



Belonging and Excellence for All (BE4ALL) is a joint effort by SMART, SMACNA, and the ITI to create an industry-wide culture where everyone is welcome and belongs, including those from historically underrepresented groups, and where we all strive for the highest standards of performance and professionalism, resulting in a thriving unionized sheet metal industry that affirms the dignity and worth of us all. These Toolbox Talks are in support of this mission.

BE4ALL Toolbox Talk

Mentorship in the Sheet Metal Industry

In the sheet metal industry, knowledge and skills are passed down through generations. That's where mentorship comes in – it's not just training; it's building the future of our trade.

What is Mentorship?

Mentorship is a professional relationship where an experienced worker (mentor) shares their knowledge, skills, and advice with someone who is learning (mentee). It's about more than just showing someone how to do a task, it's about guiding, supporting, and helping them grow into a confident and capable tradesperson.

Why is Mentorship Important in the Sheet Metal Industry?

- **Preserves Trade Knowledge:** Sheet metal work is highly technical. Mentors help pass down tips, tricks, and trade secrets that aren't always in the manuals.
- **Builds Confidence:** A mentee with strong support is more likely to take pride in their work and ask questions without fear.
- **Increases Safety:** When mentors emphasize and demonstrate safe work habits, it reduces the risk of injury.
- **Strengthens the Crew:** Teams work better when there's trust, communication, and shared goals – mentorship builds all three.

Being a Good Mentor

- Be patient and approachable
- Explain the "why" behind tasks, not just the "how"
- Encourage questions, because no one learns without asking
- Give constructive feedback, not criticism
- Share career advice and your path through the trade

Being a Good Mentee

- Show up prepared and eager to learn
- Ask questions and take notes
- Be open to feedback – it's meant to help you
- Respect your mentor's time and knowledge
- Learn the big picture, not just the task at hand



Conclusion

Mentorship is a two-way street that improves safety, quality, and pride in our trade. Mentorship can be seen in several different forms: traditional mentorship, reverse mentorship and intergenerational mentorship. Whether you're teaching or learning, you're helping keep the sheet metal craft strong for the next generation.

Staff Conversation & Notes:

Who was a mentor that made a difference in your career?

What do you wish someone had told you earlier on in your career?

How can we all help strengthen mentorship on this job/site?



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BE4ALL Toolbox Talk Participation Sheet

Employer: _____

Location: _____

Presenter: _____

Date Presented: _____

Participant	Initials

Participant	Initials



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