is just as crucial as wearing our safety gear. Let's take a moment to discuss what mental health is and how it impacts us in the construction industry.

Understanding Mental Health

Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. In the high-pressure environment of construction, it is common to focus on physical safety, but mental health is equally vital. Stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues can impact our ability to work safely and effectively.

A CDC STUDY FOUND THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST SUICIDE RATES IN THE COUNTRY. ACCORDING TO THE STUDY, MALES IN CONSTRUCTION HAD A SUICIDE RATE OF 45.3 DEATHS PER 100,000 PEOPLE. (ABOUT TWICE THE OVERALL SUICIDE RATE FOR MEN IN THE U.S.)

Common Risk Factors

- 1. Home and Family Matters:** We all face personal challenges at home. Whether it is financial stress, relationship issues, or family concerns, these factors can significantly impact our mental health on and off the job.
- 2. Job Site Pressures:** The nature of our work exposes us to unique challenges on the job site. From tight deadlines to unexpected setbacks, it is crucial to acknowledge the impact these facts can have on our mental well-being.
- 3. Physical Strain:** The physical demands of our jobs can take a toll on our mental health. Chronic pain and physical fatigue can contribute to feelings of frustration and, in some cases, depression.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

What are other common risk factors that may impact our mental health on and off the job site?

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Why Mental Health Matters

1. **Safety First:** A healthy mind contributes to a safer work environment. When we are mentally well, we can stay focused, make better decisions, and react more effectively to unexpected challenges.
2. **Productivity and Efficiency:** Mental well-being isn't just about avoiding problems; it is also about enhancing our performance. A clear and focused mind leads to increased productivity and efficiency.
3. **Team Dynamics:** Building strong teams requires more than physical strength. It involves understanding and supporting each other's mental well-being. A positive work environment fosters better collaboration and communication.

Top 4 Reasons Why Workers May Not Seek Care When Needed

SHAME AND STIGMA **FEAR OF JUDGEMENT BY PEERS**
FEAR OF JOB CONSEQUENCES **DON'T KNOW HOW TO ACCESS CARE**

Building Mental Wellness

1. **Open Communication:** Talk about your challenges. Share your experiences with colleagues. We are a team, and supporting each other starts with open communication.
2. **Take Breaks:** Do not underestimate the power of a short break. Stepping away from the job for a few minutes can refresh your mind and improve your focus.
3. **Access Resources:** Many companies provide employee assistance programs (EAPs) that offer mental health support. Take advantage of these resources if you need support.
4. **Promote a Positive Culture:** Be mindful of the language used on the job site. Encourage positive reinforcement and acknowledgement of a job well done.
5. **Know the Signs:** Familiarize yourself with the signs of mental health issues, both in yourself and your colleagues. Early recognition and intervention can save lives.

988 Lifeline

TEAM 1-800-634-7710

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