

Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting



Social Connections

June 2021

One of the suicide risk factors in construction is isolation. We know that many construction workers leave their families and communities behind as they follow opportunities for work. There are other reasons like self-reliance and not sharing feelings that may cause workers to feel alone and disconnected. When workers feel connected to a social group because they have an overall sense of well-being that reduces or prevents suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Connectedness is the degree to which we feel socially close or interrelated with other persons or groups. We can be connected to individuals, families, community organizations or social institutions (think churches or clubs). As a construction worker, who do you surround yourself with at home or on the road? When we choose to spend our social time with friends, family, supervisors, and co-workers who we trust and who we believe care about us we tend to thrive emotionally and physically. When we can communicate openly and honestly with family and friends during conflict, we build stronger healthier connections. These connections improve our physical and mental wellbeing.

Most of us have areas in which we can improve our connectedness and well-being. Try these tools for life to experience greater connectedness:

Get active together. Whether you are at home or on the road, be active with others in your community (on the road, this could be your work group). This helps to create positive health habits as well as opportunities to connect.

Shape your family's health habits. Kids learn from watching and repeating parent's behaviors. Be a role model. Eating healthy family meals together, walking or riding bikes instead of watching TV or surfing the web helps build bonds between family members. Having a sense of belonging within the family protects the parents as well as the children from mental health problems that can lead to suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Build healthy relationships with partners, co-workers and extended social circle members. As children we learn social skills needed to form and maintain relationships with others. But we can learn to improve our relationships at any age. Do you know what a healthy relationship looks like and how to keep your connections supportive?

HEALTH REMINDER: Friendpower is stronger than willpower. Choose friends who are positive and supportive of positive and healthy lifestyle.

Discussion Points / Question:

1. Do you have any suggestions about how to maintain social connections when you are away from home? Or at Home?
2. Who are your most important social connections and why?