



EMBRACING NEURODIVERSITY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

Neurodiversity Toolbox Talk – Part 2

Date: _____ Jobsite: _____ Discussion Leader: _____

Most construction sites have worked the same way for decades. The way instructions are given, work is planned, and how people talk to each other works for some, but can create challenges for crew members who speak, think, learn, and work differently.

This does not mean they are less capable. In fact, those differences often make the crew stronger. The goal is simply to make sure everyone can do their best work safely.

COMMON JOBSITE HABITS THAT CREATE CHALLENGES

1. **Unclear or rushed instructions or using jargon.**
 - a. Some people need:
 - i. Time to process information,
 - ii. Visual cues, or
 - iii. More complete instructions.
2. **Heavy reliance on verbal communication**
 - a. Information can get missed without written or visual backup.
3. **Changing plans at the last minute.**
 - a. Sudden changes interrupt focus and disrupt routines, making it harder to stay on track.
4. **Managing multiple tasks at once.**
 - a. Switching between tasks can lead to missed steps or unfinished work
5. **Very loud, bright, or crowded work areas.**
 - a. Makes it harder to concentrate, especially on detailed or high-risk work.
6. **Lack of consistent routines or structure**
 - a. Frequent changes in workflow can reduce efficiency and confidence
7. **Assuming quiet workers are confused or disengaged.**
 - a. Some people naturally
 - i. Listen more than they talk,
 - ii. Need time to think before they speak, or
 - iii. Focus better when they aren't talking.
8. **Assigning tasks without thinking about individual strengths.**
 - a. Everyone has different strengths. Most of these challenges are not about ability, they are about how the work is communicated and structured. Matching the right person to the right task makes the whole job more efficient and safer.
9. **Reluctance to ask questions or speak up.**
 - a. Concern about how it will be perceived by others.

STRONGER JOBSITE PRACTICES FOR BETTER RESULTS

Clear Communication

Strong crews use more than one way to communicate.

- Use a mix of verbal, written, and visual aids (e.g., safety signage, marked-up plans, sketches, photos, mockups, hand signals, or quick demonstrations).
- Avoid jargon and unclear language. Be specific in expectations, instructions and feedback.
- Give people enough time to process information and instructions.
- Ask simple check-in questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How can we be more inclusive of different communication, thinking, and working styles on this jobsite?
2. How can we model mutual respect when working with others who present or communicate differently?
3. What support or adjustments could help everyone do their best and safest work?

Flexible Work Environment

Strong crews know that people don't all work the same way.

- Allow noise-reducing headphones, sensory-friendly objects, or adjusted lighting when possible and safe.
- Provide quiet spaces for detailed work when possible.
- Allow short breaks or adjusted work schedules when possible.
- Be open to different working styles (e.g., solitary vs collaborative tasks).

Foster Psychological Safety

A strong jobsite is one where everyone feels respected.

- Create a culture where team members are welcomed, heard, valued, and respected.
- Encourage workers to share ideas, concerns, and observations openly.
- If you see or experience inappropriate behavior, report it to the appropriate leadership.
- Model mutual respect, even when someone communicates or behaves differently than you.