

MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX GUIDE



INDUSTRY-BACKED, RESEARCH-BASED, SUICIDE PREVENTION AND SUPPORT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY SINCE 2008

MENTAL HEALTH IS A GROWING TOPIC FOR CONCERN ACROSS THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, AND OUR PEOPLE ARE FEELING THE STRAIN



MATES MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX.

The lockdown period may have given some much needed downtime to many, but as we gradually start the process of returning to work and get used to more new protocols, MATES want to make sure that wellbeing and conversations around mental health are at the top of the list at your toolbox talks.

As you head back onto site you may see some of the team struggle or be anxious about what is happening. Working with MATES you have already started the journey toward better mental health on site, you have the tools in your toolkit and this induction pack includes some helpful reminders to use when guiding the conversation on site.



YOU ARE NOT ON YOUR OWN.

MATES in Construction is here to support you and we are just a phone call away - **0800 111 315**.

IDEAS FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX TALK

Stay calm! You're doing great.

Call MATES in Construction on our 24/7 helpline – **0800 111 315** for immediate support and we can take it from there.



TO HELP GUIDE THE CONVERSATION, HERE ARE SOME EASY STEPS FOR YOU TO FOLLOW

- Talk about Psychological Wellness which follows naturally from your Health and Safety Talk.
- Be yourself (you know your crew)
- Keep the conversation light (if you're a funny person, be funny, this breaks the ice)
- Talk about the importance of Health & Safety and Psychological Wellness going hand in hand (give examples what this may look like). For example if someone is struggling to concentrate because of things going on in their life, they could be going onto the worksite mentally impaired putting both them and their workmates at risk.
- Use the "How to spot the invitations" poster in this guide to help you talk about behavioural changes that we might see or hear.
- Highlight the fact that it's ok not to be ok, everyone struggles during COVID but we need to talk to someone.
- Utilize your ASIST /Connectors to help with delivery and identify them to the crew, **if you're not comfortable talking with any of these people, talk with someone you trust.**
- Promote the collateral available, posters, attached in this guide
- Big emphasis on supporting one another, keeping an eye out for each other (mates helping mates)
- MATES is available 24/7 through our Helpline
- You are not alone!

"EHARA TAKU TOA I TE TOA TAKITAHU ENGARI I TE TOA TAKITINI"

WORKING TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER!

MATES CONNECTORS AND ASIST

CONNECTORS ARE KEY

If you have Connectors on your site, they will play a key role over this time as they have the skills and confidence to assist those in need. Highlight who the Connectors are on your site.

Connectors act as a MATE who can keep you SAFE while connecting you to help.

They can:

- Notice and respond to situations in which individuals may be having thoughts of suicide.
- Recognise that invitations for help are often overlooked.
- Move beyond the common tendency to miss, dismiss, and avoid suicide.
- Apply the talk steps: Tell, Ask, Listen and Keep Safe.
- Understand which community resources are available and how to connect someone with thoughts of suicide to these agencies for further help

We know that our Connectors helps to make our industry safer as they are our eyes and ears on site.

ASIST TRAINED WORKERS

If you have ASIST trained workers make sure they are well known on site.

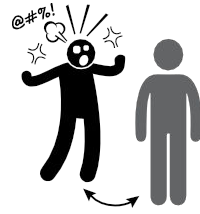
ASIST trained workers know how to develop safe plans for colleagues at critical risk. These workers can be compared to the first aid officer on site. ASIST trained workers will talk to a person contemplating suicide with the intention of making this person “safe”. Using simple skills an ASIST worker will listen to the persons’ concerns and respond to them appropriately with the object of reaching a “safe plan” for the worker.

We know that our ASIST trained workers save lives.



KNOWING HOW TO SPOT THE INVITATIONS

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR THAT YOU OR A MATE MIGHT BE DISPLAYING. THESE ARE NOT ONE-OFF INCIDENTENCES, BUT RATHER HAPPENING MORE OFTEN THAN USUAL.



usually easy going

angry and agitated easily



struggling to concentrate

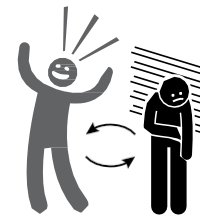


usually talkative
isolating oneself

"not wanting to talk to people"



struggling to finish tasks using alcohol or drugs as a way of coping



usually sociable
being distant

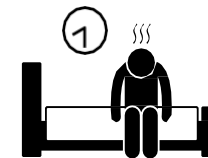
"not responding to messages"



coming to work late



finding it hard to cope with everyday things



not making it to work at all

IT'S OKAY NOT TO BE OKAY, BUT IT'S NOT OKAY TO DO NOTHING ABOUT IT.

Sometimes what might be happening for us might require more help. Talk to a mate, or call us at MATES in Construction on 0800 111 315. We are available 24/7 for free confidential service.



Heading out of lockdown and back to site is likely to cause some feelings of anxiety and distress.

As we head back to site we want to remind everyone to remember that if you are struggling or recognise that you are not travelling well, it is okay.

It's OK not to be OK, but it's not okay to do nothing about it.



IF YOU FIND THAT YOU ARE FEELING STRESSED AND ANXIOUS, HERE ARE 5 SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP YOU MANAGE:

1 DE-STRESS

Go through the steps below to help you de-stress. This will give you the time and skills to manage your feelings and emotions more easily.

2 STEP BACK

Stop what you are doing, remove yourself from the situation immediately. This is for your own health and safety and the safety of others working around you.

3 TAKE A BREATH

Take 10 seconds for yourself. Take a breath and breathe out slowly a few times this will help slow your heart rate and calm your busy mind.

4 RE-FOCUS

Focus on the here and now and clear your mind of the stressors you are feeling. Focusing is one of the best ways to alleviate stress by paying attention to what is going on now. This will help to calm your busy mind.

5 ENGAGE

Now that you have had a few minutes to re-centre, what do you need to engage with from here?

- You might be OK. Heading back to work right now is OK for you.
- You might just need to chat to someone, talk to a MATE, your boss or a friend or family member.
- You might be struggling more than both of those options. If so, we recommend that you advise someone onsite and engage with more professional supports such as MATES in Construction on 0800 111 315.

MATES SELF-CARE GUIDE



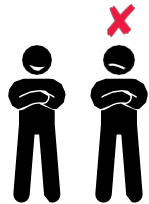
BE KIND TO YOURSELF Have reasonable expectations of yourself. If you feel like you are struggling remember that we have been dealing with unusual and unique times. This has caused stress and anxiety in the community which can affect your mental health and wellbeing. Be aware of the strain you may have been under and don't beat yourself up if you are not firing on all cylinders.



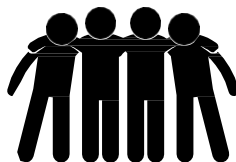
TAKE TIME FOR SELF-CARE In times of increased stress self-care must increase to counter the negative effects on your mental wellbeing. Ensure that you make time and create opportunities to do healthy things that make you feel good. This may be outdoor activities, hobbies, sports or spending quality time with friends or family.



DEVELOP YOUR KEY RELATIONSHIPS Take time to develop the most important connections you have with people. Create time for your relationships. Be kind and share how much you appreciate those valued relationships. These special human connections will then thrive, bringing you joy.



REMOVE NEGATIVE INFLUENCES IN YOUR LIFE Negative people and harmful activities can bring us down and affect our mental wellbeing. Surround yourself with happy and positive people who are positive and supportive. Avoid doing activities which you know to be harmful to your wellbeing.



EAT, DRINK AND SLEEP HEALTHILY A healthy diet, good hydration and sleep are fundamental for positive mental health and wellbeing. Look after your physical health and good mental health will follow.



HOW TO START A CONVERSATION

You don't have to have all the answers – just being there and being supportive is great!



1 ENCOURAGE HELP SEEKING

Help your mate to talk about what they are struggling with and reassure them that you are there to listen and provide support with what they're going through.

"How are you doing?"

"What's happening in your world?"

"How's life?"

"How's the family?"

Next, if they're okay talking, then mention specific things that have made you concerned, such as:

"You don't seem yourself – anything up?"

Let them know you are asking because you are concerned about them. If they get upset or angry, stay calm, don't take it personally.

Ask questions about what is going on like:

"Have you spoken to anyone else about this?"

"What would help you manage the load?"

"What can we change to make life easier?"

Don't interrupt or rush them, just wait and sit patiently in silence while they think. Take it seriously.

What comes next?

2 ENCOURAGE YOUR MATE TO SEEK HELP FOR WHAT THEY ARE STRUGGLING WITH

Remind your mate, there is always someone to listen and support them. They are not alone. If you are supporting someone in the workplace, suggest they seek further support and perhaps talk to one of the following:

MATES in Construction – we are here 24/7 to support you and your mate. Maybe they could talk to the H&S Manager or someone they trust on site. You might have an Employee Assistance Programme, alternatively their GP, family, whanau, friends, community and church leaders could provide help. You can help them contact someone for help.

"How can I help?"

"What would be a good first step?"

"What has helped before?"

RESOURCES

Download these resources for use on your site:

- 5 simple steps to help you manage stress
- MATES in Construction
- Self-Care Guide
- Spotting the Invitations

5 SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP YOU MANAGE STRESS

Thinking out of balance and back to work is likely to cause more feelings of anxiety and distress. As we head back to work we need to remember that if you are struggling or experience that you are not alone. Help is out there, because it's always there to be there, but it's not always obvious about it.

- 1 DE-STRESS** Get through the day, follow to help you do. **STRESS**. This will give you the chance to take a moment to manage your feelings and emotions in a healthy way.
- 2 STEP BACK** When you are doing, **STRESS** yourself from the situation. Remember, this is for your own health and safety, and the safety of others working around you.
- 3 TAKE A BREATH** Take 10 minutes for yourself. Take a break and breathe out slowly to help focus. This will help you get your head back to work.
- 4 RE-FOCUS** Focus on the task and not on what you're not doing. The stress you're feeling is coming in one of the best ways to reduce stress by getting attention to what is going on now. This will help to get your head back to work.
- 5 ENGAGE** Remember that you have had a lot of experience in the industry, what else you need to engage with your team?
 - This might be OK, but it's not always easy to get back to work.
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Need to talk now? 0800 111 315 / www.mates.net.nz

MATES HELPING MATES

Need a chat?
0800 111 315 / www.mates.net.nz

MATES in Construction

SELF-CARE GUIDE

- 1. BE KIND TO YOURSELF** From reasonable expectations of yourself. If you feel like you are struggling remember that you have been through with unusual and unique times. This has caused stress and anxiety for the community which can affect your mental health and wellbeing. Be aware of the things you may have been asked to do that you feel you are not doing well at.
- 2. TAKE TIME FOR YOUR CARE** If you're feeling stressed, it's important to take time to look after your mental health. This means taking time to do healthy things that make you feel good. This may include activities, hobbies, spending quality time with friends and family.
- 3. DEVELOP YOUR OWN BELONGINGS** Take time to develop the most important connections you have with people. Create time for your relationships. Be kind and show how much you appreciate those relationships. These special human connections will help you, bringing you joy.
- 4. BEWARE OF NEGATIVE INVITATIONS BY YOURSELF** Negative people and harmful activities can bring sadness and affect our mental wellbeing. Surround yourself with happy and positive people who are positive and supportive. Avoid doing activities that you know to be harmful to your wellbeing.
- 5. EAT, DRINK AND SLEEP HEALTHY** A healthy diet, good hydration and adequate rest are fundamental for positive mental and physical wellbeing. Look after your physical health and good mental health will follow.

Need to talk now? 0800 111 315 / www.mates.net.nz

KNOWING HOW TO SPOT THE INVITATIONS

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR that you or a mate might be displaying. These are not one-off incidences, but rather happening more often than usual.

- usually easy going → angry and agitated easily
- usually sociative → being distant
- usually to kitative → isolating oneself
- using alcohol or drugs as a way of coping
- struggling to finish tasks
- struggling to concentrate
- finding it hard to cope with everyday things
- coming to work late
- not making it to work at all

It's okay not to be okay, but it's not okay to do nothing about it. Talk to a mate or call our MATES in Construction on 0800 111 315. We are available 24/7 for free confidential services.

Other help lines available 24/7:
Lifeline: 0800 553 466
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Need to talk now? 0800 111 315 / www.mates.net.nz

Download resources by clicking above, or visit our website:
<https://mates.net.nz/get-help/covid-19-support/>





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"not wanting to talk to people"



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Other helplines available 24/7:

Tautoko Suicide Helpline 0508 828 865

Lifeline 0800 543 354 (text 4357)

Youthline 0800 376 633

Need to talk now? 0800 111 315 / www.mates.net.nz



SELF-CARE GUIDE



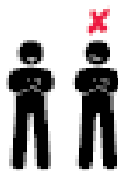
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5 SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP YOU MANAGE STRESS

Whilst working during level 3, it is normal to have feelings of anxiety and distress.

As we head back into level 3, we want to remind everyone to remember that if you are struggling or recognise that you are not travelling well, remember its OK not to be OK, but its NOT OK to do nothing about it.

1

DE-STRESS

Go through the steps below to help you de-stress. This will give you the time and skill to manage your feelings and emotions more easily.

2

STEP BACK

Stop what you are doing, remove yourself from the situation immediately. This is for your own health and safety and the safety of others working around you.

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TAKE A BREATH

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RE-FOCUS

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ENGAGE

Now that you have had a few minutes to re-centre, what do you need to engage with from here?

- You might be OK. Heading back to work right now is OK for you
- You might just need to chat to someone, talk to a MATE, your boss or a friend or family member
- You might still be struggling, if so, tell someone onsite and or call MATES In Construction on 0800 111 315



Need to talk now?

0800 111 315

www.mates.net.nz

National Helpline Open 24/7

MATES In Construction 24/7 Helpline
0800 111 315

Toll-free Suicide Helpline 0800 622 622

Helpline 0800 111 315 (Mon-Fri 8am-5pm)

Toll-free 0800 111 315

It is our responsibility if you or someone you know is at risk of harm.

• Go with the person to the nearest hospital emergency department

• Phone your local 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Team

• Telephone our helpline to communicate with a counsellor

Need to talk now? 0800 111 315 / www.mates.net.nz

[link to MATES in Construction videos](#)