

## Mental health

<b>Reason</b>	Male construction site workers are three times more likely to commit suicide than the average UK worker.
<b>Outline</b>	This talk covers some of the various mental health issues people may experience while at work.

### Anxiety

1. Anxiety and panic disorders are not uncommon but, if left untreated, can cause distress to the individual.
2. At work, an individual suffering from anxiety may lose interest, lack concentration, display low morale and be irritable.
3. Anxiety can often be controlled with medication, and psychological and self-help therapies.

### Depression

1. Individuals with depression can often feel helpless, experience low moods and morale and lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed.
2. Depression can be mild, moderate or severe.
3. When depression is not managed it can have serious health and safety implications for sufferers and co-workers.
4. Antidepressant medication can cause drowsiness, which may affect the individual's ability to drive or operate plant and machinery. An assessment should be carried out to ensure the type of work being undertaken is suitable with the treatment being received.

### Bipolar disorder

1. Bipolar disorder is a mental health problem that mainly affects mood – previously referred to as manic depression.
2. With bipolar disorder, sufferers are likely to have times where they experience disparate mood swings:
  - manic or hypomanic episodes (feeling high)
  - depressive episodes (feeling low)
  - potentially some psychotic symptoms during manic or depressive episodes.



**One in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year.**

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### Management of mental health issues

1. People living with mental health problems can often control their condition through strategies involving medication, healthcare, therapy and self-management (for example, by doing things that make them happy, such as hobbies or exercise).
2. Managers should be aware of the signs of mental ill health and put steps in place to support their employees.
3. Management should actively work to support individuals and create an environment where those with mental health conditions are able to talk to someone or seek guidance from other sources.
4. Management should work to remove the stigma around mental health issues and the unhealthy idea of construction being a 'tough man' environment where seeking help is seen as a weakness.
5. Team leaders should be trained to spot the signs of mental health conditions and be able to identify sufferers and guide them to support.



**Do you know who to speak to if you think you have a mental health issue?**  
**What does your employer have in place to help people with mental health conditions?**  
**Where else could you go for help other than your employer?**



**Signs, symptoms and support for mental health conditions can vary for individuals. Guidance can be found on the MIND website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk).**



**A free to download *Building Mental Health Toolbox Talk* can be found on the Building Mental Health website: [www.buildingmentalhealth.net/resources.html](http://www.buildingmentalhealth.net/resources.html)**