

SAFETY MEETING

Company Name: Superior Waterproofing

Tool Talk #20

Date: 5/20/2022

Mental Health Awareness

FORMEN – PLEASE DISCUSS TOOLBOX TALKS AS A GROUP AND EVERYONE SIGN ONE SHEET

Mental health and wellness, though never included in Safety Week before, may be one of the biggest safety issues on our jobsites today. When people who are struggling with substance abuse, depression, anxiety and personality disorders show up to work they are likely to be distracted, fatigued, and may have severely impaired judgment and perception. This could obviously result in incidents or injuries to themselves or someone else, or – at its worst case – self-inflicted injury or even death.

Construction is the second-leading industry at risk for suicide by men. Statistics show that rates of suicide thoughts, plans, and attempts are more than double that of the general population.

Why does it hit us so hard? There are many factors of our jobs that have an impact. First, it is a high-pressure industry. We are driven by schedule, budget and production demands. We are always pushing, and that can take a toll. Many construction workers travel regularly and are away from their families for extended periods of time. We deal with sleep disruption or deprivation due to shift work, and oftentimes manage seasonal or end-of-project layoffs. Many in our industry suffer from chronic pain that is the result of years and years of hard physical labor, and a high number of that population self-medicates with drugs or alcohol.

Last – but maybe most important, we are an “old school” and “tough” industry. This often prevents people from opening up, sharing shortcomings, or asking for help. This is what we need to fix. For many, a coworker could be a last line of defense. We need to educate ourselves and be on the lookout for warning signs, and we need to encourage people to open up and seek help when necessary.

I encourage you to take care of yourselves, take care of each other, and know who to go to for help. We are all in this together, and together we can eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health and asking for help.

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

- 1. What are some warning signs?**
 - a. Increased or excessive use of drugs or alcohol*
 - b. Anxiety, dramatic mood swings or uncharacteristic anger, recklessness*
 - c. Difficulty sleeping or dramatic increase in sleeping*
 - d. Withdrawal or comments about having no reason to live*
- 2. How can you be an active listener? (getting people to share their struggles)**
 - a. Watch non-verbal signs*
 - b. Ask open-ended questions or prompt with "tell me more"*
 - c. Make sure to remain non-judgmental, and resist offering advice*
 - d. Reflect back key feelings or phrases to assure the person they are being heard*
- 3. IF you suspect that someone is considering suicide:**
 - a. Ask the direct question and thank them for sharing*
 - b. Provide hope and let them know that "we are a team"*
 - c. Keep them safe until they can get professional help*

WHAT UNSAFE OPERATIONS DID YOU FIND ON YOUR JOBSITE THIS WEEK? _____

What Corrective action was taken? _____

Meeting Attended By _____

Supervisor's Signature _____