

# TOOLBOX TALK #2

## Mental Health Safety Plan



*Construction workers face unique stressors that can affect mental health, including high-pressure work environments, long hours, physical strain, and periods of isolation. It is important to take proactive steps to manage mental health challenges before they escalate into crises. A mental health safety plan is a practical tool designed to help workers recognize early signs of distress and provide actionable steps to manage emotions in difficult situations.*

### What is a Mental Health Safety Plan?

A mental health safety plan is a personalized strategy that outlines special actions someone can take to protect their mental health during times of crisis. Just like physical safety plans are created for potential hazards on the job, a mental health safety plan is a guide for navigating mental or emotional emergencies. It includes self-awareness of triggers, coping strategies, support systems, and emergency contacts, and it should be easily accessible when needed.

### Why is a Mental Health Safety Plan Important?

Construction work can lead to high levels of stress, fatigue, anxiety, and even depression. Without proper management, these conditions can affect not only a worker's well-being but also their safety and productivity. Having a mental health safety plan in place can:

- **Prevent escalation** of crises by identifying triggers early on.
- **Promote safety** by ensuring workers don't make decisions that could harm themselves or others.
- **Offer clear steps** to take when in distress, reducing feelings of helplessness.
- **Encourage seeking help** before the situation worsens.
- **Support colleagues** who may also face mental health struggles.

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Why do you think it's important to have a personalized mental health safety plan?
2. How do you think having a mental health safety plan could help you or a coworker during a mental health crisis?

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### How a Mental Health Safety Plan Helps in a Crisis

Mental health crises can be overwhelming, and it's often difficult to know what to do when emotions run high. A safety plan provides guidance when someone is feeling hopeless, anxious, or out of control. The plan should outline:

1. **Early warning signs:** Be mindful of personal behavioral or physical changes that may signal emotional triggers.
2. **Coping strategies:** When feeling stressed or overwhelmed, have a list of immediate actions to help de-escalate emotions and refocus.
3. **Support networks:** When things become overwhelming, it's crucial to have a list of trusted individuals to reach out to.
4. **Emergency resources:** In some situations, immediate professional intervention is necessary. It's essential to have a list of local emergency services, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) provided by employers, and mental health hotlines or services.

### Create a Personalized Mental Health Safety Plan

A Mental Health Safety Plan worksheet has been provided to guide you when you need mental health support. Creating a personalized plan is as essential as wearing your hard hat on the job site - it protects you from potential harm. Take the time to fill out the worksheet; developing this plan can be life-changing, equipping you with the tools to manage stress, prevent mental health crises, and improve your overall well-being. Keep it easily accessible in a location that works best for you.

**This plan is for *you* - take time to revisit it when necessary and make updates as needed. Remember, your mental health is just as important as your physical health, and it's ok to ask for help when you need it.**

**988 Lifeline**

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

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