



Belonging and Excellence for All (BE4ALL) is a joint effort by SMART, SMACNA, and the ITI to create an industry-wide culture where everyone is welcome and belongs, including those from historically underrepresented groups, and where we all strive for the highest standards of performance and professionalism, resulting in a thriving unionized sheet metal industry that affirms the dignity and worth of us all. These Toolbox Talks are in support of this mission.

BE4ALL Toolbox Talk

Creating a Culture of Collaboration

Collaboration is essential in the sheet metal industry to create a workplace where employees feel comfortable speaking up, asking questions, and reporting concerns in good faith without fear of retaliation or embarrassment. A psychologically safe environment leads to better teamwork, increased productivity, and fewer accidents.

What is Psychological Safety?

Psychological safety means that workers feel safe to:

- Ask questions
- Share ideas and suggestions
- Report hazards
- Seek help when needed
- Express concerns without fear of being ridiculed or punished

Why is Psychological Safety Important in the Sheet Metal Industry?

- The sheet metal industry involves complex tasks, heavy machinery, and potential hazards. Open communication ensures a higher level of engagement.
- Employees who feel psychologically safe are more likely to report unsafe conditions or errors, preventing accidents.
- A culture of respect and open dialogue improves teamwork and problem-solving on job sites.

How to Foster a Collaborative Culture

1. Encourage Open Communication

- Leaders should actively listen and respond respectfully.
- Encourage employees to voice ideas to foster innovation.

2. Promote a No-Blame Culture

- Mistakes should be seen as learning opportunities.
- Focus on solutions instead of assigning blame.

3. Lead by Example

- Supervisors and team leaders should model respectful and open behavior.
- Show appreciation for input and feedback.

4. Recognize and Address Bullying or Intimidation

- Ensure that no one is afraid to speak up.
- Have clear policies for reporting and follow-through when addressing workplace issues.

5. Encourage Teamwork and Collaboration

- Foster an environment where workers support each other and share best practices.
- Conduct regular team meetings where employees can collaborate.



Real-Life Examples

- A worker notices a potential fall hazard but hesitates to report it, fearing backlash. In a psychologically safe workplace, they would feel confident to speak up, preventing an accident.
- A journey person encouraging an apprentice to ask questions and communicate ideas is an example of someone that feel that their company culture has psychological safety that allows them to feel valued as a team member.

Conclusion

Collaboration and psychological safety is just as important as physical safety in the sheet metal industry. When workers feel safe to communicate openly, it leads to a safer, more productive, and more positive workplace. Everyone has a role in fostering a culture of psychological safety—let’s work together to make our industry safer for all.

Staff Conversation & Notes:

Have you ever hesitated to speak up about a concern? What would have made it easier?

What can we do as a team to create a more open and supportive work environment?

How can leaders encourage employees to report safety hazards without fear?



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BE4ALL Toolbox Talk Participation Sheet

Employer: _____

Location: _____

Presenter: _____

Date Presented: _____

Participant	Initials

Participant	Initials



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