

Mental Health in Construction: Identifying Action

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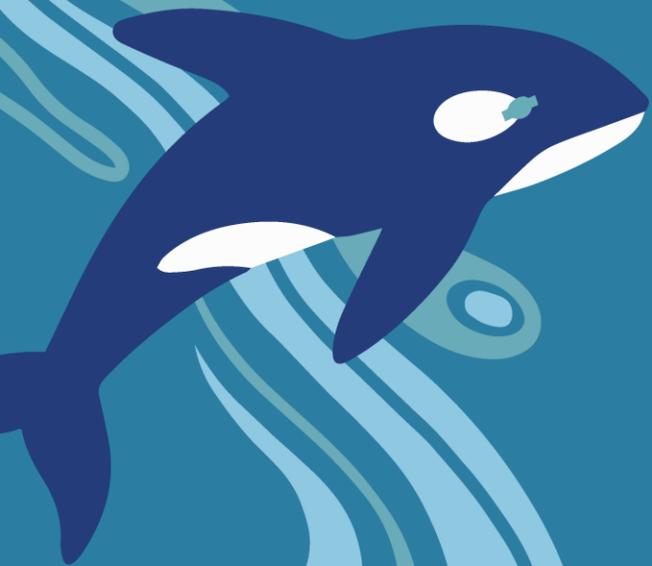
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Current conditions

- Construction industry has some of the strongest safety cultures in the country
 - But the leading cause of death is not falls or equipment
- System-level issue, not a personal failing

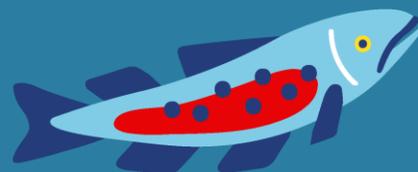
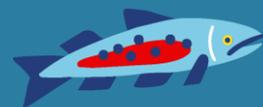




A reframe

Mental health isn't a personal issue—it's a worksite condition. We already treat fatigue, impairment, and distraction as safety risks.

Mental health sits in the same category.



Discuss: How do you personally handle having a hard time or a period of tough times? What is helpful for you?



Connection prevents risk

- **Lack of social support** is one of the most frequently identified risk factors for poor mental health in construction (Pamidimukkala A, Kermanshachi S, Almaskati DN. Mental Health in Construction Industry: A Global Review. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2025 May 20;22(5):802. doi: [10.3390/ijerph22050802](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph22050802). PMID: 40427915; PMCID: PMC12110938.)
- Crisis center training guidance- Support by asking directly
 - Signals you are there for a hard conversation
 - Call 988



How to sit with difficult emotions

| SOARS Technique | Description | Example |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| S ilence | Give them time to think. After asking a question, count to three before jumping in. | Let silence happen. Growth and discovery lives there. People fill silence with truth. |
| O pen-Ended Questions | Avoid yes/no or “why” questions. Start with “what” or “how.” | “What would make this easier for you?” / “How do you typically handle that?” |
| A ffirmation | Validate that their experience and their feelings make sense. | “That sounds like a lot. It makes so much sense for you to be feeling stressed.” |
| R eflection | Mirror their emotions and feelings back to them. Use their own language. | “Sounds like you’re super frustrated by all the extra phone calls.” |
| S ummarize | Summarize what you’ve heard to ensure you’ve got a clear picture and to confirm you’ve been listening. This step helps close the loop and reinforces the provider’s reasoning, before introducing next steps. | “So to recap — you’re short on time, the process has been clunky, you’re frustrated and you want something easier and more reliable. Is that right?” |



You already have the tools

You already have the tools and culture:

- You are trained to notice risk early
- You look out for your team/crew
- You don't wait for something to get worse



Practical application

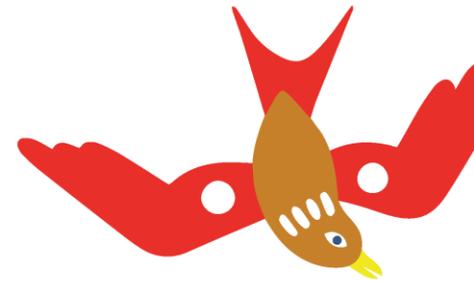
- Have you ever noticed someone in the room that seemed off? What are some of the signs you noticed
- When you notice that, what do you do?
- **What is something someone could do or say in that moment?**





Broader application

+ What is out of your direct control but within your influence?



Possible solutions- by and for you

- Peer support programs
- Mentorship programs
- Mental health support focus in health benefits from HR



Thank you

