



*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

# Burnout Prevention & Managing Construction Stress

### Why This Matters

Construction work is demanding—physically, mentally, and emotionally. Tight timelines, long commutes, unexpected delays, and changing crews can all create stress. When stress builds up without a break, it can lead to burnout, which affects safety, productivity, morale, and overall well-being. Preventing burnout is not about being “tough enough”—it’s about working smarter, supporting each other, and building a work environment where everyone can perform their best.

### What is Burnout?

Burnout is a job-related state of exhaustion caused by prolonged stress. Common signs include:

- Feeling drained before the day even starts
- Irritability or frustration with coworkers
- Trouble concentrating or making routine decisions
- Increased mistakes or rework
- Physical symptoms like headaches, trouble sleeping, or muscle tension
- Feeling detached or “checked out”

Burnout is not a personal failure—it’s a normal response to sustained pressure.

### Sources of Stress in Construction

People in our industry often face:

- Fast-paced schedules and production pressure
- Weather impacts and unpredictable work conditions
- Heavy physical workloads
- Changing supervisors, crews, or workplace cultures
- Long hours or long commutes
- Balancing work with family responsibilities
- Lack of clear expectations or communication

Recognizing these stressors helps us manage them more effectively.

### Prevention Strategies for Workers

- Pace Yourself
- Set Boundaries
- Stay Connected
- Pay Attention to Warning Signs

### Prevention Strategies for Crews & Leadership

- **Offer Clarity:** Clear expectations, job assignments, and daily goals reduce uncertainty.
- **Encourage Communication:** Workers should feel safe asking questions or raising concerns.
- **Look Out for One Another:** If someone seems overwhelmed, check in with them.
- **Reinforce Rest and Hydration:** A rested, focused crew is a safer and more productive crew.



## Managing Stress in the Moment

- **Pause:** Take a breath and reset your focus.
- **Prioritize:** Identify the immediate next step rather than the entire task.
- **Talk:** Let your lead or partner know what you're experiencing.
- **Step Back from Conflict:** A short break often prevents escalation.

## Long Term Strategies

- Maintain a consistent **sleep** schedule when possible
- **Stretch** daily to reduce physical tension
- Build time for **hobbies**, **family**, and **recovery**
- Use employer-provided **resources** (EAP, mental health benefits, wellness programs, SMOHIT)
- **Seek support** early if stress becomes overwhelming

## Your Role in a Healthy Workplace

Burnout prevention is a shared responsibility. A supportive, respectful work environment improves:

- **Safety**
- **Productivity**
- **Communication**
- **Crew morale**
- **Worker retention**

Each of us, regardless of role, contributes to a climate where all workers can perform at their best and go home safe and healthy.

## Staff Conversation & Notes:

What are common stress points in your current job?

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What small actions could help reduce unnecessary stress for you or your coworkers?

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How can we check in and support each other better?

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<https://forms.office.com/r/V6rDW3Tyan>





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# BE4ALL Toolbox Talk

## Participation Sheet

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Presented: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant	Initials



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