

 SAFESTART[®] FORUM
FOR HUMAN FACTORS PRACTITIONERS

2025

CINCINNATI, OH
OCTOBER 28 & 29

TALK, LISTEN, LEAD

Kevin Nix, MSP, CSM - SafeStart

**I enjoy having
conversations with
my co-workers about
safety.**



ACTIVITY 1

I enjoy having conversations with my co-workers about safety.

- In groups of 2, take 5 minutes to discuss your thoughts on this statement.
- Record 2-3 key points to share when we re-group.



SESSION OVERVIEW

Welcome

Our purpose today

The SafeStart Conversation Framework

Positive conversations

Difficult conversations

Words to delete



OUR PURPOSE TODAY

1. Try out several activities from a new product
2. Gather your feedback and suggestions on the content and activities.

We welcome your candid input to help make the activities

- Relatable
- Memorable (“sticky”)
- Practical



WHO CONTROLS HUMAN FACTORS?

Can a leader **control** whether their team members are

- Distracted
- Impatient
- Tired
- Mad
- Hungry
- Rushing



CAN A LEADER INFLUENCE HUMAN FACTORS?

Can a leader **influence** how their team members cope with being

- Distracted
- Impatient
- Tired
- Mad
- Hungry
- Rushing

How does this influence happen?



LEADERS HAVING CONVERSATIONS

Good leaders not only have frequent conversations with their people, they have effective conversations.

The activities in today's session provide ways to practice conversations that:

- Build up the positive human factors
- Diffuse or reduce the negative



LEADERS HAVING CONVERSATIONS

Get out on the floor and have one-on-one conversations.

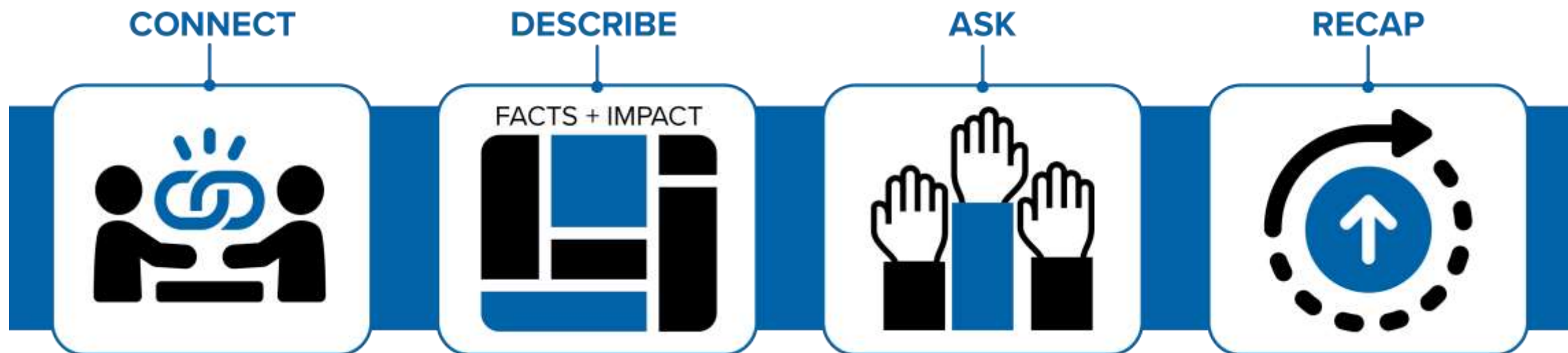
Commit to gaining skill in the three most crucial types of conversation:

- Positive
- Difficult (correction/intervention)
- Safety

SafeStart's Conversation Framework works for all three.



SAFESTART CONVERSATION FRAMEWORK



The SafeStart Conversation Framework is a roadmap for:

- Having effective conversations that influence positive human factors & manage those which are negative
- Ensuring that team members are encouraged to contribute
- Confirming that feedback shared is understood and actions agreed on

SAFESTART CONVERSATION FRAMEWORK

Connect

Start the conversation with a human connection.

If it's a difficult conversation, find common ground for why the issue must be addressed.

Describe

Use facts, not judgements. What happened, where, who, when.

Describe the impact on them, on others, on the work.

Ask

Guide the conversation by asking open-ended questions, not pointing fingers.

Ask the worker to suggest next steps.

Recap

Summarize what you've discussed to make sure that the next steps are clear.

Gain agreement on follow-up actions and timelines.

SAMPLE POSITIVE INTERACTION

Connect

Hi Carlos, do you have a minute for a quick thank-you?

Describe

I noticed that you reviewed the new XYZ process with Frank this morning. That got the shift started smoothly for everyone. Thank you!

Ask

How did you think that review went with Frank?
How else could we help the new operators?
(Listen to Carlos' response.)

Recap

Thanks for those ideas, and for keeping Frank on track.

ACTIVITY 2: IMPROVE THIS EXAMPLE

Connect

Describe

Ask

Recap

Scenario: Alisha has been learning a new skill and is following the processes safely and correctly.

Good job today,
Alisha.

[nothing said]

[nothing said]

'K, bye.

Use the conversation framework to provide positive reinforcement for something specific that she is doing well.

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

- Not all workplace conversations are going to be easy, whether they're about safety or something else.
- There will be times when you notice an undesirable action and need to address it with a worker on your site.



ACTIVITY 3 - DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

This is Tina and she has recently been promoted to team leader in the warehouse.

She has been working here for 7 years and has always taken safety and the safety of her co-workers seriously.

She's lately noticed a situation that could be putting workers at risk, but in her new leadership position she's not sure how to approach her old co-workers.



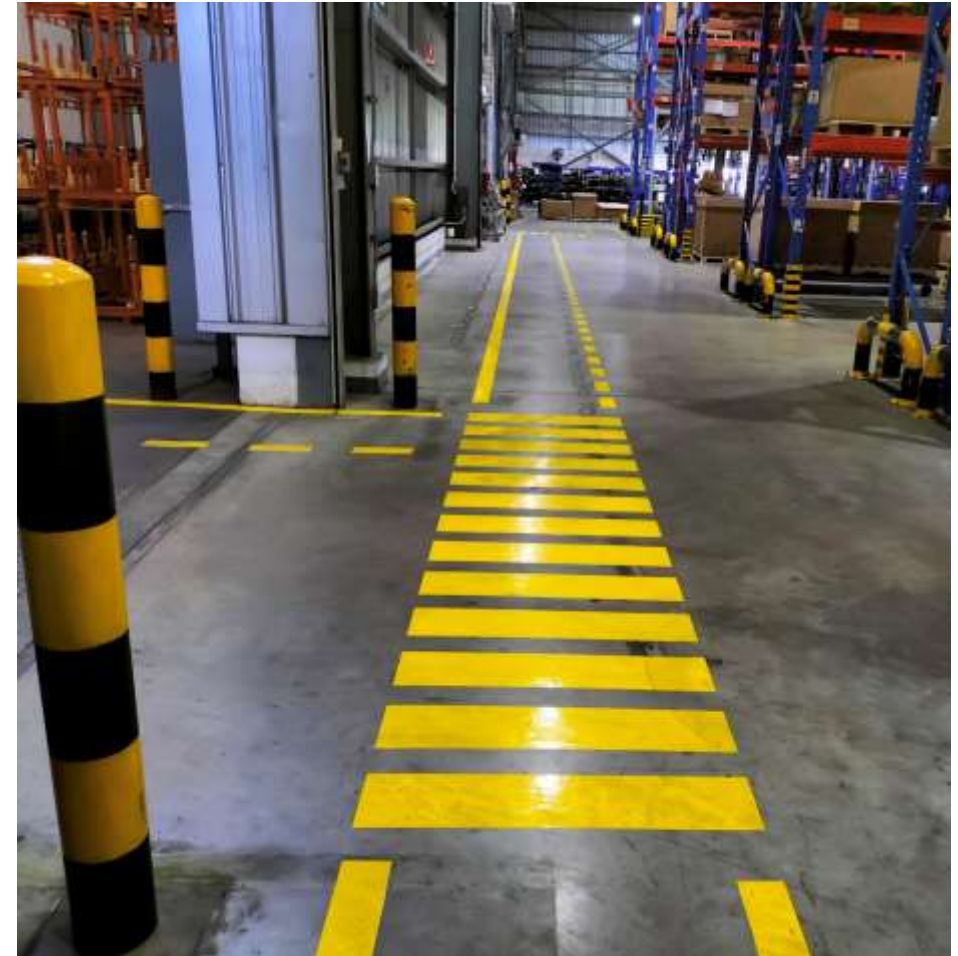
ACTIVITY 3 - DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

“The warehouse that I’m responsible for is one of the busiest areas of the factory.

There are forklifts and a lot of foot traffic and it moves fast.

There are safety lines to keep people safe from collisions but I’ve noticed lately that the rules are being routinely broken.

I know I have to have a conversation about it before we have a serious accident.”



ACTIVITY 3 - DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

In partners:

- One person takes the role of Tina and one the role of a worker
- Use the Conversation Framework to address Tina's safety concern

Tip:

Remember to ask open ended questions and invite worker input on solving the issue.

CONNECT
DESCRIBE
ASK
RECAP

SEVEN WORDS TO DELETE

These seven words tend to increase resistance and other undesired human states.

**Always, Never, Don't, Try,
Should, But, Why**

ALWAYS/NEVER

“You always...”

“You never...”

If there’s an undesired behavior that’s repeated, be factual - “Your record shows a late punch-in on seven of the past ten shifts.”



DON'T

Sentences that start with “don’t” are always structured as commands.

“Don’t touch the hot stove.”

“Don’t forget your PPE.”

Human brains don’t process negative commands very well. We process “Touch the hot stove” and “Forget your PPE.”

Solution: If an instruction is needed, make it positive. Tell them what you DO want. “Hands off the hot stove.”

“Remember your PPE.”



In North American English, “try” often implies that we don’t expect the result we want.

“I’ll try to be there by 6:00” really means “It’s not likely I’ll be there by 6:00.”

In talking with a worker, avoid using “try” when you really mean “do it.”

Example: “Try to be on time.”

You don’t want them to *try* to be on time, you want them to be on time!

So, replace “try” with “What are you going to do in order to be on time?”

SHOULD

‘Should’ raises resistance.

Saying “You should...” (lose weight, get a haircut...) is a recipe for resistance.

“We should...(wear our PPE, not eat fried food, etc.)” comes across as condescending.

A better approach...

“We could/would really benefit by wearing our PPE, losing weight, not eating fried foods, etc.”



BUT

“But” negates everything that is said before it.

“The soup was delicious, but it was too salty.”

“You did a good job with the toolbox talk, but didn’t use a good example of a hazard.”

Replace “but” with a period (i.e., silence).

“You did a good job with the toolbox talk. Next time, consider finding a stronger example of a hazard.”



WHY

In the case of unintentional error, asking “why did you...?” or “why didn’t you...?” is useless and only results in increased resistance.

This accusatory type of “why” question doesn’t build trust or relationships.

We are better off asking, “what do you think could have contributed to this situation?”



ACTIVITY 4: REPLACE LOADED WORDS

Connect

HEY! Don't forget your earplugs! Why do you always need to be reminded?

Describe

You never wear your ear protection properly. You should know this by now, but you don't seem to get it.

Ask

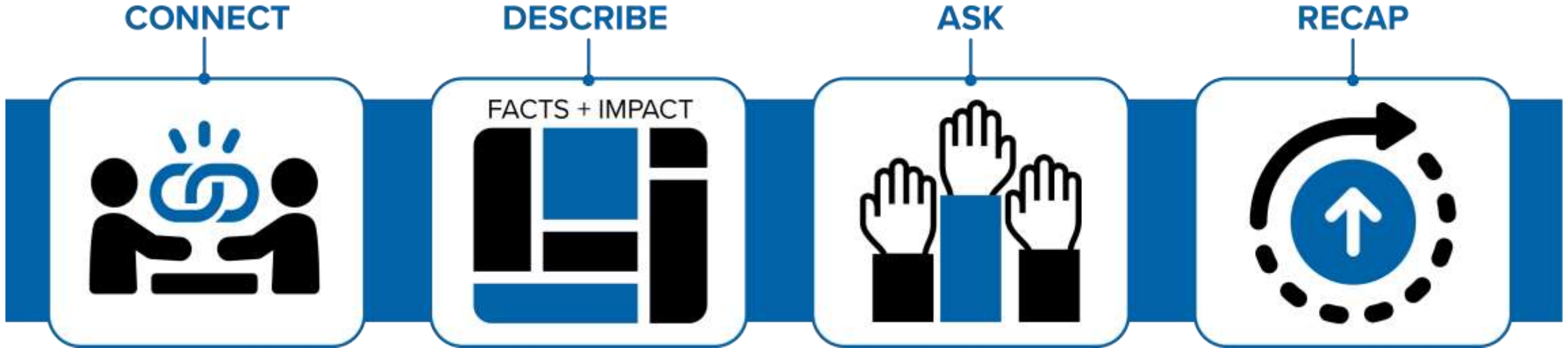
What the heck were you thinking?

Recap

Don't make me tell you again. Try to do better.

Always, Never, Don't, Try, Should, But, Why

SAFETY CONVERSATIONS



Use the framework to have safety conversations. It can be used 1:1 and in groups.

Remember, the SafeStart Conversation Framework is a roadmap for:

- Having effective conversations that influence positive human factors
- Ensuring that team members are encouraged to contribute
- Confirming that feedback shared is understood and actions agreed on

SESSION SUMMARY

Our purpose today

The SafeStart Conversation Framework

Positive conversations

Difficult conversations

Words to delete

Safety conversations



FEEDBACK DISCUSSION

We welcome your candid input about the session content and activities.

Qualities we're aiming for:

- Relatable
- Memorable (“sticky”)
- Practical

FEEDBACK DISCUSSION

Is there a need for a common language for leadership to use in organizations to influence positive human factors such as trust and engagement?

What are your thoughts regarding the conversation examples in the Talk, Listen, Lead session?

What are your thoughts regarding the SafeStart Conversation Framework? Are the steps easy to remember?

The Seven Words to Delete - are these relevant for building effective communication skills within today's leaders?

Any other Suggestions or comments?



SAFESTART[®] FORUM

FOR HUMAN FACTORS PRACTITIONERS



2025

CINCINNATI, OH
OCTOBER 28 & 29

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!