



## Daily Toolbox Talk: Be Present, Be Focused

### May 3, 2021

Taking a holistic approach to safety means embracing a total wellness approach that includes paying attention to both the body and the mind in everything we do. There are many things going on around us in our physical environment as well as distractions occupying our minds at any given time. With all the challenges and noise we face in today's world, it is often difficult to be truly present in the moment. This can be especially true at work. It is important to recognize and adjust when our minds are not fully focused or present in the moment while completing a work task.

What does it mean to be truly present? All too often we are physically present somewhere, but our focus and attention are not. We have all been there. Whether it is during a safety meeting or when driving home, we zone out and quickly realize we have no clue what was said in the safety meeting or with the snap of a finger we are home but have no recollection of the drive. This kind of disconnect from the present moment can be extremely dangerous when at work.

#### How to be Present

There are many reasons why we may not be present in any given moment. As individuals we vary greatly, but a few quick tips may help you be more in the moment the next time you find your mind wandering.

- Take note of how well you are focusing and where your mind is at. From there, make the conscious choice to improve your focus and attention if needed.
- When you are part of a discussion or receiving directions, make sure you are actively listening to the person speaking. One way to become a better listener is to treat the information as something you are going to have to teach to a coworker. Receiving information with the understanding that you will be responsible to pass it on can help ensure that you actively listen to the person speaking.
- Eliminate distractions from the physical work area. Things such as noise, clutter, chemicals, people, equipment, etc. can have a large impact on your ability to fully pay attention to what you are doing in any given moment at work. Eliminating distractions can make a difference in whether you are able to fully focus on the task at hand.
- Identify any personal concerns that are 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.

#### Summary

It can be challenging to truly be present at work. Distractions, long hours, health issues, family, stress, all plague our ability to be fully present in our work. Being present and focused is only possible through recognizing where our current focus and attention are, then taking the necessary steps to be more present in the moment in our work environment.

**Discuss these questions with your crew. Possible answers are listed below each question.**

1. Have you ever attended a safety meeting and realized that you missed some important information that you may need to use later? What did you do once you realized you may have missed some pertinent information?
  - a. *Asked your supervisor for additional instructions*
  - b. *Asked fellow co-workers*
  - c. *Read the material again*
2. What do you do to get yourself back on track if you notice your mind wandering?
  - a. *Take time to look around to identify what is happening around yourself and reevaluate your current safety measures*
  - b. *Put away personal cell phones/iPads until breaktime*
  - c. *Take time off when needed to handle personal items*
3. As supervisors, what can you do to alleviate employee's stressors causing them to lose focus and not be present at work?
  - a. *Have open communications with your employees so they can bring their authentic selves to work and feel comfortable discussing their concerns*
  - b. *Know what employee resources are available to your employees before you are faced with difficult conversations*

**Crew Signatures:**

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