

MENTAL HEALTH IN CONSTRUCTION



**Construction
Inclusion Week**

TOOLBOX TALKS

06



Estimated Time:
15 minutes max



Audience:

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

CIW PILLARS:

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

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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.



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.

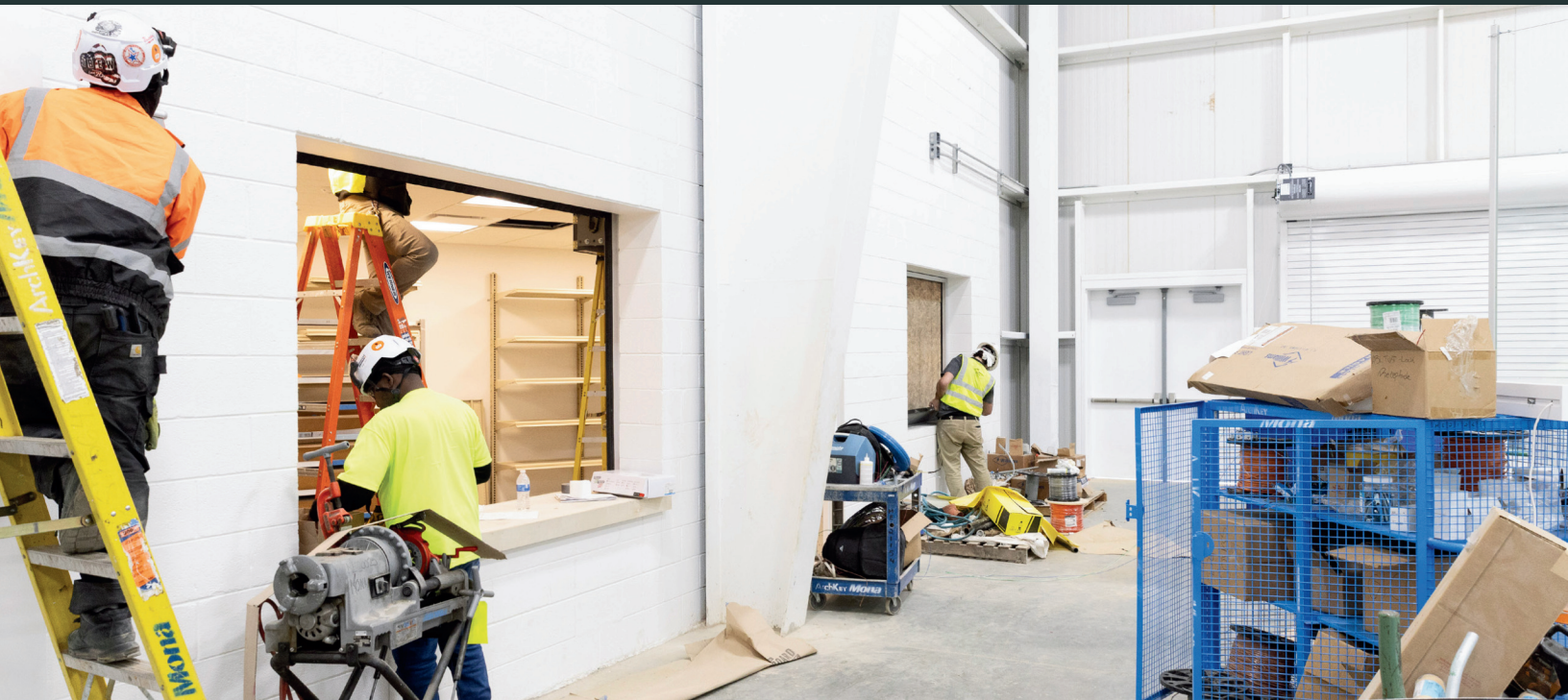
Peer Support: Assistance from individuals with similar life experiences to promote recovery, well-being, connection, and resilience.

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.

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.



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.

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

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



JOBSITE



OFFICE



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY**



GROUP



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 ACTIVITIES

- 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.



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



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

Resources:

- Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention
- NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Illness
- Man Therapy or Mental Health America (MHA)
- 988 Lifeline