



TOOLBOX TALK:

Building a Healthy Mindset



BUILDING A HEALTHY MINDSET

STANDUP

We all know physical health matters, but we don't always recognize that mental health matters just as much. For example, imagine a day when equipment breaks down in the middle of a big project, causing delays and raising pressure to finish on time. Situations like this are common on construction sites and can stress anyone out. When you exercise your mind and build a healthy mindset, you can bounce back, recover quickly, and adapt to difficult situations like these. Having external support and working for a job that has a caring culture is important, but having a healthy mindset, or being resilient, is also critical to keeping ourselves mentally well.

The numbers show that construction is a tough industry. In 2024 alone, over 5,000 construction workers died by suicide and over 11,000 died from opioid overdoses, underscoring the need to act. But change is possible. As more people in the industry talk openly about mental health and support each other, we can make a real difference and help save lives.

Construction work is stressful. Life is stressful. Balancing the two can get overwhelming for even the toughest of us. Building a healthy mindset can help us face those challenges head-on and come out the other side without turning to harmful behaviors.

How to build a healthy mindset:

- Learn to talk about stress or trauma instead of bottling things up; simple phrases like *"Work has been stressing me out lately"* or *"Mind if I get something off of my chest?"* can help open the door to support and a conversation.
- Build strong relationships and connections.
- Join local groups, like a sports or hobby club in your area.
- Volunteer to help or mentor others.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Develop coping habits over time to avoid negative emotional reactions or bounce back from them more quickly.

How to build a healthy mindset (continued):

- Break large problems down into manageable steps. Celebrate small wins.
- Practice mental flexibility. Change is normal; remember “*control the controllables*.” Sometimes the only thing you can control is your reaction, thoughts, and behaviors when faced with hardships.
- **Replace negative self-talk with helpful thoughts.**
- Take care of your body. Eat healthy, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly.
- Practice mindfulness. This can be as simple as a few deep breaths or going for a walk. If you’d like to try more, meditation or yoga can help, too.
- Recall past hard times and how you survived them.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does a healthy mindset mean to you?
2. What are some of the biggest sources of stress for construction workers today?
3. What are healthy ways you deal with stress after a tough day

Instructor Note: If anyone needs support in response to this toolbox talk, please guide them in one of the following ways:

1. Identify resources available through your employer. Is there an EAP or MAP?
2. Help the individual identify local support resources through an internet search.
3. Call 988 alongside the individual to get immediate crisis support or recommendations for local services.