

BRIDGING GENERATIONS: RESPECTING DIFFERENCES, BUILDING TOGETHER



**Construction
Inclusion Week**

TOOLBOX TALKS

12



Estimated Time:

15 minutes max



Audience:

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

CIW PILLARS:

*Belonging & Workforce Culture,
Commitment & Accountability*

BRIDGING GENERATIONS: RESPECTING DIFFERENCES, BUILDING TOGETHER



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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE:

This Toolbox Talk is provided as a voluntary workforce development resource in support of Construction Inclusion Week. It does not impose or endorse any directives, quotas, or identity-based exclusions or preferences.

The content reflects voluntary best practices and is designed to promote safety, opportunity, and inclusive team culture benefiting everyone across the construction industry, to help support, attract, and retain top talent.

Construction Inclusion Week does not control or endorse the content of third-party links. Activities should be adapted to align with your company's legal policies and job-related criteria.



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.



KEY CONCEPTS:

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

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.



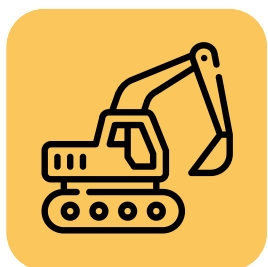


ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

General Ask:

Think about a time when someone from a 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?

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

- 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 lunch time 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 ACTIVITIES

- 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!



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



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

Resources:

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