CrewSigned

Mental Health Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

We spend a lot of time talking about protecting our bodies on the job: our backs, our hands, our eyes. Today I want to talk about protecting our minds. This one matters a lot in our line of work.

Construction has one of the highest suicide rates of any industry in the country. Many more workers in our industry die by suicide each year than die from falls and other job site accidents. That is hard to hear, but it is true, and it means this is something we need to talk about out loud.

There are reasons our work is hard on mental health. Long hours, time away from family, seasonal layoffs and money worries add stress. Injuries and chronic pain wear people down, and pain medication can make things worse. On top of that, there is a culture of toughing it out and not talking about feelings. A lot of people struggle in silence.

Watch for changes in the people you work with. Someone who seems withdrawn or quiet, angry or on edge, more tired than usual, drinking more, missing work, giving away things they care about, or saying things like they are a burden or nobody would miss them. You know your crew. If something seems off, trust that.

If you are worried about someone, reach out. Pull them aside somewhere private and say what you have noticed. Ask how they are really doing, and listen without judging or trying to fix everything. It is okay to ask directly whether they are thinking about suicide. Asking does not put the idea in their head. It shows you care and gives them a chance to talk.

Then help them connect to support. In the United States you can call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, any time of day. If the company has an employee assistance program, that is confidential help too. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911 and stay with them.

If you are the one struggling, you are not weak and you are not alone. Talk to someone you trust, call or text 988, or come see me privately.

Taking care of your mind is part of working safely. Look out for each other.

Discussion questions

1. What makes it hard for people on a crew like ours to talk about stress or mental health?
2. If you noticed a coworker acting differently, what would you say to start the conversation?
3. Where would you find the 988 Lifeline number or our employee assistance number if you needed it?

OSHA standard

OSHA, Preventing Suicides in Construction
https://www.osha.gov/preventingsuicides

SOURCES

Suicide Prevention in Construction: 5 Things You Should Know (OSHA 4446): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA4446.pdf
Suicide Prevention: 5 Things You Should Know (OSHA 4180): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA4180.pdf
OSHA, Preventing Suicides in Construction: https://www.osha.gov/preventingsuicides
OSHA Safety and Health Topics, Workplace Stress: https://www.osha.gov/workplace-stress

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Mental Health Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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