

CONSTRUCTION INCLUSION WEEK 2025

TOOLBOX TALKS



**Construction
Inclusion Week**

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



**Commitment &
Accountability**



**Attract
& Retain**



**Belonging & Workforce
Culture**



**Economic
Opportunity**



**Community
Engagement**



Estimated Time:

15 minutes max



Audience:

**All employees (field teams, supervisors,
PMs, office staff, senior leadership)**

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONSTRUCTION INCLUSION WEEK 2025 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



PURPOSE

The CIW 2025 Toolbox Talks are short, team-based discussions and strategic engagement tools designed to build awareness, strengthen workplace culture, and drive retention through short, action-focused conversations aligned with workforce development best practices. and make the industry more welcoming—one conversation at a time.

The Toolbox Talks are designed to help your organization enhance workforce development, safety, and respect for all. The materials focus on creating a work environment that supports equal employment opportunity, inclusion, and belonging for everyone, so that your organization can attract, retain, and engage top talent. We hope that these materials will be a valuable resource that helps enhance workforce readiness, team performance, safety, productivity, and skill development for all employees.

These talks align with CIW's national focus on **Workforce Development** and the 2025 theme of Opening Doors. These talks support CIW's 2025 five national pillars:



Commitment & Accountability:

Promoting leadership ownership and consistent follow-through on inclusion, culture, and workforce development efforts across all levels.



Economic Opportunity:

Creating fair access to contracts, careers, and business partnerships that help individuals, suppliers, and communities grow together.



Attract & Retain:

Expanding and sustaining high-quality talent pipeline by creating inclusive pathways open to all qualified individuals, improving onboarding, and reinforcing reasons to stay.



Belonging & Workforce Culture:

Fostering environments that enhance team cohesion, safety, and long-term retention.



Community Engagement:

Building meaningful partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and neighborhoods to strengthen the construction industry today and create opportunities that inspire current and future generations.

Each Toolbox Talk is action-focused and designed for flexible delivery across jobsites, offices, and school environments.



WHAT'S INCLUDED **13 CURATED TALKS** COVERING

1 | MENTORSHIP

5 | INCLUSIVE
JOBSITE CULTURE

10 | DIFFERING ABILITIES
AND NEURODIVERGENT
THINKING

2 | TALENT
OUTREACH

6 | MENTAL
HEALTH

11 | MICRO-
INCLUSION

3 | RESPECT &
BELONGING

7 | PSYCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY

12 | BRIDGING
GENERATIONAL GAPS

4 | CAREER RE-ENTRY

8 | LIFE AFTER
ATHLETICS

13 | ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY

9 | VETERANS IN
CONSTRUCTION



EACH TALK INCLUDES

- **15-minute discussion** script (10-minute delivery + 5 min discussion)
- Learning objectives
- Plain-language definitions, key concepts & activities
- **Audience-specific** examples for Jobsite, office, school/community & group activity options
- Discussion questions to spark insight.
- General ask, group activities, and action steps.
- **2-3 curated** external resources per topic
- Hashtags + social media prompt

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



FLEXIBLE DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS

You can use the Toolbox Talks in several ways:

- Pillar focused throughout the week (1 talk per day: Oct 13–17, 2025)
- Specific toolbox talks for the needs of your project/jobsite/office
- Weekly/Monthly Rotation (year-round workforce focus)
- Custom Application (pick a topic relevant to your site/team/season) – veterans' day.



DEPLOYMENT GOALS

- Foster team-led conversations that build inclusion, trust, and shared accountability across all roles and levels.
- Promote daily inclusive behaviors that shape culture—beyond policies, training, or titles.
- Strengthen retention and engagement by making jobsites and offices safer, more respectful, and more welcoming to everyone.
- Elevate all voices and respect all paths, bringing visibility to different experiences, journeys, and career routes.
- Connect workforce development to culture, showing how inclusion for all drives skill-building, growth, and long-term success.
- Encourage storytelling and impact to helping teams share what's working.
- Deepen community and school engagement, using CIW as a platform to inspire future talent and build local partnerships.



HOW IT WORKS

Site/office
facilitator opens
with the days Talk.

Team engages
in discussion or
activity.

The group selects 1
takeaway action for
the week.

Optional:
Share stories on
internal channels or
social media.



IMPACT METRICS TO TRACK

- Participation counts (sign-in, QR check-in)
- Stories shared or team reflections.



Social engagement using:

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors



DISCLAIMER

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CONSTRUCTION INCLUSION WEEK 2025

TOOLBOX TALK PILLAR ALIGNMENT

TOOLBOX TALK TITLE	PILLAR ALIGNMENT
1. Opening Doors through Mentorship	Attract and Retain, Belonging & Workplace Culture, Commitment & Accountability
2. Sparking Early Interest in The Construction Industry	Attract and Retain, Community Engagement
3. Respect and Inclusion on the Jobsite	Belonging & Workplace Culture, Commitment & Accountability
4. Career Re-entry Pathways	Economic Opportunity, Community Engagement, Commitment & Accountability
5. Every Role Counts: Building an Inclusive Site Culture	Belonging & Workplace Culture, Commitment & Accountability
6. Mental Health in Construction	Belonging & Workplace Culture, Attract and Retain,
7. Psychological Safety in Construction	Belonging & Workplace Culture, Attract and Retain
8. Pivot & Build – Life After Athletics	Attract and Retain, Economic Opportunity
9. From Service to Site – Construction Careers for Veterans	Attract and Retain, Belonging & Workplace Culture
10. Differing Abilities and Neurodivergent Thinking Styles	Attract and Retain, Belonging & Workplace Culture, Commitment & Accountability
11. Small Actions, Big Impact	Belonging & Workplace Culture, Commitment & Accountability
12. Bridging Generations: Building Together	Belonging & Workplace Culture, Commitment & Accountability
13. Broadening Opportunities for Qualified Suppliers	Economic Opportunity, Community Engagement, Commitment & Accountability

OPENING DOORS THROUGH MENTORSHIP

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All team members, new hires,
apprentices, and early-career
workers, students**

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CONSTRUCTION INCLUSION WEEK 2025 TOOLBOX TALK



CIW PILLAR
*Attract and Retain, Belonging
& Workforce Culture,
Commitment & Accountability*

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 1

OPENING DOORS THROUGH MENTORSHIP



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation introduces the power of mentorship and how it builds inclusion, confidence, and career development across the industry.

- Understand how mentorship improves retention and team culture.
- Learn small actions to build trust, signal support and inclusion.
- Spot teammates who may need encouragement or guidance.
- Learn how to practice every-day mentoring, even without a title.



DEFINITIONS

Mentorship:

A voluntary relationship where experience, encouragement, and insights are shared to support growth and not tied to employment decisions. Open to everyone, mentorship is separate from and not tied to employment decisions such as hiring, promotions, or compensation, which are based solely on job-related qualifications and performance.

Mentee:

A person who receives guidance, feedback, and connection from someone more experienced (anyone can be a mentee).

Micro-Mentorship:

Small acts, like offering advice or listening, build trust, confidence, and culture voluntarily without being tied to employment decisions. For example, taking 2 minutes to explain a task or checking in with a new team member.

Psychological Safety:

The ability to speak up, ask questions, ask for help or admit mistakes without fear.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Mentorship isn't a program, it's a habit.
- Starting in construction can be intimidating; especially for those new to the construction environment or entering from other industries. Mentorship helps someone feel seen, heard, and capable of growing in their role.

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

- Mentorship builds belonging by strengthening team cohesion, psychological safety, and confidence at every level.
- You don't need a title to mentor, just the intention to support someone.
- Mentorship helps people stay, grow and feel safe on the team.



CONTENT

Mentorship helps people feel supported, included, and more confident in their work. When someone takes time to show you the ropes, share advice, or simply check in, it builds trust and connection. Whether you're in the field, the office, or just starting your career, mentorship can help you feel like you belong.

You don't need a formal program or title to be a mentor. Every team member can make a difference by offering encouragement, sharing lessons learned, or checking in with someone new. These small actions build a stronger team and help others grow.





Mentorship is especially important in construction because many people are entering the industry for the first time. New workers may be nervous or unsure about how things work. A quick tip, a kind word, or a daily check-in can help someone feel welcomed and valued.

Mentorship is also good for business. It improves teamwork, supports learning, and helps people stay longer in their roles. When people feel seen and supported, they are more likely to stay, grow, and take pride in their work.

Opening doors through mentorship is one of the easiest and most powerful ways we can strengthen our workforce, today and into the future.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think about the first person who helped you feel confident in your role. What did they do, and how can you pay that forward, today or this month?

The following page includes ways to practice mentorship, on site, in the office, or with community partners:



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Pair new workers with experienced teammates or peer mentor for informal daily check-ins.
- Inspire your team with a quick mentorship story during the morning huddle. Start a **"Mentor Minute"** during daily huddles, share a quick tip or lesson.
- Create a **Words to Build By wall** /platform for sharing the best mentor advice received.
- Feature a monthly **"Mentor Spotlight"** at your toolbox talk.
- Host rotating team-to-team check-ins for broader exposure and support.
- Collect anonymous **"First Week Advice"** slips and post on site board.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Host a day to sign up for Nationally Sponsored Mentorship Programs
- Launch **"Coffee & Questions"**, a 15-minute chat between a senior and junior staff.
- Start a digital **"Welcome Wisdom"** board with short advice tips from employees.
- Connect with new team members to understand needs, offer support, and build rapport.
- Start a "You Belong Here" welcome letter tradition from tenured staff.



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Host a **"Meet a Mentor"** or **"Why I build"** panel.
- Invite students to write a note to someone who guided them.
- Connect emerging talent with students to share career paths in construction.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- Hold small group discussions to reflect on one way mentorship made a difference in your own life. Share takeaways with the group.
- Create a team mentoring challenge, support one new person this month.
- Build a **"Mentorship Commitment Tree"** each person adds 1 thing they'll do.
- Share your most important career lesson with a teammate.
- In pairs, ask: "What do you wish someone told you earlier?"
- Host a Lunch & Learn to learn about the importance of Mentorship, especially in our industry.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What helped you feel supported as you entered the industry and/or role?
2. What does effective mentorship look like in the field or office?
3. How can mentorship forge bonds amongst teammates?
4. How can we build a culture where everyone is encouraged to mentor?
5. What tools or behaviors make it easier to offer support without formal programs?

*You don't need a title to make someone feel seen, supported, or encouraged.
Look around. Who could use a quick word of support?*

*Who helped you when you started? **That's mentorship. Let's pass it on...***



This Week:

- Offer advice or encouragement to someone new.
- Thank someone who supported your growth.
- Start a habit of daily check-ins with direct reports, apprentices, or interns.
- Share a story of mentorship on social media.
- Encourage your team to talk about what makes a great mentor.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#MentorshipMatters

***Mentorship opens doors; and
sometimes changes lives.***

Resources:

[National Mentoring Partnership](#)

[ACE Mentor Program of America](#) or [ACE Mentorship Video \(Students\)](#)

[Build California - Mentorship Toolkit](#)

[Mentor Program | Construction Management Association of America](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



SPARKING INTEREST IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All employees: Field, office,
leadership, Educators.**

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CONSTRUCTION INCLUSION WEEK 2025

TOOLBOX TALK



CIW PILLAR
Community Engagement,
Attract & Retain

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 2



SPARKING EARLY INTEREST IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation encourages teams to actively promote construction careers to students and build long-term pipelines of talent.

- Understand why engaging students early builds the future workforce.
- Learn how to share your story to make the trades feel relatable
- Know how to connect with students, educators and families.
- Spot myths about construction and know how to correct them.
- Inspire students to see construction as one of many strong career paths that offer growth and opportunity.



DEFINITIONS

Trades Careers:

Skilled roles such as electrical, carpentry, HVAC, plumbing, and welding, often gained through hands-on training or apprenticeships.

Workforce Pipeline:

The systems and pathways that introduce, prepare, and connect individuals, especially students for careers in construction.

Career Exploration:

Activities that help students discover what jobs exist and what it takes to pursue various career options.

Ambassador:

Anyone who promotes the trades through personal experience, enthusiasm, and encouragement.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Some families and students may not be aware of the full range of skills, pay levels and career paths construction offers.
- Visibility matters, when students see relatable role models thriving in this field, it shifts their mindsets.
- Trades careers offer purpose, income and mobility, and purpose, but students need to see it to believe it.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Trades careers offer purpose, income and mobility, and purpose, but students need to see it to believe it.
- A site tour, classroom visit, or casual conversation can be the spark that changes a student's future or inspire a career.
- Every team member, field or office, has the power to inspire by sharing their pride and story.
- Trades careers offer growth, income, mobility, and purpose, but students need to see it to believe it.



CONTENT

Many young people still don't know what a career in construction can look like. They might think it's only about hard labor or that it doesn't offer long-term opportunities. But we know that construction offers strong careers, meaningful work, and a clear path to grow.

This talk is about how we can help students, parents, and educators see the value of trades and how to get involved. Every team member has a story to share, about how they got into construction, what they've learned, and why they've stayed. Sharing your story could inspire someone to take the first step.





Getting involved with schools, community programs, or youth organizations is a great way to show the next generation what construction is really about. It doesn't have to be complicated. A jobsite tour, a classroom visit, or a quick video about "Why I Build" can leave a lasting impact.

By showing up, speaking honestly, and being visible, we break stereotypes and create new possibilities. When students see role models with relatable career paths and experiences, as well as clear pathways to the trades, it helps them picture themselves here too.

Opening doors means creating a path forward for others. When we connect with the next generation, we help build the future of construction.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think about when and how you first heard about construction as a career. What do you wish someone had shown or told you earlier?

Now consider how you could help students see the trades differently, today or this year.



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Practice 60-second **"Trade Pitches"** to describe your work in simple exciting ways and why it matters.
- Invite a student program or school to tour the site safely.
- Create a **"This is What We Build"** photo wall or banner.
- Host an **"Ask a Trade partner"** Q&A during lunch.
- Feature a student story board: "Why I'd Join Construction" (w/ Students quotes or drawings)
- Display stats about careers and job growth in visible areas.
- Add a team log: "3 Student Outreach Ideas for Our Site"



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Build a **"Career Day Kit"** with key talking points, visuals, and personal stories.
- Host a digital photo wall or social media campaign; **"Why I Build"** across departments.
- Record 1-minute employee intro videos to share with local schools.
- Invite student participants to an office walkthrough or project planning session.



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Sponsor a **"Tool Demo Day"** with trade professionals and hands-on activities.
- Invite trade professionals to speak about their path to the industry.
- Partner with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), Career and Technical Education (CTE) and shop teachers to co-host skill building sessions.
- Create take-home handouts for families explaining modern construction careers.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- Break into small groups and brainstorm 3 ways your company could engage students of all ages this year.
- Build a **"Trades MythBusters"** list as a team, ask, what do students get wrong about the industry?
- Each person shares one reason they love what they do, and who they wish they could tell.
- Watch a short video of a student trades spotlight (e.g., SkillsUSA) and discuss.
- Draft a classroom activity idea your team could bring to a school visit.
- Role-play a conversation with a student who says, "Construction isn't for me."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What stereotypes do students and parents/families have about construction careers?
2. How can we make construction more visible and more relatable?
3. What stories or actions can you share to make construction, and the trades feel exciting?
4. How can we better partner with local schools or training programs?
5. Who's someone that inspired you to pursue this path?

Let's show students why construction is a future worth building.



This Month:

- Speak at a local school classroom or on a career day.
- Share a video or post about what you do and what it means to you.
- Host or volunteer for a jobsite visit for students or interns or career day.
- Mentor a student who is thinking about careers.
- Connect with a local community-based organization that focuses on trades or construction careers.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#FutureOfTrades

Let's show students and new workers that construction is not just a job, it's a future.

Resources:

[SkillsUSA](#)
[YouthBuild](#)
[NAWIC Education Foundation](#)
[Build Your Future™ \(by NCCER\)](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



**Construction
Inclusion Week**

RESPECT AND INCLUSION ON THE JOBSITE / WORKPLACE



**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All team members, field, office,
unions or management**

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**CONSTRUCTION
INCLUSION WEEK 2025**
TOOLBOX TALK



OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 3

CIW PILLAR

*Belonging & Workforce Culture,
Commitment & Accountability*

RESPECT AND INCLUSION ON THE JOBSITE / WORKPLACE



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation reinforces the importance of respect and inclusion in construction and how to foster a workplace where everyone feels safe, heard, and valued.

- Understand respect and inclusion in high-pressure jobsites.
- See how daily behaviors, good and bad, shapes trust, safety and morale.
- Learn how to respond to disrespectful actions or exclusionary remarks/behaviors.
- Understand how disrespect can impact mental health, retention, and results.



DEFINITIONS

Respect:

Valuing others through positive behaviors, communication, and actions, especially in high-pressure environments.

Inclusive Environment:

A workplace where all team members feel safe, heard, and valued regardless of role, background, or experience.

Psychological Safety:

Confidence that a team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking, including speaking up, asking questions, and making mistakes without fear of retaliation.

Disrespectful or exclusionary remarks/behaviors:

Actions or comments, intentional or unintentional, that violate our conduct standards or undermine respect and safety.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Respect isn't a buzzword, it's the foundation of safety, collaboration, and teamwork.
- Disrespectful behavior weakens trust, increases turnover, risk, conflict, and accidents.
- Inclusion means all team members have the opportunity to contribute regardless of role or tenure, without identity based distinctions.

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

- Small actions, like using someone's name or asking their opinion, create a culture of respect.
- Everyone contributes to jobsite culture, not just supervisors or leadership.



CONTENT

Every person on the jobsite deserves to be treated with respect, no matter their title, background, or experience. A respectful jobsite is not just a better place to work, it's a safer, more productive one.

Respect shows up in how we talk to each other, how we listen, and how we follow through. It means using people's names, valuing different ideas, and handling disagreements without disrespect. Inclusion means everyone has a voice, and no one is made to feel less than.

Even small actions can send a big message, such as how inputs are requested, how ideas are heard, who is interrupted, or how credit is shared.





These moments shape how people feel about coming to work. When people feel disrespected or ignored, morale drops, and safety suffers. But when people feel seen, heard, and included, they do their best work.

Inclusion doesn't just happen at the leadership level. Everyone plays a role in creating a jobsite culture where people feel safe, supported, and respected. That includes calling out harmful behavior and modeling respect every day.

Respect and inclusion are not extras; they are the foundation of a strong team and a successful project.

When we lead with respect, we build more than just buildings, we build trust, safety, and pride in the work we do.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think about a time when you felt truly respected, or disrespected, on the job. What created that feeling? What did you learn? What made the difference?

Now think about how you show (or withhold) respect
in your daily interactions.



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Start every day/shift by greeting each team member by name.
- Post a “Respect on Site” board: teammates write one way they show respect.
- Host a “Respect Moment” during toolbox talks or daily huddles (shoutout someone’s actions).
- Rotate who leads huddles to elevate every voice.
- Practice pausing and asking, “What do you think?” when someone hasn’t spoken.
- Introduce a “One Ask, One Acknowledge” ritual at the end of each day.
- Invite team members to share a moment when they felt seen or heard.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Audit team meetings: Who speaks, who gets interrupted and who gets heard? Discuss what you see and recommend improvements.
- Create a “How We Talk Here” board (physical or digital) where teammates post examples of respectful language or communication habits that work well in your group.
- Pick one recent team message and discuss how tone and phrasing can impact trust. What came across clearly? What could have been better?
- Host a quick team check-in on language, what words build trust on this team, and what do we avoid?
- Create a “Field Notes” Highlight board to share lessons learned from the field.



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Invite students to design “Respect at Work” posters for display on sites.
- Lead a classroom discussion on how students define and demonstrate respect.
- Lead a classroom circle about inclusion and safety culture in the trades.
- Offer conflict resolution or teamwork workshops in training programs.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- Reflect in pairs: Share one time you felt respected at work, and why it mattered?
- As a group, list 3–5 simple ways your team can show respect every day. Post it where everyone can see it.
- As a group, role-play what to say when disrespect happens.
- Host a 5-minute “Bias Check” circle: what assumptions might we bring to the work without realizing it?
- Ask: What is one habit we need to stop, and one we should start, to make this team more respectful?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What does a respectful work environment look and feel like and what threatens it?
2. How should we address disrespect when we see or experience it?
3. What habits or traditions may unintentionally exclude people?
4. How can feedback be given respectfully under pressure?
5. What can each of us do to model inclusive behavior every day?

*Respect is built in the small moments.
It shapes trust, psychological safety, and teamwork, every shift, every site,
FOR EVERYONE.*



This Week:

- Thank you to someone you don't usually acknowledge.
- Pause and actively listen before responding to someone's idea.
- Address one disrespectful behavior constructively.
- Ask someone how they prefer to be included in conversations or decisions.
- Start a team conversation about norms and inclusion.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#RespectOnSite

***Every person deserves a
safe, respectful jobsite, and
everyone can build one.***

Resources:

[The Center for Respect](#)
[National Equity Project](#)

[Psychological Safety Resource Center](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

CAREER RE-ENTRY PATHWAYS

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
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Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All employees and supervisors,
jobsite, office, leadership**

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CONSTRUCTION INCLUSION WEEK 2025 TOOLBOX TALK



CIW PILLAR
Community Engagement,
Economic Opportunity,
Commitment & Accountability

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 4

CAREER RE-ENTRY PATHWAYS



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation helps teams understand how the construction industry can offer new chances to people rebuilding their lives and careers.

- Understand what “second chance” means and how it benefits the industry.
- Recognize the strengths and potential of non-traditional career paths.
- Learn how to support teammates who are starting over. Explore ways to reduce bias against teammates who are starting over and build trust.
- Understand how second-chance helps with retention and workforce growth.



DEFINITIONS

Second-Chance Hiring:

Employment practices that provide opportunities for qualified individuals reentering the workforce based on role requirements, qualifications, safety readiness and job-related criteria.

Inclusive Hiring:

Practices that expand access to opportunity for all

Reentry Support:

Programs that help people transition back into the workforce, including job training, mentorship, and mental health services after periods of unemployment, justice involvement, caregiving, health or other life events.

Opportunity Barrier:

Anything that makes it harder for someone to get hired or stay on the job (like no transportation, no references, or lack of recent experience).



KEY CONCEPTS

- Construction is a great path for people to start over because we build skills and careers, not just projects.
- Many workers returning to the workforce bring valuable skills, commitment and motivation to succeed.
- Second-chance workers seek fair, skills-based opportunities to contribute, earn trust and grow.

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

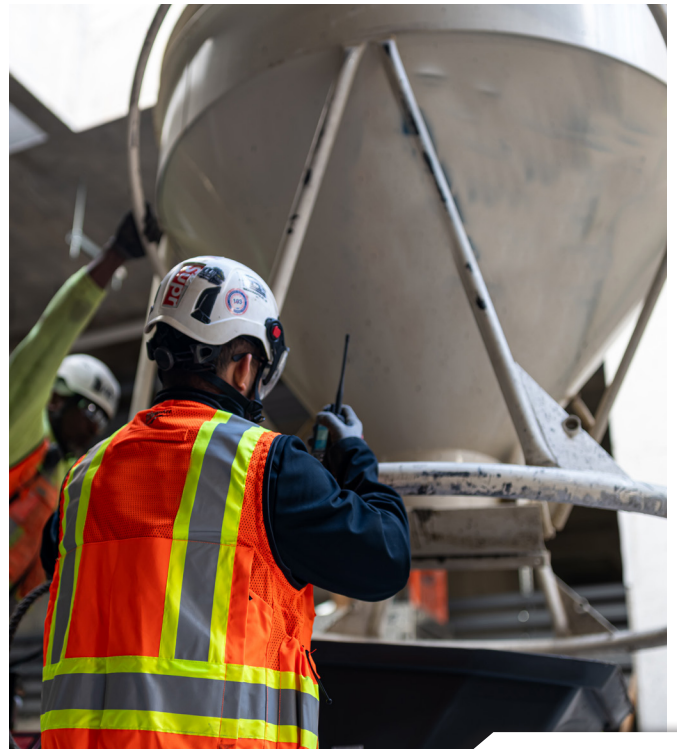
- Respect, patience, mentorship and clear expectations help second-chance employees succeed.
- Hiring this talent helps reduce turnover, build stronger teams, and support our communities.
- Opportunities are based on qualifications, safety readiness, and job-related criteria, consistent with law



CONTENT

People enter the workforce through many different paths. Some people enter construction after a break in their work history or a career change. But a second chance at work can be a first step toward building something better, not just for the worker, but also for the teams and organizations they join.

Construction is one of the few industries where people can start over, grow their skills, and make a living. Many workers who get that second chance bring valuable experience and commitment to team success. But success doesn't happen by luck; it takes support, structure, and respect.





Every jobsite and office has the opportunity to support pathways to employment and growth. or simply creating a culture that values individuals for their current contributions and potential.

That can mean giving someone a shot at a new role, offering a bit of extra coaching during their first weeks, or simply creating a culture that values individuals for their current contributions and potential.

Second-chance hiring is also good for business. It helps fill labor gaps, improves retention, and brings in people who are truly motivated to succeed. The impact extends beyond the jobsite. It helps reduce recidivism and supports stronger communities.

Second chances work when teams are willing to support each other and when leadership creates room for growth. We maintain standards and remove unnecessary barriers to qualified applicants.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Reflect on a time when someone gave you a second chance, at work in life or somewhere in between. What did that chance mean to you? How did it change your path?

Now imagine what it means for someone to be trusted and trained after facing big challenges.



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Talk about what “starting over” might look like in construction.
- Review how we welcome new people, what works and what could be better.
- Share stories (anonymously if needed) of teammates who have rebuilt their lives.
- Ask: What do new team members need in their first 2 weeks to feel supported?
- Highlight a trade partner or program that works with reentry or recovery groups.
- Check your jobsite signage, tone, and rules, do they reflect trust and growth?



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Review current hiring and onboarding policies; look for language or steps that could exclude reentry talent.
- Invite a guest speaker from a local reentry or workforce support program.
- Host a **“Build Your Second Chance”** learning session across departments.
- Encourage hiring teams to look at skills and attitude, not just resumes.
- Challenge HR/teams to identify opportunities within their firms that second-chance employees could apply for.



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Invite guest speakers to share how they built careers after overcoming challenges, focusing on skills, growth, and
- persistence.
- Partner with training, recovery, or second-chance programs to offer site tours or info sessions.
- Share your company’s story about supporting someone who started over and found success.
- Visit a local youth or justice organization understand to explain what jobs in construction look like.
- Lead a group talk about bouncing back from setbacks and building a future.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- Draft a simple proposal for one second chance hiring initiative or job fair your company could sponsor or attend.
- In teams, list what it takes for someone to succeed on your crew, then ask: are we making that possible for everyone?
- Discuss: What kind of support would you want if you were new and had a tough past?
- Build a “Team Promise” to support people who are starting over.
- Watch a short video of someone who turned their life around through trades (e.g., Helmets to Hardhats or The Last Mile)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What does a second chance mean to you?
2. What helps someone feel safe and included when starting over?
3. What assumptions do we make about people's backgrounds, and are they fair?
4. How can we help supervisors, and team leaders support second-chance workers?
5. What's one thing our team could do better when welcoming someone new?

*Second chances can change lives and strengthen teams.
Let's be the bridge to something better.*



This Week:

Disclaimer: Second-chance hiring should align role readiness, workplace safety, and legal compliance

- Welcome someone new to the team and ask how you can help.
- Share a second-chance success story with your team.
- Ask HR about your company's inclusive hiring policy.
- Reach out to a community partner working with reentry programs.
- Post a story or highlight someone who's thrived after a second chance.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#CareerReentry

**Everyone deserves a chance to
build their future; and construction
is where it begins.**

Resources:

[Center for Employment Opportunities](#)
[Operation New Hope](#)

[National Reentry Resource Center](#)
[Home - The Last Mile](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SITE CULTURE

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All jobsites and office roles:
laborers, supers, admin, trades,
and leaders**

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**CONSTRUCTION
INCLUSION WEEK 2025**
TOOLBOX TALK



OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 5

CIW PILLAR
*Belonging & Workforce Culture,
Commitment & Accountability*



BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SITE CULTURE



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation explores how everyone plays a role in shaping inclusive jobsite and office culture, no matter what their title.

- Understand what “inclusive site culture” means and why it matters.
- Learn how small actions (micro-inclusions) build culture.
- Identify everyday behaviors that boost team morale and trust.
- Understand how recognition, feedback and inclusion improve retention and performance.
- Learn how culture impacts safety and performance.



DEFINITIONS

Inclusive Site Culture:

A work environment where every worker, regardless of title or background, feels respected, engaged, and empowered to contribute based on daily habits and values.

Belonging:

A workplace norm where teammates are valued, accepted, treated with respect and can contribute fully. Where that connection contributes to higher safety, trust, and retention.

Micro-Actions:

Small, everyday respectful actions that strengthen team culture (e.g., greeting team members, inviting input, recognizing effort) and build trust and inclusion.

Recognition:

Letting someone know their effort matters, even when they're not around, so they feel valued and seen.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Culture is defined by everyday behavior, not just policies or slogans.
- Every role contributes to the tone of the jobsite, from entry level / apprentice to executive / supervisor.
- Inclusive teams are safer, more productive and more likely to stay together.

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

- Empowering every voice creates resilient, high-performing teams.
- People are different, some like public shoutouts, others prefer quiet thanks. Ask for feedback in groups and one-on-one.
- Leaders set the tone, but each person shapes the culture through habits and choices.



CONTENT

Site culture isn't just about rules, it's about how people feel when they come to work. Do they feel respected, valued and part of the team? That's what an inclusive site culture creates.

An inclusive site is one where every role counts. From laborers to leadership, everyone has a part in setting the tone. When people greet each other by name, check in on teammates, and make room for new voices, it builds trust. That trust shows up in safety, productivity, and how long people stay.





Culture lives in everyday habits. It's not only about what leaders say, but also what everyone does. Keeping the site clean, rotating huddle leaders, giving credit, and listening with respect all send the message: "You belong here."

People also show up in different ways. People value recognition differently; some prefer public acknowledgement, others appreciate more private or direct feedback. Some speak up in groups; others feel more comfortable one-on-one. We build stronger teams when we make space for both.

Culture isn't something we fix once; it's something we shape daily. When we pay attention to how we treat each other, we build a site where people want to work and grow.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think of a time when you felt like part of the team. What did people do, or not do, to make that feeling possible? What made the difference?

**Now think about your current team.
How do you show people that they matter?**



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Start the day with “name + role” intros for new workers or subs.
- Rotate huddle leaders each week so everyone gets a chance to lead.
- Create a **“Team Shoutout Board”** where crew members post praise.
- Ask your team: What would make this site more respectful or welcoming?
- Share one new thing you learned about a co-worker this week.
- Make “see something, say something” part of your crew’s daily rhythm, for culture too, not just safety.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Launch a “Culture Pulse” survey; then discuss one improvement idea.
- Post weekly “thank you” messages from the office to jobsite teams in break areas.
- Launch a “Who Helped You Today?” thank-you wall.
- Ask: “What’s one thing we can do better to support the team in the field?”



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Host a **“What Construction Looks Like”** event with people from all roles, not just leadership.
- Let students or new hires shadow field crews, admin staff, or logistics’ teams.
- Co-create a visual banner with students: **“Everyone Has a Role.”**
- Invite students to identify 5+ types of jobs they did not know existed in construction.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- In pairs, ask: What’s something you do that others may not see, but help the team?
- List all the roles on your job or team. What happens when any one of them is missing?
- Share a moment when someone made your role feel respected.
- Break into groups and produce a “Top 5 Culture Boosters” list, post it on-site.
- Use stickers or markers: everyone tags where they feel most valued on site.
- Build a quick “All Roles Matter” visual on a whiteboard with everyone’s input.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What does a respectful jobsite feel like?
2. What work/jobsite habits might unintentionally exclude or isolate people?
3. How can leadership highlight quiet or behind-the-scenes contributors?
4. What does shared accountability look like in your team culture?
5. How can onboarding be used to introduce inclusive culture norms?

*We all want to feel like our work, and who we are, matters.
That starts with how we show up for each other.*



This Week:

- Share a shoutout in your next meeting or huddle.
- Ask for input from someone you don't usually hear from.
- Recognize someone who doesn't always get credit.
- Suggest a culture-building norm to your supervisor.
- Post a moment where inclusion made a difference.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#InclusiveCulture

***Inclusion isn't one person's job.
It's everyone's role. Every day.***

Resources:

[Catalyst – Inclusive Workplace Practices](#)
[Belonging at Work Toolkit \(Deloitte\)](#)

[Center for Respectful Leadership](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



MENTAL HEALTH IN CONSTRUCTION

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All field and office employees,
especially jobsite teams and
frontline leaders**

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INCLUSION WEEK 2025**
TOOLBOX TALK



OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 6

CIW PILLAR

*Belonging & Workforce Culture,
Commitment & Accountability,
Attract and Retain*



MENTAL HEALTH IN CONSTRUCTION



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation helps teams talk about mental health without stigma and learn how to support themselves and each other.

- Understand why mental health is of jobsite safety.
- Recognize signs of burnout, and emotional distress.
- Learn how to check in with others and ask for help.
- Talk openly around stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Understand how mental wellness affects retention and safety.



DEFINITIONS

Mental Health:

How we think, feel, act, and manage stress, just like physical health, it affects how we show up at work and in life.

Stigma:

Refers to a set of negative attitudes, beliefs, or assumptions that a person or group holds about a person or group based on a particular characteristic, condition, or experience.

Peer Support:

Assistance from individuals with similar life experiences to promote recovery, well-being, connection, and resilience.

Burnout:

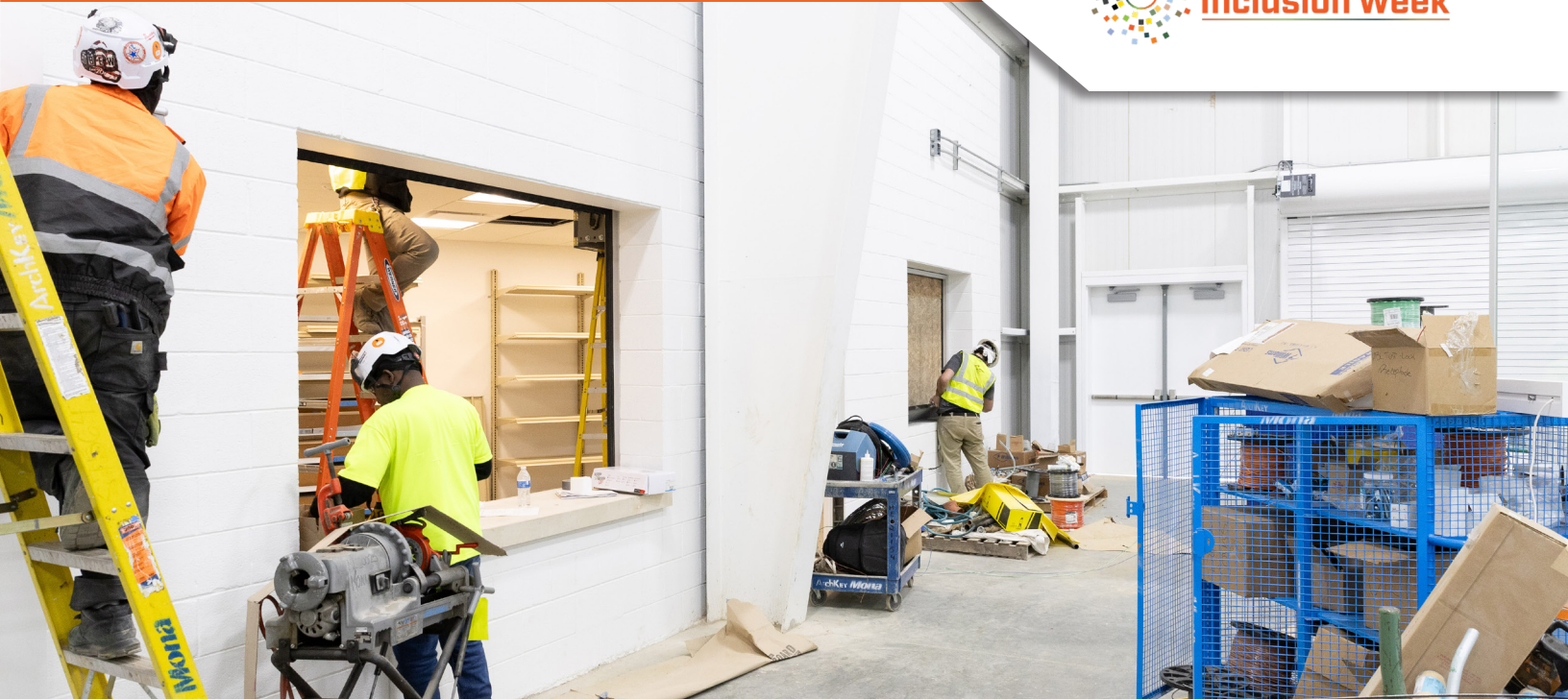
A state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress or pressure.



KEY CONCEPTS

- The construction industry is physically demanding and mentally stressful; but conversations about mental health are often avoided.
- Mental health impacts every level of the team, from apprentices to leaders.

| OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

- Construction faces high mental health risks, making open conversations and support especially important.
- Workers are more likely to speak up about stress when they know their teams listen without judgement.
- Asking a teammate how they're doing could be the most important safety check of the day.



CONTENT

Construction is tough, physically and mentally. Long hours, pressure to meet deadlines, and working in all conditions can take a toll. But while we talk often about physical safety, we don't always talk about mental health. That needs to change.

Everyone has stress. Everyone hits rough patches. But ignoring mental health doesn't make it go away, it just makes it harder to get through the day. When we talk openly about mental health, we help reduce stigma and show that no one has to carry it alone.





Mental health is an important part of overall workforce safety and performance. When workers feel safe to speak up, ask for help, or take a break when needed, everyone benefits. Team members who are supported are more focused, more reliable, and more likely to stay.

Leaders play a big role. But support can come from anyone. A simple “You good?” or a quiet check-in can open the door for someone to speak honestly. Even without formal training, expressing concern and listening can make a difference.

Let’s treat mental health the same way we treat physical safety: as a daily part of the job, not something extra.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think about a time when you felt overwhelmed or stressed but pushed through anyway. Would it have helped to talk to someone? Did anyone notice?

Now consider: How can we make this team a place where people feel okay speaking up?



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Begin toolbox talk with a quick “1 to 5” mood check (no pressure to explain).
- Post a resource sheet with national, local or company mental health contacts.
- Start a “Quiet Space” initiative. Create one area on site for short breaks or reset.
- Invite team to wear a color or sticker for Mental Health Awareness
- Share a healthy coping strategy or personal story that helped you deal with stress or loss.
- Designate a resource point of contact (not a counselor) who can share EAP resources and escalate emergencies per policy. Work with your Safety teams.
- Invite a guest speaker to speak on Mental Health in Construction.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Host a 15-minute “Mental Health Moments” session once a month.
- Bring in a local Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or counselor for Q&A (anonymous questions allowed).
- Review how your team manages urgent stress, who can you call? What’s the plan?
- Post wellness posters or emergency hotline resources.
- Share a video or short story from someone in the industry who overcame a mental health challenge.
- Share a healthy coping strategy or personal story that helped you deal with stress or loss.



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Partner with local schools or unions to teach about “Mental Wellness at Work”.
- Co-host a student mental safety day with short talks and role plays.
- Invite students to help create posters that normalize stress and support.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- Go around and answer, what helps you reset when things feel off?
- Role-play checking in with someone who seems down. What feels helpful, what doesn’t?
- Ask: What signs tell you someone’s not doing well? List and discuss.
- Brainstorm one way your team can promote mental health on-site. Make a commitment together.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. Why do so many people stay silent about mental health?
2. What are some signs that someone may be having a challenging time?
3. How can we support a teammate who's experiencing stress or burnout?
4. How can we support others without acting like counselors?
5. How can leaders reinforce the message that it's OK not to be, OK?

*Ensuring psychological safety helps teams speak up,
mental health support helps them stay whole.*



This Week:

- Ask a teammate, "You good?" and mean it.
- Take your full break, no guilt.
- Speak up if you need support or offer it to someone else.
- Display mental health resources in a visible place around the office or site.
- Consider taking or promoting Mental Health First Aid training.
- Invite a guest speaker on mental health.
- Review the Mental Health resources offered by your employer.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#MentalHealthMatters

***You don't have to fix everything.
But you can be the reason someone
doesn't feel alone.***

Resources:

[Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#)
[NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

[Man Therapy](#) or [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#)
[988 Lifeline](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN CONSTRUCTION

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All workers, supervisors, leaders,
apprentices, and support staff**

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INCLUSION WEEK 2025**
TOOLBOX TALK



CIW PILLAR
Belonging & Workforce
Culture, Attract & Retain

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 7

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN CONSTRUCTION



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation helps teams understand how safety isn't just about PPE, it's about people feeling safe to speak up, ask for help and be themselves.

- Define what psychological safety and what it looks like on the job.
- Understand how team dynamics affect trust and safety.
- Learn what helps people feel safe speaking up.
- Practice how to respond when someone shares a concern.
- Connect psychological safety culture to mental well-being and performance.



DEFINITIONS

Psychological Safety:

The belief that everyone can speak up, ask questions, or share concerns without being embarrassed or punished.

Supportive Supervision:

Leadership that values feedback, listens actively and responds with respect.

Trust Culture:

A team environment where everyone feels like they will be backed up, not blamed.

Check-in:

A simple, quick conversation asking someone how they are doing, workwise or personally.



KEY CONCEPTS

- On the jobsite, people often stay quiet about problems because they fear looking weak, getting in trouble, or being judged.
- That silence can lead to actual harm, missed safety issues, burnout, or mental health struggles.
- Psychological safety isn't about being nice, it's about trust, clarity, and respect when it matters most. Example: When a new worker speaks up about a safety concern and the team listens—that's psychological safety in action

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

- Creating psychological safety means people feel like they belong and can ask for help.
- Culture is shaped by how we respond when people speak up.
- Everyone, not just supervisors, can help others feel safe.



CONTENT

Safety includes equipment and culture, people must feel safe to speak up. When workers stay quiet because they fear being blamed, ignored, or embarrassed, problems grow. Psychological safety means team members can raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

On a jobsite, mistakes happen, questions come up, and people notice risks others might miss. If workers don't feel safe sharing what they see, teams lose valuable input, and that can lead to bigger issues.

Psychological safety doesn't mean avoiding tough conversations. It means creating a team culture where people feel respected when they do speak.





When someone reports a mistake, they should be met with support, not shame. When someone brings up a concern, it should be taken seriously, not brushed off.

This starts with leadership but doesn't stop there. Everyone shapes culture. It's in how we react when someone messes up, who we invite into conversations, and how we treat people who speak out. It's also in how we check in with each other, build trust, and follow through on what we say.

When people feel safe to speak, teams are stronger, jobsites are safer, and work gets done better.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think about a time you had a concern at work but didn't speak up. Why not, and what might have helped you feel safe enough to say something.

Now flip it. When someone brought you a concern, how did you respond?



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Start a “You Good?” check-in at the start or end of shift, one team/crew member asks each person on the team. Consider adding a jobsite visual: “You Good? It’s OK to Ask” sign/poster
- Practice responding to mistakes with “Thanks for telling me” before problem solving.
- Create a “Speak Up Wins” board to highlight when someone spotted and shared a concern.
- Discuss as a team: What’s one thing that makes people stay quiet? How can we change that?
- Roleplay: Someone is nervous about asking for help, how do you make it easier?
- Build “Trust Norms” as a team with 3 behaviors you all agree to model.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Review how mistakes are managed, do people get support or blame?.
- Start your next team meeting with a safety moment about speaking up.
- Have supervisors practice saying: “Thank you for telling me, I’ve got your back.”
- Share a real story where speaking up helped prevent something from getting worse.



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Teach students that safety includes mental and emotional well-being, not just gear.
- Practice, “What would you do if.....?” scenarios about peer pressure or fear of failure.
- Share stories from our craftworkers about times they needed help but stayed quiet, and what they would do differently now.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- Break into small groups: each person shares a time they help someone feel safe at work.
- In pairs, ask: What would help you feel more comfortable sharing a mistake or concern?
- Have each group write one sentence about what psychological safety means to them?
- Share the phrase, “It’s OK to ask” and brainstorm how to make that real on the job.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What keeps people from speaking up at work?
2. How do you respond to mistakes, and what does that teach people?
3. What does it mean to have someone's back here?
4. What's the difference between fixing problems and blaming?
5. What's one way your team can build more trust this week?

Protecting mental health is just as important as protecting physical safety.

Start today: Listen actively. Say thank you when someone speaks up. That's how psychological safety begins.



This Week:

- Ask a teammate "You good?" and really listen.
- Thank someone who brought up an issue, even if it wasn't easy.
- Check your tone when someone makes a mistake, lead with support.
- Start building "trust norms" as a team.
- Consider attending or promoting Mental Health First Aid Training.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#YouGood?

Safety isn't just physical. Psychological safety helps people stay, speak up, and do their best work.

This content is not medical advice, follow safety and crisis protocols.

Resources:

[Center for Construction Research and Training](#)
[Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#)

[Google re:Work – Guide to Psychological Safety](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

PIVOT & BUILD - LIFE AFTER ATHLETICS

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All roles, especially HR, Former
student athletes, recruiters, trainers,
Team leaders, workforce educators**

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TOOLBOX TALK



CIW PILLAR
Attract and Retain,
Economic Opportunity

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TALK 8



PIVOT & BUILD – LIFE AFTER ATHLETICS



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation explores how the construction industry can be a new path for former athletes transitioning from sports to construction careers.

- Recognize the skills athletes bring, like discipline, teamwork and leadership.
- Understand the challenges former athletes face post-graduation.
- Explore why construction is a great next team for athletes.
- Learn how to support athletes who are starting a new career.
- Help former athletes find direction, purpose and opportunity.



DEFINITIONS

Career Pivot:

A notable change in job direction, especially after a major life event like leaving competitive sports.

Student-Athlete:

A person who balanced sports and academics, often highly driven and competitive.

Transferable Skills:

Skills such as discipline, leadership, time management, and resilience gained through athletics and applicable to many roles in the workplace.

Coachability:

Willingness to accept and apply feedback; valued in both athletics and professional roles.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Every year, thousands of college athletes do not make it to the pros; but they leave sports with a wealth of talent.
- Athletes often experience shifts in purpose and career focus after sports, which construction careers can help realign.
- Construction offers a fast-paced, team-oriented environment that mirrors athletic culture.

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

- Former athletes excel in performance under pressure, teamwork, and continuous improvement.
- Mentorship, visibility, and purpose-driven work can help athletes find meaningful careers in construction.
- These career transition efforts are part of broader workforce readiness and retention strategies.



CONTENT

Transitioning from competitive sports to a new career can happen quickly and may raise questions about the next steps. Construction can be a strong next step for career changers including but not limited to former athletes.

Athletes already have many of the skills needed to succeed in this industry: teamwork, leadership, focus, and resilience. They know how to take feedback, stay on schedule, and push through challenges. These traits make them valuable on the jobsite and in the office.

Still, the transition can be tough. Losing a team, structure, and identity can be hard. That's where we come in.





By identifying transferable skills and offering mentorship, and helping them understand the opportunities in construction, we open the door for them to thrive.

Former athletes bring skills like focus and adaptability that support success in construction. Helpful support includes visibility into roles, mentorship and clear entry paths. Whether it's an internship, apprenticeship, or an entry-level role, construction offers a second team, and a new purpose.

By welcoming career changers, we strengthen our workforce and show that construction is a place where all kinds of talent can succeed.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think about a time with a big life goal didn't work out, and you had to pivot. What helped you move forward? Who opened a door for you?

Now imagine finishing your college athletic career with focus, discipline, and a strong work ethic, but no clear path forward. That's where many former athletes find themselves.



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Share a story of someone on the team who successfully transitioned careers, especially from sports, military, or other hands-on careers.
- Pair new hires with field mentors who understand transition and hard work.
- Post a “Who Helped You Pivot?” wall with team stories.
- Ask your team: What habits from sports help you succeed here?
- Display athlete spotlights or profiles of tradespeople who were former student-athletes.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Partner with local college athletics departments for internships, job shadowing and info sessions.
- Include “pivot-friendly” language in your job postings (such as “Team oriented, structured learners welcome”). All selections are based on job-related qualifications.
- Share short video testimonials from employees who used to be athletes.
- Launch a “Second Wind” program to welcome career changers with a tailored onboarding and mentorship plan.



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Offer a “What’s next after Sports?” workshop with trade professionals and recruiters.
- Create a handout comparing sports roles to construction roles (e.g., Captain = Foreman or Crew Lead)
- Partner with high school coaches or athletic departments to introduce athletes to trades careers.
- Invite former athletes to speak to students about building a career after competitive sports.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- Roleplay a peer conversation with someone unsure about joining construction.
- In small groups, ask: What would you say to a student who feels stuck after sports?
- Create a “Team Strengths” chart: map typical athlete traits to construction job needs. Discuss as a team.
- Write a welcome message or post for athletes entering the company.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. Why might former athletes feel unsure about what's next?
2. What strengths do they bring to our teams?
3. How can we help them feel like they belong, even without trade experience?
4. What does "coachability" mean on our site?
5. What's one thing we can change to make career changers feel more welcome?

*Athletes bring motivation and discipline – they need visibility and opportunity.
Construction can be that path.*



This Week:

- Invite a former athlete to share their story.
- Reach out to a local college or high school athletic department about career partnerships.
- Share a story about someone who successfully changed paths. Share on social media.
- Recognize someone who brought a new energy after changing paths.
- Discuss how your team can better support new beginnings.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#LifeAfterAthletics

The game might end, but the work is just beginning. Let's help athletes pivot and build.

Resources:

[Athletes Soul](#)
[Positive Coaching Alliance](#)

[NCAA Career in Sports Forum](#)
[Construction Ready – Training Programs for Construction Jobs](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

CONSTRUCTION CAREERS FOR VETERANS

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All construction professionals,
veterans, HR teams, hiring managers,
transition programs, team leaders.**

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**CONSTRUCTION
INCLUSION WEEK 2025**
TOOLBOX TALK



OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 9

CIW PILLAR

*Attract and Retain, Belonging
& Workforce Culture*

CONSTRUCTION CAREERS FOR VETERANS



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation shows how construction offers a strong career path for military veterans and how teams can help them transition successfully.

It supports veteran workforce inclusion and highlights the value of military experience in construction careers.

- Understand how military skills transfer to construction roles.
- Recognize challenges veterans face when entering civilian careers.
- Use inclusive practices to support veterans on your team.
- Learn how to help veterans transition through onboarding and mentorship.
- Build a culture and inclusive environment that respects and supports veteran experience.



DEFINITIONS

Veteran:

A person who has served in the U.S. Armed Forces (active duty, reserves, or National Guard)

Camaraderie:

Mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together; often found in both military and construction settings.

Skills Translator:

A tool or method used to connect military job experience with civilian career opportunities.

Mission-Driven Work:

Jobs that are purposeful, team-oriented with structure and impact, aligned with clear outcomes; something many veterans value.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Many veterans bring strengths like leadership, discipline, adaptability, or a strong work ethic—especially when expectations are clear. While every service member's experience is unique, construction can offer a familiar sense of structure, purpose, and teamwork.

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

- Construction shares many military values: structure, teamwork, mission-focus, and hands-on problem-solving.
- Many struggle with the shift to civilian jobs and may not know how to translate their skills.
- Simple things like clear communication, mentorship, and respect go a long way.
- Recognizing veterans' qualifications and leadership experience can strengthen team cohesion and trust.



CONTENT

Veterans may bring skills such as teamwork adaptability and leadership that can transfer into construction roles. They understand structure and the importance of getting the job done right. Many have led teams, worked under pressure, and adapted to changing conditions, skills that directly transfer to the jobsite.

The shift to civilian work can bring changes that require adjustment and support. Some veterans may not know how their military experience fits into this new environment. Others may be unsure of the culture or worried about asking for help. That's why support, mentorship, and clarity matter.

Construction can be a natural next step for veterans. It offers structure, purpose, and clear goals. But success doesn't happen by accident.





Teams need to be intentional about welcoming veterans, starting with onboarding, coaching, and showing them, they belong. Outreach can include veterans and other qualified candidates; selection and advancement are always based on job-related skills, performance and safety criteria.

Recognizing veterans isn't just about saying thank you. It's about making sure they have the tools, information, and support they need to succeed. When we do that, we gain teammates who are dependable, mission-driven, and ready to lead.

Let's ensure those who've served have access to clear pathways and tools for success and show them this industry can be their next mission.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think about someone who served in the military. What qualities did they bring to their work? How did others treat them?

Now ask yourself, what could we do to help more veterans see this industry as their next team.



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Host a **"Veteran Spotlight"** huddle; highlight team members who served. Thank them for their service.
- Ask a veteran crew member to share one lesson from service that helps them on the job.
- Create a **"Service Wall"** to display photos or team members' military backgrounds and recognize their service.
- Offer opt-in storytelling channels (employee spotlights, panels, private affinity/resource groups). Avoid public identifiers on PPE/badges.
- Walk through your onboarding process, what could be confusing to someone newly out of the military?
- Host a **"Day in the Life"** talk by a veteran in construction for the crew.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Launch a "Veteran Buddy" Program, pair newly hired veterans with mentors during onboarding.
- Partner with a local Veteran Service Organization (VSO) or Helmets to Hardhats or other veteran employment programs to
- explore partnership opportunities.
- Include language in job postings that welcomes all qualified candidates including veterans, (e.g., "structured environment," "mission-focused teams", "We welcome applications from veterans") while clarifying that selections are based on job-related qualifications and requirements).
- Create a "Veterans at Work" story feature in internal communications or newsletters. Highlight veteran employees.
- Review your onboarding checklist through a veterans Lens. Ask: Would this make sense to someone new to civilian work?



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Partner with military transition programs for speaking engagements about careers in construction.
- Offer jobsite tours or internships for National Guard or reserve members.
- Co-host an "Intro to the Trades" event with veteran service organizations.
- Create a video or flyer showing how veterans thrive in construction.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- In pairs, ask: What do veterans bring that we need more of on our teams?
- List of 5 things new veteran hires might struggle with, and how to help.
- Write a group welcome message or video for veteran applicants.
- As a team, review your job descriptions. Do they speak to veterans? Identify 1-2 changes to better communicate alignment.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What makes construction a good fit for people coming from the military?
2. What parts of our onboarding or culture could be improved for veterans?
3. How can your company or team improve how it supports veterans?
4. What's one step we can take to make veterans feel respected, not just welcomed?
5. How can we elevate the voices of veterans already on our teams?

*Veterans bring discipline, leadership, and a sense of purpose.
Let's honor service with opportunity, not just recognition.*



This Week:

- Invite a local veteran's group to your next job fair or site event.
- Share your company's commitment to veteran hiring on social media.
- Update job descriptions or career pages to highlight veteran pathways.
- Reach out to a local Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) to explore partnership opportunities.
- Ask how you can make onboarding easier for those new to civilian work?



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#FromServicetoSite

"When veterans find their next mission in construction, everyone wins; let's build the bridge from service to site."

Resources:

[Helmets to Hardhats](#)
[Hire Heroes USA](#)

[VA Career Resources](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH **DISABILITIES** **AND NEURODIVERGENT** **THINKING STYLES**

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All team members – field,
office employees, supervisors,
teamleaders, HR teams, educators.**

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**CONSTRUCTION
INCLUSION WEEK 2025**
TOOLBOX TALK



OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 10

CIW PILLAR

*Attract and Retain, Belonging
& Workforce Culture,
Commitment & Accountability*



SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH **DISABILITIES AND NEURODIVERGENT THINKING STYLES**



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation empowers teams to understand and embrace differing abilities and thinking styles as vital dimensions of opportunity and innovation.

- Understand what disability and neurodivergence mean at work.
- Learn how diverse minds and abilities strengthen workplaces and teams.
- Practice small habits that support cognitive and physical differences.
- Identify barriers and suggest ways to improve accessibility for everyone.
- Build a team culture where everyone contributes in their own way.



DEFINITIONS

Disability:

A physical, mental, sensory, or cognitive condition that may affect how a person works, communicates, or performs tasks.

Universal Design:

Work environments and tools that are usable by everyone, regardless of ability.

Neurodivergence:

A non-medical description of diverse cognitive processing styles, such as those related to attention, learning or communication, ". It may include autism, ADHD, dyslexia, PTSD, and other cognitive differences.

Accessibility:

Making sure people can fully participate in work, physically, mentally, and socially.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Roughly 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. lives with a disability.
- Many disabilities are visible or shared but they still impact work experience.
- Disability and neurodivergence reflect natural variations in how people experience and contribute to work.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Construction needs all types of thinkers, analytical people, planners, and hands-on learners.
- Simple supports: like flexible communication styles, visual aids or quiet spaces, can make a big difference.
- Everyone benefits when we remove physical, social, and procedural barriers to success.



CONTENT

Disability and neurodivergence are part of the workforce, jobsite and office, and workplaces should provide universally accessible practices consistent with the ADA and applicable law. Some workers live with physical disabilities. Others think or process information differently. Some share this openly; others don't. Either way, we all benefit from a workplace culture that supports full participation and contributions.

Inclusion means more than just access, it means support. That could be a visual checklist for someone with ADHD, a quieter break area for someone sensitive to noise, creating optional, confidential ways to share workstyle preferences or request reasonable accommodation, in line with privacy and applicable legal standards. Small, thoughtful changes can significantly improve inclusion and accessibility.





This also means rethinking how we give instructions, how meetings are run, or how we build tools and spaces. When we design for different learning styles and abilities, we make the job easier for everyone, not just a few.

Welcoming different minds and bodies makes our industry stronger. It helps us solve problems in new ways and ensure all qualified individuals have equal opportunity to contribute. Inclusion isn't just about being nice, it's about being smart and fair.

When we build workplaces for all kinds of people, we build better teams.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think about how your workplace could be more accessible; physically or socially. What is one small change that could help? Now ask: What would help someone with different needs succeed on our team?

Now think about how you show (or withhold) respect in your daily interactions.



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Post signs or color codes with visual instructions to help all learning styles.
- Create a quiet break area or low-distraction zone if possible.
- Use drawings, models, or step-by-step checklists for key tasks.
- Add a "How Do You Learn Best?" question to team onboarding.
- Share one thing each person wishes others understood about how they work.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Review job postings and onboarding materials for inclusive language. Focus on essential job functions and qualifications; when physical, cognitive, or sensory requirements are truly essential, state them clearly and note that reasonable accommodations are available.
- Review how you give directions: Is it verbal-only, or backed up in writing and visuals? Ask: Do our meetings work for everyone?
- Share inclusive tools. Introduce items like color-coded plans, visual task lists, or noise-canceling options (earplugs, headsets).
- Use closed captions for virtual meetings.
- Host a lunch-and-learn with a neurodiversity advocate.



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Partner with schools that support students with disabilities or Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- Co-host hands-on construction activities that meet different learning styles.
- Bring in tradespeople with disabilities to speak about their career path.
- Sponsor inclusive career day swag: visual guides, ear protection, QR code videos.
- Partner with disability-focused programs (e.g., Project SEARCH, DisabilityIN) for inclusive trade workshops.
- Invite students with disabilities to explore tools and safety gear with support.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- In pairs, ask: What is one thing that helps you do your best work?
- Each person shares a myth about disability they have heard, and the truth behind it.
- Build a list: "Small Changes, Big Impact," team practices that support all minds.
- Watch a short video about neurodiverse tradespeople or professionals.
- Brainstorm accommodations that could improve experiences for everyone, not just those who ask for them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What does inclusion look like for people who think or move differently?
2. How can jobsite and office environments be more welcoming to neurodivergent individuals?
3. What barriers; physical or cultural; might we be overlooking?
4. How do we make space for different strengths, not just speed or volume?
5. What can we do this week to make the job more accessible for everyone?

*When we build workplaces for all bodies and brains,
we build stronger teams.*



This Week:

- Ask someone how they learn or work best and listen.
- Offer flexible communication options in meetings or training.
- Update a team process or tool to be more accessible.
- Offer support without judgment or assumptions.
- Thank someone who helped you see or think differently.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#NeurodiversityInTrades

***Not every strength looks the same.
But all of them help us build..***

Resources:

[DisabilityIN](#)
[Job Accommodation Network](#)

[Project SEARCH](#)
[Neurodiversity Hub – Resources for Students, Employers & More](#)



SMALL ACTIONS, BIG IMPACT

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**Jobsite teams, office teams, team
leads, new hires, senior leadership**

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**CONSTRUCTION
INCLUSION WEEK 2025**
TOOLBOX TALK



OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 11

CIW PILLAR

*Belonging & Workforce Culture,
Commitment & Accountability*

SMALL ACTIONS, BIG IMPACT



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation reinforces that culture is not built by one big moment, it's built by daily actions and how we treat each other.

- Understand how small behaviors build team trust and morale.
- Learn everyday habits that support inclusion.
- Recognize how treatment impacts retention.
- See culture impacts performance and safety.
- Take personal responsibility for creating positive team culture.



DEFINITIONS

Micro-Actions:

Small behaviors; like greetings, thank-you(s), giving credit or active listening; that shape how included people feel.

Belonging:

The daily respectful behaviors that make teammates feel seen and valued.

Team Culture:

The shared values, norms, and behaviors that influence how a team works together.

Accountability:

Taking responsibility for how your actions affect others.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Belonging contributes to retention and team reliability, especially in high-performance or safety-sensitive environments.
- Everyone helps set the tone through what they say, do, ignore, or repeat.
- Small gestures: remembering someone's name, offering help, saying thank you; can have a lasting impact.

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

- Respect, kindness, and curiosity go a long way.
- Strong culture is built through consistent, everyday inclusion for everyone, not just policies.



CONTENT

Culture isn't built in one big moment. It's shaped by the small things we do every day, how we treat people, how we listen, and how we show up for each other.

A simple "Good morning," giving someone credit for their work, or asking for feedback shows people they matter. These actions don't cost anything, but they can make someone feel seen, respected, and valued.





The opposite is also true. Ignoring someone's input, interrupting, or leaving people out can chip away at trust and team morale. Over time, these moments shape whether someone feels included, or invisible.

Leaders set the tone, but every person helps build culture. That includes quiet leaders, new hires, and people behind the scenes. Everyone plays a part in making the jobsite or office a place where others feel welcomed.

When we take time to notice others, say thank you, and invite people in, we create a stronger team. The little things add up. They send the message: "You belong here."





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think about one small action a teammate took that made you feel welcome. How can you pay that forward today?

Now think: What's one small thing you can do for someone else this week?



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Start each day/shift with a 1-word “check-in” round, how are you today?
- Create a **“Recognition Wall”** / **“Workplace Culture Shoutout”** board where team members can leave quick shoutouts.
- Practice **“Name and Thanks,”** acknowledge teammates by name during tasks.
- Introduce a daily **“Culture Building Moment,”** one person shares a story, idea, or action that amplifies company values.
- Ask each team member to identify one way they help others feel seen or valued.
- Ask: What’s one thing we do well, and one thing we could improve?



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Launch a **“Welcome Buddy”** system to support new hires.
- Start each meeting with 30-second appreciation shoutouts to recognize a small win or positive behavior.
- Create small **“culture cards”** with simple actions: greet someone, say thank you, check in.
- Review your daily habits, what do they say about your values?



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Invite students to design welcome signs or a values poster for a jobsite.
- Have students write anonymous **“gratitude notes”** to classmates or instructors.
- Co-host a “small acts” challenge: encourage students to do 3 kind actions each day.
- Provide stickers or posters that say **“Culture Starts with Me.”**



GROUP ACTIVITY

- As a team, commit to one daily micro-inclusion behavior for the week, and report back on its impact.
- Go around: Share one action someone took that made you feel included.
- Build a team **“Do More / Do Less”** list about team behaviors.
- In pairs, practice how to speak up respectfully when something’s not right?
- Watch a short video about workplace culture (e.g., Brene Brown or trade-specific clips) and discuss takeaways.
- Create a **“This is Who We Are”** team agreement, add one word each that represents your crews’ values.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What's a small action that made you feel included in a team?
2. What unspoken habits might unintentionally push people away?
3. What small things have made a big difference in your work life?
4. How can supervisors' model daily inclusion for their teams?
5. What could we change in our routines to help new or quiet team members feel welcome?

*Culture lives in everyday moments. Everyone has the power to shape it.
Every action builds culture.*



This Week:

- Greeting teammates by name each morning.
- Offer help to someone new or quiet on your team.
- Give a genuine shoutout to someone doing great work.
- Notice how your tone and words affect others.
- Start a conversation about how your team defines respect.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#SmallActionsBigImpact

***Culture isn't what we say,
it's what we do every day.***

Resources:

[Center for Positive Organizations](#)
[Great Place to Work](#)

[Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 11
SMALL
ACTIONS,
BIG IMPACT



BRIDGING GENERATIONS: RESPECTING DIFFERENCES, BUILDING TOGETHER

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All employees (field, office, and leadership);
especially useful for supervisors,
superintendents, PMs, and team leads**

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INCLUSION WEEK 2025**
TOOLBOX TALK



OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 12

CIW PILLAR
Belonging & Workforce Culture,
Commitment & Accountability

BRIDGING GENERATIONS: RESPECTING DIFFERENCES, BUILDING TOGETHER



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation is designed to help teams work across generations and build respect across age groups with more empathy, curiosity, and shared respect.

- Understand how generational differences shows up on your team.
- Learn how age and generational experiences affects work styles and communication.
- Spot and reduce friction caused by generational differences.
- Practice respect and curiosity across generations.
- Build a team where experience and fresh ideas are both valued.



DEFINITIONS

Generation:

A group of people born around the same time who share key cultural, technological, and social experiences (e.g., Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z).

Mutual Respect:

Listening, learning, and valuing contributions, no matter someone's age.

Generational Gap:

Variations in work style, communication preferences, work style and expectations based on age or life stage.

Reverse Mentoring:

A two-way mentorship model where senior and junior team members share knowledge and learn from each other.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Construction teams include many age groups. That mix brings strength—but it takes effort to work well together.
- Different experience levels contribute strengths like deep expertise, new ideas, or innovative skills.
- Friction often comes from how we communicate, like how people use phones, show respect, or ask questions.

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

- Learning from each other builds stronger, safer crews.
- Respecting generational differences builds stronger, more resilient teams.



CONTENT

On most jobsites and in most offices, people from different generations work side by side. Team members contribute a range of strengths, from tested practices to new approaches. Some team members contribute. Both are valuable, but they don't always understand each other right away.

Different age groups may bring varied communication styles or experience, e.g., giving feedback, or using technology. Teams benefit with all perspectives are respected. This can lead to misunderstandings, but it doesn't have to lead to conflict. The key is curiosity, not judgment.





When we take time to learn from each other, teams become stronger. New workers can learn proven techniques. Experienced workers can hear new ideas. Everyone gets better when we build trust across generations.

Respect stems from how we treat one another, regardless of background or tenure. Asking someone from another generation for input, sharing advice, or just working together on a task can build connection and trust.

When we value both experience and new perspectives, we create crews that are safer, smarter, and more united. That's what bridging generations is all about, working together to build what's next.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think about a time when someone from a with a different level of work or life experience taught you something meaningful at work. What did you learn from that interaction? What helped it succeed?

Now ask: What could you learn (or teach) by simply starting a conversation?



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Create a “2-Minute Skill Swap” where different generational workers exchange one technique, shortcut, or life lesson.
- Post a board: “Best Advice I Ever Got,” all ages contribute.
- Highlight “team-up” stories: cross-generational duos who solve problems together.
- Have teams build a “Top 3 Ways to Work Across Generations” poster based on input from multiple age groups.
- Encourage crew leaders to rotate tasks so different generations interact more.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Host a lunchtime roundtable: “What I wish my teammates understood about me.”
- Build an “Experience Snapshot,” to see what motivates each group – less experiences versus more experienced to understand what they value?
- Start a buddy program that pairs new hires with experienced staff (and vice versa)
- Share a story in your newsletter about multigenerational success.



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Organize a “Mentorship Moment” where trades veterans share their path with students, and students share their vision for the future.
- Invite both early-career and veteran workers to speak on career day.
- Ask students to interview someone from a different generation and present what they learned.
- Host a “Then vs. Now” building techniques day to show how tools and tech have changed.
- Display a team timeline: What construction looked like across generations.
- Host a reflection circle where students explore how they hope to grow through different life stages.



GROUP ACTIVITY

- Ask in small groups: What’s something your generation is proud of, and what do you admire about others?
- In pairs, answer: What’s one thing people assume about your age group that’s not true?
- Build a “Bridge Plan” what habits help us connect more and argue less?
- Write a team pledge: “We Build Together,” one word per person from all age groups!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What range of career stages and experiences are represented on our team today?
2. What strengths or skills do you see in teammates whose background or career path differs from yours?
3. What kinds of assumptions, about experience, communication, or work style, can get in the way of trust or collaboration?
4. What are some of the different ways team members prefer to receive feedback or recognition?
5. What does showing respect look like on our jobsite, regardless of role, title, or years of experience?

*The best crews combine experience with fresh perspective.
Respect builds connection across generations and work experiences.*



This Week:

- Share a skill with someone from a different generation.
- Ask a teammate what motivates them most at work.
- Invite someone more or less experienced into a decision or planning conversation.
- Reflect on how you communicate and adjust with respect.
- Post one piece of advice you have learned across generations.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#BridgingGenerations

"Respect doesn't retire, and wisdom doesn't wait. Every generation has a role in building what's next."

Resources:

[National Center for Construction Education and Research \(NCCER\)](#) [Construction Employers Association DEI Resources](#)
[Generations at Work Toolkit – AARP Foundation](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 12 BRIDGING GENERATIONS:
RESPECTING DIFFERENCES,
BUILDING TOGETHER



**Construction
Inclusion Week**

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY - BROADENING OPPORTUNITY FOR QUALIFIED SUPPLIERS

**OPENING DOORS:
BUILDING A
WORKPLACE
FOR EVERYONE**



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:
**All employees, especially
Project Managers, procurement,
estimating and leadership**

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TOOLBOX TALK



OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 13

CIW PILLAR
Economic Opportunity,
Community Engagement,
Commitment & Accountability



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY – LEVERAGING A BROAD SOURCE OF SUPPLIERS



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation explores how your team's choices, especially around who gets hired for work, can build stronger communities and create long-term opportunity.

- Understand how inclusive procurement and contracting decisions creates economic opportunity and drives job creation.
- Learn how expanding your vendor network opens doors.
- Identify common barriers smaller firms face and how to reduce them.
- See how inclusive sourcing supports training, access and fair opportunity.
- Explore new ways to engage local or first-time suppliers' participation in your projects.



DEFINITIONS

Economic Opportunity:

Access to income, contracts, and business growth that helps communities and workers succeed.

Workforce Multiplier Effect:

When supplier contracts lead to local jobs, apprenticeship, skills training, and career growth.

New or Underused Supplier:

A small or local business that may not have had full access to past bids or networks.

Capacity Building:

Support programs and partnerships that help smaller businesses compete and deliver on contracts.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Economic Opportunity doesn't just mean hiring workers, it includes who we hire to do the work.
- Construction impacts local economies, and who we work with matters.
- Smaller businesses often hire local, invest in workers and create first job chances into the industry.

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025



KEY CONCEPTS

- Expanding your vendor/supplier lists increases competition and broadens access to qualified firms. Final procurement decisions remain based on neutral factors such as cost, safety, quality, and reliability.
- Many of these businesses don't need handouts, they need access, support, and a fair chance to compete.
- Who you buy from can influence pathways into the industry: Ensure outreach is broad and process is competitively neutral; decisions are based on objective performance factors.



CONTENT

Every project involves choices: who we work with, who we hire, and where we spend money. These choices influence access to jobs, training, and a future in construction.

When we broaden outreach to include small, local, or newer businesses, we expand competition. Many firms often hire local talent, invest in training, and create first-job opportunities. Some face barriers such as unclear requirements, or limited access to bidding processes.

Opening doors means ensuring qualified firms have fair access to compete; standards remain consistent and job-related.





That can include updating vendor lists, publicizing opportunities, inviting new companies to bid, and asking: “Who is not aware of this opportunity, and why?”

When we widen the pool of suppliers, we build better projects and stronger teams. We also show that construction offers fair and open access to opportunity.

Your role in procurement, estimating, or project management can create access for others. That’s leadership. That’s economic opportunity in action.

Procurement decisions use objective, transparent, and consistently applied criteria; no preferences are based on protected characteristics.





ACTIVITY OPTIONS

General Ask: Think of a time when your project worked with a new or small business. What stood out about their impact, story, or workforce?

Now ask: Are we doing enough to make room for new, local, emerging or underused firms?



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Highlight a local trade partner during your morning huddle.
- Create a “Partner spotlight” board featuring photos or stories of their impact.
- Ask each crew to learn one new fact about a local or first-time contractor on site.
- Invite a supplier rep to share about how they got started and who they hire.
- Share a story of a supplier that helped someone get their start in the industry.
- Build a jobsite map showing where local vendors/suppliers and their workers are based, highlighting local pride.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Review current vendor lists for opportunities to expand to local or new certified businesses.
- Host a “Meet the Builder” day to connect estimating or procurement with newer vendors.
- Add a line in RFPs encouraging mentorship or job creation or local hiring.
- Track which partners create entry-level opportunities or apprenticeships.
- Feature a “New Voices in Construction” vendor/supplier story in internal communications.



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Partner with small business that hire youth, reentry, or second chance workers.
- Sponsor a career day with emerging vendors and hands-on demos.
- Invite suppliers to speak with students about careers and business ownership.
- Host a “Build Local, Hire Local” community partners.
- Help students to design posters or social media posts about “Why Local Business Matters.”



GROUP ACTIVITY

- In pairs, discuss: What makes it hard for small or new firms to break in?
- Brainstorm: How can we be more open and supportive as a team or site?
- Create a team pledge, to help expand access in your next project.
- Watch a short video or read an article about local partners success stories.
- List 5 benefits of growing your network, and who benefits most.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What's the link between who we hire and who has a career path in construction?
2. What gets in the way of working with small or emerging firms?
3. How can we remove barriers and create more access through our contracts?
4. Who on our team has the ability to open doors through procurement or project planning?
5. What's one simple action we can take to open doors wider in procurement or partnership?

*When we include more voices in how we build,
we open doors for jobs, skills, and futures.*



This Week:

- Learn about a supplier you have not worked with before.
- Share one way your project supports economic opportunity.
- Invite a small or local firm to attend your next outreach event.
- Share a story about how someone got their start because of a contract.
- Challenge your next project team to expand beyond the usual vendor list.



Post your impact

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#EconomicOpportunity

***When we build with everyone, we
build stronger. Economic opportunity
opens doors for everyone.***

Resources:

[Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#)
[Women's Business Enterprise National Council \(WBENC\)](#)

[Disability:IN Supplier Diversity Program](#)
[aptac-us.org](#)

OCTOBER 13-17, 2025

TALK 13 ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY
BROADENING
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
QUALIFIED SUPPLIERS