

# MATES Mental Health TOOLBOX

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

# MATES IN CONSTRUCTION

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- Established in 2008 to reduce the high level of suicide among Australian construction workers
- Established in 2019 at the invitation of the New Zealand construction industry
- Here to address the number of workers we lose to suicide every year
- We are a New Zealand charitable organisation
- The programme builds on the strength of the industry
- **MATES helping mates - Stronger Together**

2019



**“Ehara taku toa i te  
toa takitahi engari  
i te toa takitini”**

**Working together  
we are stronger!**

# WHY ARE WE HERE?

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Construction workers are at

**more than TWICE  
the risk of dying  
by suicide**

compared to the rest of the workforce

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Our highest risk age groups are

**20-24 year olds and  
45-49 year olds**

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**Maori Men**

are significantly overrepresented  
in these statistics

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Our highest risk occupations are our

**labourers and  
our tradies.**

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**Approximately ONE**

person dies **every week** to suicide in our  
industry, that's 52 lives a year, which is the equivalent of  
10 per cent of Aotearoa's total suicide rate

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# MENTAL HEALTH TIPS TO USE ON SITE

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## BE CLEAR HONEST AND DIRECT

- Reassure your team with clear, direct and supportive communications.



## CHECK IN ON YOUR WORKERS

- Make the time to check in with workers during the day.



## ENCOURAGE YOUR WORKERS

- The morning Toolbox Talks are a great way to encourage your workers, brighten the mood, and increase positivity.



## BE AVAILABLE

- Advise your workers that if for any reason they are struggling they can come to the site office (or a point of contact) any time.
- Refer workers to appropriate channels of support for workplace mental health and wellbeing, such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP). Call MATES in Construction to speak to someone immediately on 0800 111 315.

# KNOWING HOW TO SPOT INVITATIONS

Changes in behavior that you or a mate might be displaying. These are not one-off incidents, but rather happening more often than usual.

**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.



usually easy going



**angry and agitated easily**



usually talkative



**isolating oneself**

"not wanting to talk to people"



usually sociable

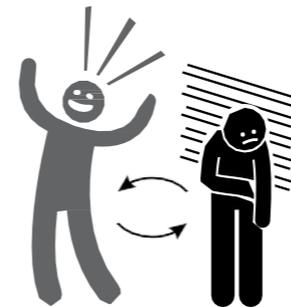


**being distant**

"not responding to messages"



**finding it hard to cope with everyday things**



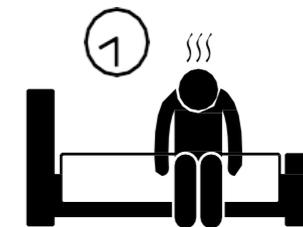
**struggling to concentrate**  
**struggling to finish tasks**



**using alcohol or drugs as a way of coping**



**coming to work late**



**not making it to work at all**

# 5 STEPS TO DE-STRESS

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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.

# 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.

"How can I help?"

"What would be a good first step?"

"What has helped before?"

# MATES SELF-CARE GUIDE



## BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Have reasonable expectations of yourself. 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

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.



## EAT, DRINK AND SLEEP HEALTHILY

A healthy diet, good hydration and sleep are fundamental for positive mental health and wellbeing.



## 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.



## 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.

# TE WHARE TAPA WHĀ

When our buckets are in balance, we thrive.  
When one or more of these is running low our wellbeing is impacted.



- REST
- NUTRITION
- EXERCISE



- COMMUNICATION
- COPING WITH STRESS
- PROBLEM SOLVING



- FAITH
- SPIRITUALITY
- KARAKIA
- WAIRUA



- BELONGING
- WHAKAPAPA
- PEPEHA
- CONECTEDNESS

Developed by Sir Mason Durie in 1984 to provide a Māori perspective on health

# IDEAS FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX

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- Talk about Mental 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 Mental 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 worksite mentally impaired putting both them and their workmates at risk
- Use the "**How to spot the invitations**" poster to help you talk about behavioural changes that we might see or hear
- 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
- Big emphasis on supporting one another, keeping an eye out for each other (Mates helping Mates)
- **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**



**0800 111 315**

**STRONGER TOGETHER**