

# Being Present

A Construction Suicide Prevention Partnership Toolbox Talk \*

[www.suicide-stops-here.org](http://www.suicide-stops-here.org)

Taking a holistic approach to safety means embracing the body/mind connection, paying attention to our thoughts, valuing sleep, and eating well. Numerous distractions abound in our physical environment. With all the challenges and noise, living in the moment is difficult. In construction, being present and mindful is vital to safety. Construction sites are complex, and we will never control everything that happens, but we can develop a mindset to be more aware and present.

What does it mean to be truly present? Often we are physically present somewhere, but our focus and attention are elsewhere. We have all been there. Whether it is zoning out during a safety meeting and quickly realizing we have no clue about what was talked about; or when we arrive home with no recollection of the drive. This kind of disconnection from the present moment can create dangerous and preventable hazards at work.

## How to Be Present

Here are some quick tips to focus your mind.



Take note of how well you are focusing and settling your mind. From there, make the conscious choice to improve your focus and attention if needed. Writing in a journal or log can focus the mind, foster attention, and improve work performance.



Ensure you are actively listening when you are part of a discussion or receiving directions. One way to become a better listener is to value the person speaking, avoid distractions, and understand that you may need to share this information with a coworker. Focused listening to instructions and updates builds your attention and improves job site safety.



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## More Tips

Eliminate distractions from the physical work area. Noise, clutter, chemicals, people, equipment, and personal stress can impact your ability to fully pay attention to what you are doing at work. Eliminating distractions and creating an organized workspace can help you focus on completing the task.



Identify any personal concerns causing your mind to wander and not be fully present at work. If not possible to eliminate them, talk about them with your supervisor so they can help you address them accordingly



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## Final Thoughts

Being alert and present at work is challenging. Distractions, long hours, health issues, family, and stress all plague our ability to focus on work.

In construction, we must have the ability to hold two opposing ideas(home life versus work life) in our minds and still retain the ability to function. The strategies above can help you maintain this difficult balance.

