



## Daily Toolbox Talk: Thank You

### May 7, 2021

This year's Construction Safety Week theme is Be Present. Be Focused. Be Safe. For today, let's give thanks to the people we work side by side with, discuss our **gratitude** for one another, and remind ourselves of our family and friends at home that we work safe for every day.

Here's what today's daily topic, **Thank You**, means:

*Our industry is embracing safety more than ever, most especially with the outbreak of COVID this year, and every worker in our industry deserves a big thank you. The efforts of all our workers are reducing risks and accidents on our projects. This week we have been discussing the importance of total well-being to being safe. Thank you for listening as we explored ways to be present, be focused and stay safe on the job and at home. Our workers are the essential ingredient to the success of our industry. Thank you for participating in Safety Week and for your hard work all year.*

### Pre-Toolbox Meeting Ideas and Preparation

*The following are ideas to enhance the message of gratitude, but do not need to be implemented:*

1. **Thank you notes:** Pass out a handwritten thank you note at the toolbox to each crew member
2. **Banners:** Order a gratitude/thank you banner that has a very personal feel to be hung at the jobsite and can be signed.
3. **Meal:** Provide a socially distant lunch/breakfast/evening meal – with or without spouses and shift dependent. Must follow all job COVID-19 protocols.
4. **Giveaway:** Gratitude wrist bands to be handed out. A daily reminder of the team's gratitude to the folks building the work.
5. **Recognition:** At the end of shift, staff to host a moment of recognition as craft leave for the day:
  - a. Applause line as craft depart at the end of shift.
  - b. Virtual high five craft as they leave the jobsite at the end of shift.



### Toolbox Meeting Kick-Off at Start of Shift

Share a message of gratitude on why you are thankful for your crew and their continued commitment to the job, team, production and being safe in the field.

Discuss these questions with your crew. Possible answers are listed below each question.

1. **What does being part of a crew/team/family mean to you?**
  - a. *The people you work next to become an extension of your family.*
  - b. *You care about their safety and well-being, as well as your own.*
  - c. *Engage with your crew members and build team comradery.*
2. **When was a time that you were a brother/sister's keeper for a member of your crew?**
  - a. *Share a personal story that has stuck with you.*
  - b. *Thank a member of your crew for looking out for you and keeping you safe.*
  - c. *Share what you learned from your experience.*
3. **How will you personally commit to keeping yourself and the ones around you safe?**
  - a. *Be consistently aware of your surroundings and the other crews in the area.*
  - b. *Stay up to date with all task-specific paperwork to mitigate risks to yourself and other crew members.*
4. **Why do you work safe?**
  - a. *Talk about your close family and friends, and why it is important that you go home safe each day.*
  - b. *Share your favorite hobbies that you can do because you keep yourself and others around you safe.*
  - c. *Thank your crew for looking out for you so you can continue to be there for the people you love most.*

Crew Signatures:

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## **Daily Toolbox Talk: Be Present, Be Focused**

### **May 3, 2021**

Taking a holistic approach to safety means embracing a total wellness approach that includes paying attention to both the body and the mind in everything we do. There are many things going on around us in our physical environment as well as distractions occupying our minds at any given time. With all the challenges and noise we face in today's world, it is often difficult to be truly present in the moment. This can be especially true at work. It is important to recognize and adjust when our minds are not fully focused or present in the moment while completing a work task.

What does it mean to be truly present? All too often we are physically present somewhere, but our focus and attention are not. We have all been there. Whether it is during a safety meeting or when driving home, we zone out and quickly realize we have no clue what was said in the safety meeting or with the snap of a finger we are home but have no recollection of the drive. This kind of disconnect from the present moment can be extremely dangerous when at work.

#### **How to be Present**

There are many reasons why we may not be present in any given moment. As individuals we vary greatly, but a few quick tips may help you be more in the moment the next time you find your mind wandering.

- Take note of how well you are focusing and where your mind is at. From there, make the conscious choice to improve your focus and attention if needed.
- When you are part of a discussion or receiving directions, make sure you are actively listening to the person speaking. One way to become a better listener is to treat the information as something you are going to have to teach to a coworker. Receiving information with the understanding that you will be responsible to pass it on can help ensure that you actively listen to the person speaking.
- Eliminate distractions from the physical work area. Things such as noise, clutter, chemicals, people, equipment, etc. can have a large impact on your ability to fully pay attention to what you are doing in any given moment at work. Eliminating distractions can make a difference in whether you are able to fully focus on the task at hand.
- Identify any personal concerns that are causing your mind to wander and not be fully present at work. If not possible to eliminate them, talk about them with your supervisor so they can help you address them accordingly.

#### **Summary**

It can be challenging to truly be present at work. Distractions, long hours, health issues, family, stress, all plague our ability to be fully present in our work. Being present and focused is only possible through recognizing where our current focus and attention are, then taking the necessary steps to be more present in the moment in our work environment.



**Discuss these questions with your crew. Possible answers are listed below each question.**

1. Have you ever attended a safety meeting and realized that you missed some important information that you may need to use later? What did you do once you realized you may have missed some pertinent information?
  - a. *Asked your supervisor for additional instructions*
  - b. *Asked fellow co-workers*
  - c. *Read the material again*
2. What do you do to get yourself back on track if you notice your mind wandering?
  - a. *Take time to look around to identify what is happening around yourself and reevaluate your current safety measures*
  - b. *Put away personal cell phones/iPads until breaktime*
  - c. *Take time off when needed to handle personal items*
3. As supervisors, what can you do to alleviate employee's stressors causing them to lose focus and not be present at work?
  - a. *Have open communications with your employees so they can bring their authentic selves to work and feel comfortable discussing their concerns*
  - b. *Know what employee resources are available to your employees before you are faced with difficult conversations*

**Crew Signatures:**

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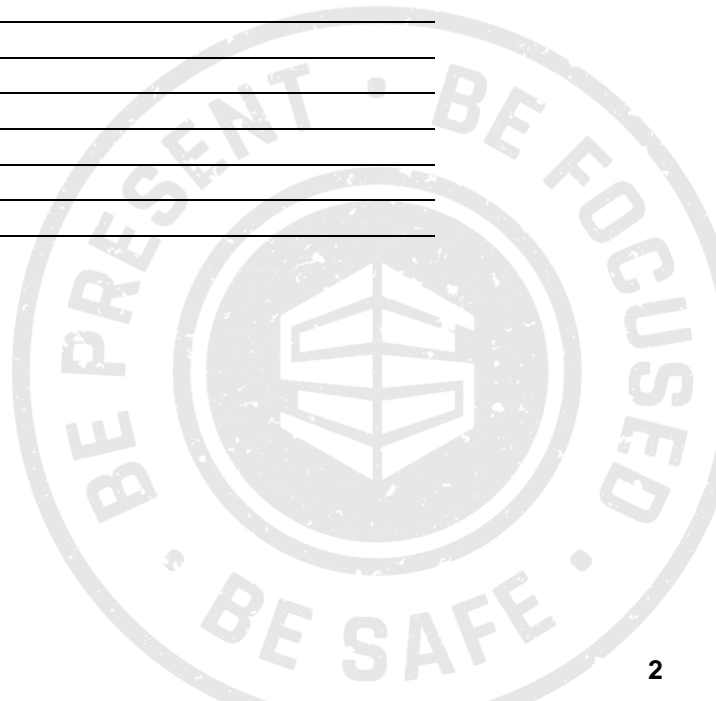
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## **Daily Toolbox Talk: Healthy Mind, Healthy Body**

### **May 4, 2021**

Being safe means paying attention to both mind and body. It extends beyond wearing hardhats and safety glasses. It means recognizing how important mental health really is to everyone's overall safety. From suicide to distractions that lead to devastating accidents, it is important that we all recognize the importance of total well-being. When workers are physically and mentally safe everyone wins.

Today, more than ever, the construction industry is prioritizing mental health well-being. Often referred to as "the silent epidemic," construction has the second-highest suicide rate by occupation in the United States. To face this silent epidemic, we must first understand what causes it and continue to work together to overcome it.

Our industry is often labeled as an "old school" or "tough" culture, but we must realize this is changing. For co-workers dealing with a mental illness, this may be a barrier to reach out for help. Embracing the culture of caring that is sweeping our industry creates the workplace support network that is critical for workers in need. Work away from home and long hours means we often spend more time with our co-workers than our family. Taking a genuine interest in your team members' well-being can be our best tool to overcome mental illness. Know the warning signs such as significant mood changes, withdrawals, tardiness, and substance abuse. Stop, take the initiative, and intervene. You just may be the help that person needs or even save a life.

Many employers have also adopted an employee assistance program or direct talk/ text therapy service. Encourage the use of these tools and always remember help is available.

People are indeed the most valuable asset we have, and to preserve our people's longevity, we must take an active role in our physical health. Hard manual labor, long hours, and lack of rest can take a toll on the body. With an aging workforce, the focus must turn to healthy lifestyle choices. Participation in daily stretch and flex, as well as proper lifting techniques has shown a significant impact on soft tissue injuries. Adequate sleep and a healthy diet play an integral role in your overall health. Aim for eight hours of sleep a night, maintain a healthy balanced diet, and stay hydrated throughout the day. Remember that small changes each day can have a tremendous impact over time on your physical well-being.

Striving for a healthy mind and healthy body means you are one piece of the puzzle that shapes a healthier future for our industry. Together we can make a difference.





Discuss these questions with your crew. Possible answers are listed below each question.

1. **How can you help someone that seems to be struggling with mental health?**
  - a. *Listen to what that person is saying - show understanding*
  - b. *Talk about well-being and keep questions open-ended*
  - c. *Don't try to diagnosis an issue or guess feelings*
  - d. *Offer seeking professional support and provide ways to do this*
2. **What resources are available to support a healthy mind?**
  - a. *Family and close friends*
  - b. *Trusted co-workers*
  - c. *Your doctor or mental health professional*
  - d. *Employee Assistance Programs*
  - e. *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-TALK (8255)*
3. **What adjustments can you make to your daily routine to support a healthy body?**
  - a. *Eliminate unhealthy habits like excessive drinking, smoking, or other substance abuse*
  - b. *Participate in a daily stretch and flex routine - listen to your body*
  - c. *Maintain a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of water*
  - d. *Aim for 8 hours of sleep each night*
4. **Encourage sharing and storytelling:**
  - a. *What advice would you give to a younger worker?*
  - b. *What ideas do you have to make your workplace better?*
  - c. *Has a mental or physical health problem ever affected you or a co-worker?*

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## Daily Toolbox Talk: Be Relentless

### May 5, 2021

Preventing injuries means relentlessly paying attention to risk, and monitoring what is happening around you at all times. Executing the fundamentals is critically important. Full PPE 100% of the time, hand safety, power tool safety, and even housekeeping are key elements of total safety. Injuries happen in a flash, so never take safety for granted. Be relentless everyday by choosing to work safe--- for yourself and the people that love you.

**Discuss these questions with your crew. Possible answers are listed below each question.**

1. Who do you work safe for every day? (Discuss what would happen to them if you don't come home today.)
  - a. *Wife or husband.*
  - b. *Kids.*
  - c. *Parents.*
  - d. *Dog or Cat.*
2. What is the best way to start each day committed to safety? (Discuss how starting your day focused on safety sets the tone for the day)
  - a. *Completing a Pre-Task Plan or Job Hazard Analysis prior to beginning work.*
  - b. *Having a morning huddle with crews to discuss the day's work, and current site conditions.*
  - c. *Ensuring that all workers are properly trained.*
3. What are some ways to always be aware of your surroundings? (Discuss the importance of always being aware of what is going on around you.)
  - a. *20-20-20 Rule: Every 20 minutes, take 20 seconds, and look 20 feet around*
  - b. *Update the Pre-Task plan throughout the day*
  - c. *Morning coordination meetings with all contractors.*
4. What is the best way for companies to create a work culture that is relentlessly dedicated to safety? (Discuss the ways in which companies demonstrate to their workers that safety is important.)
  - a. *Leadership from the Top-Down. Ex: Supervisors also wear PPE 100% of the time.*
  - b. *Empowering employees to speak up when an unsafe condition exists without fear of retaliation.*
  - c. *Making sure that all crews have the right tools, the right equipment, the right PPE, for the right job, in the right condition.*



# CONSTRUCTION SAFETY WEEK

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## Daily Toolbox Talk: Be Safe, Be Well Rested

### May 6, 2021

Do you ever feel exhausted during the day even after a full 8 hours of sleep? Or, do you routinely get less than 7 hours of sleep per night and struggle to stay awake during the day? The construction industry often comes with early hours, long commutes and nightshift work. This interruption with the Circadian Rhythm, your body's natural sleep/wake cycle, can have major consequences on your physical and mental health. For some, it can lead to substance dependency and even depression.

The good news is no matter what your sleep habits are, there are some simple things you can do to improve your quality of sleep, your overall well-being, and safety on the jobsite. Here are a few tips to improve your sleep quality tonight:

1. **Exercise:** Being physically active during the day can help you fall asleep easier. If you are not physically active while at work, be sure to take time periodically throughout the shift to get up, stretch and walk. Consider an exercise routine when you get home. The more energy you expel during the day, the easier it is for your body to enter a deep and restful sleep at night.
2. **Food and Beverage:** Avoid eating heavy meals before bedtime. Resist the urge for a "nightcap" before bed. Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but negatively impacts your quality of sleep causing you to wake up frequently. Also, avoid drinking caffeinated drinks (coffee, energy drinks) within 6 hours of bedtime.
3. **Sleep routine:** Keep your bedtime and your waketime consistent, even on the weekends and resist the urge to take naps. There is no such thing as "catching up" on sleep. Consistent sleep intervals help keep your body in a reliable routine of rest and rejuvenation. For those who work nights, do your best to keep a consistent schedule as well. Avoid bright light or sun exposure after your shift as it will make it easier for you to fall asleep.
4. **Sleep Quantity:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends most adults 18-60 should aim for 7 or more hours per night. Those 61 and older should try for 7-9 hours. Make it a priority to get to bed early enough to get the rest you require.
5. **Sleep Environment:** Your bedroom should be dark and free of distraction and noise. Avoid screen time a minimum of 30 min before bedtime (an hour is best). Use blackout curtains if necessary and keep it cool. Studies suggest that deep sleep is best at temperatures around 68 degrees.



**Discuss ways your work has challenged your sleep quality. How can you prioritize better sleep, even with early hours or shiftwork?**

**Review these questions with your crew. Possible answers are listed below each question.**

1. What are some warning signs that you or your co-workers may be sleep deprived?
  - a. *Excessive yawning*
  - b. *Dozing off on the job*
  - c. *Inability to stay focused*
  - d. *Excessive mood swings*
  - e. *Lowered self-control around food, especially craving sugar and carbohydrates.*
  - f. *Increased dependency on caffeine, energy drinks or alcohol.*
2. What are likely causes of potential sleep deprivation associated with our industry?
  - a. *Shift work or being required to work sometimes during the day and sometimes during the night.*
  - b. *Long commutes, getting home late and eating dinner right before bed.*
  - c. *Drinking coffee or energy drinks throughout the day, or even before the drive home.*
  - d. *The desire to stay up late when you get home so you can catch up on TV shows or other personal interests.*
  - e. *Having a drink or two before bed to help you "relax."*
  - f. *Sleep Apnea and or excessive snoring which causes frequent interruptions in the sleep cycle (consult your doctor or dentist).*
3. What are some possible solutions to sleep deprivation that you can do tonight?
  - a. *Ensure you get to bed early enough to get at least 7 hours of sleep.*
  - b. *Stay active during the day.*
  - c. *Avoid eating dinner or drinking alcohol right before bedtime.*
  - d. *Stop drinking caffeine or energy drinks after lunch.*
  - e. *Go to bed at the same time and wake up at the same time as consistently as you can.*
  - f. *Avoid screen time (TV, Smart Devices, etc.) 30-60 min before bedtime.*
  - g. *Make sure your bedroom is dark, cool and quiet.*

**Crew Signatures:**

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