

 SAFESTART[®] FORUM
FOR HUMAN FACTORS PRACTITIONERS

2025

CINCINNATI, OH
OCTOBER 28 & 29

A POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE: REMOVE THE NEGATIVE FROM SAFETY

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AGENDA

- Why Positivity Matters
- Mental Health Story & Lessons Learned
- Negativity Bias – The Science Behind the Struggle
- The 5 Shifts Framework
- Flip the Card Activity
- Reflection & Challenge

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THIS?

- Messaging shapes behavior and culture
- Negative framing can increase stress, disengagement, and errors
- Positive framing builds trust and ownership



MY MENTAL HEALTH JOURNEY

- When the job hurts the safety professional
- You can't help people when you are running on empty.



MY MENTAL HEALTH JOURNEY

- Bryan's help and support
- Campfire stories with my Dad
- Started realizing how we talk, and act impacts others
- Growth began when I stopped focussing on control and started focusing on connection

NEGATIVITY BIAS

- Our brains react faster and stronger to negative information
- It's a survival mechanism
- If we don't intentionally reinforce the positive, the negative runs the show



THE \$10 EXERCISE



WHAT THE \$10 EXERCISE TEACHES US

- Most people don't think about how to get the most money – they think about how the other person will feel
- Your brain instantly predicts the emotional reaction before you make an offer
- If communication feels unfair or negative, the same thing happens
- To lead, we need to communicate in a way the brain perceives as fair, respectful, and safe

THE 5 SHIFTS FRAMEWORK

- **Shift 1: From Avoiding Injuries → Building Capacity**
- **Shift 2: From Control → Curiosity**
- **Shift 3: From Fault → Factors**
- **Shift 4: From Fixing Failure → Celebrating Wins**
- **Shift 5: From Policing → Partnership**

■ Shift 1: From Avoiding Injuries → Building Capacity

- Avoiding failures keeps us reactive
- Building capacity keeps us ready
- Capacity = training, tools, time, teamwork
- Success is the presence of controls, not the absence of incidents
- Ask: “What does capacity look like to you team?”

■ Shift 2: From Control → Curiosity

- Control focuses on compliance; curiosity builds understanding
- Replace command with coaching
- Ask questions that invite ownership
- “What could make this go well?” instead of “Don’t mess up”
- Curiosity creates learning, not fear

■ Shift 3: From Fault → Factors

- “Who messed up?” focuses on blame
- “What set this up?” focuses on learning
- Look beyond the person to the system, state, and setup
- Identify human factors
- Understanding the why prevents the next incident

■ Shift 4: From Fixing Failure → Celebrating Wins

- Constant correction drains energy and trust
- Reinforcement builds habits faster than criticism
- Catch people doing it right
- Ask: “What went well and why?”
- Debrief success, not just failure

■ Shift 5: From Policing → Partnership

- Safety with people, not safety to people
- Move from enforcement to empowerment
- “Safety says...” becomes “We decided...”
- Partnership builds trust and shared ownership
- People commit to what they help create

These four states...

- Rushing
- Frustration
- Fatigue
- Complacency

can cause or contribute to these critical errors...

- Eyes not on Task
- Mind not on Task
- Line-of-Fire
- Balance/Traction/Grip

...which increase the risk of injury.

Critical Error Reduction Techniques

- Self-trigger on the state (or amount of hazardous energy) so you don't make a critical error.
- Analyze close calls and small errors (to prevent agonizing over big ones).
- Look at others for the patterns that increase the risk of injury.
- Work on habits.

FOCUS: WHAT NEEDS TO GO RIGHT

These four states...

- Confidence
- Positive Attitude
- Good Energy
- Engagement

facilitate these conditions...

- Attentiveness
- Concentration
- Situational Awareness
- Control the Controllables

...which reduce the risk of error.

Focus on what needs to go right.

- Complete (or review) the Pre-Task Plan before starting work.
- Understand how to do the work properly.
- Have everything you need available and readily accessible (avoid shortcuts).
- Keep developing your good habits.

GROUP DISCUSSION: LET'S MAKE A CARD

These four states...

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

facilitate these conditions...

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

...which reduce the risk of error.

Focus on what needs to go right.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

WHAT DID THAT FEEL LIKE?

- Rewriting language changes how we think
- Positive words build connection and ownership
- That's how fast we can rewire bias

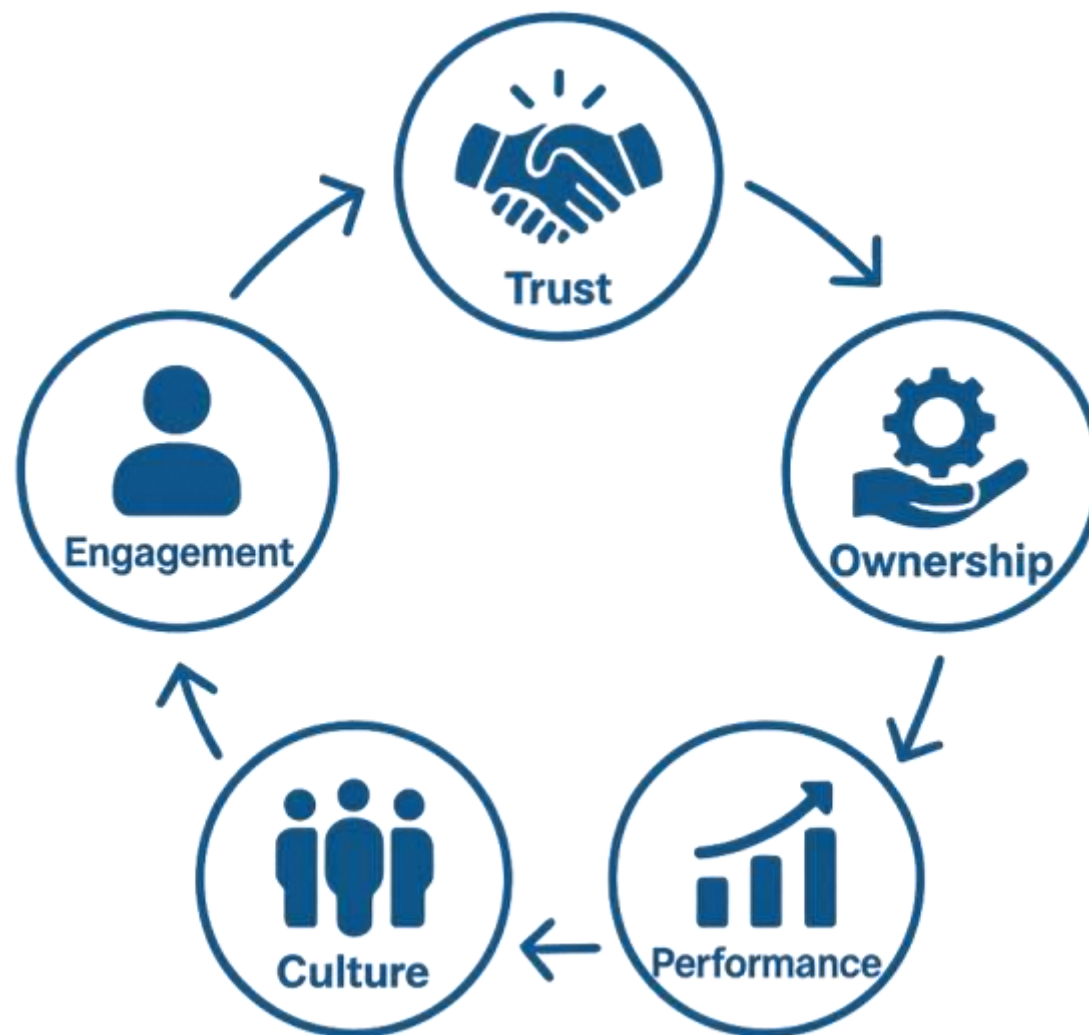


LANGUAGE IS LEADERSHIP

- Every phrase you use shapes culture
- What you say becomes what people believe in
- Respond with intention – not emotion



THE FEEDBACK LOOP



CLOSING CHALLENGE

Reframe one safety message this week. Watch how your people respond.

CLOSING CHALLENGE

Culture doesn't change overnight – it changes one message at a time.

THANK YOU!



Foster Trust. Build People. Multiply Your Impact

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THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!