AN ACTIVE CARING APPROACH THROUGH PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

IGLC 2019

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Why Psychological Safety in Construction?

What we see depends on our perspective & We act based on what we see (our beliefs)

BLS: 20% of fatalities are in construction + People reluctant to ask for help + unwillingness to raise concerns for fear of a sanction or shame.

Psychological Safety:
- **Worked** in healthcare, manufacturing, technology
- Opens learning behaviors: Continuous improvement
- Influences people’s behaviors: allows openness regarding expectations and limitations

→ Confident about asking questions & get clarity on the work
→ Speaking up when errors occur
→ Expressing concerns
→ Provide feedback on processes
→ Avoid getting into hazardous conditions
Case Study + Procedure:

- Center for Neurovision Science Building of the University of California, San Francisco
- 12-story concrete building:
  359, 703 sq. ft.
- 100 craft workers, participation rate of 64 people (25% SPW + 75% other subs)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q ID</th>
<th>Statement as Written</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I’m always learning new skills working with this crew.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If I make a mistake, my co-workers in the crew help me learn how to do the work correctly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My co-workers in the crew are willing to listen to my ideas for improving how work is done.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If I see someone on my crew doing something unsafe, I speak up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>If I see someone on another crew doing something unsafe, I speak up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>My direct supervisor is willing to listen to my ideas for improving how work is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I feel comfortable talking to my direct supervisor about my safety concerns at work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My direct supervisor is understanding and helpful when I make a mistake at work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>My direct supervisor is a good role model for safety.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>If I make a mistake, my co-workers do not teach me how to avoid making that same mistake again.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I am satisfied that there really is a commitment to a safe work environment where I am now working.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I feel comfortable and confident in reporting near misses on the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I participate in designing the operations of the activities I am going to execute on site and I feel safe about how we execute them.</td>
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</table>
Research Findings – Survey Outcomes
Research Findings – Survey Outcomes

If I see someone on my crew doing something unsafe, I speak up.

I am satisfied that there really is a commitment to a safe work environment where I am now working.
If I see someone on another crew doing something unsafe, I speak up.

My direct supervisor is understanding and helpful when I make a mistake at work.
Research Findings – Survey Outcomes

Variability in Participants’ Perception

My direct supervisor is a good role model for safety.
Creating a Culture with Psychological Safety

What makes my people feel safe?
Creating a Culture with Psychological Safety

What makes my people feel unsafe?

Uncovered Holes
People Behavior
Not Clean Work Area
No Communication
Congested Area
Rushing
Transport With Crane
Wet Floor
Right Tools
Not Understanding Work Sequence
Signage
Accidents
Safery Measures
Work On The Borders Of Building
Shadows
Too Many People Per Area Of Work
People Not Using Proper Spotters
Others People
Blocking Access Zones
Other People
Not Being Aware Of Surroundings
Debris On Ground
Other People
Not Following Rules
Management
New Workers
Work Upper Floors
Limited Information
Research Findings

What did workers say? – Building a psychologically safe work site

I'm being heard and actions are taken
Not punished for speaking up
Participate in task planning and understand activities
Strength relations among trades
Relation with supervisors
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Research Findings
## Plan Forward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Stop</th>
<th>Continue</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Use of English &amp; Spanish in all hands meeting on site</td>
<td>• Understand errors as a reason to feel fear</td>
<td>• Have sessions with supervisors and general foreman to discuss initiatives for increasing psychological safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Creation of an on-site safety committee: build cohesiveness</td>
<td>• Thinking about reporting near misses as something negative</td>
<td>• Reinforce recognitions program “Doing it right” campaign</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strength relations between and amongst trades</td>
<td>• Acting as if the GC was the only mean for communication about trades</td>
<td>• Sharing good examples during orientations</td>
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<td>• All staff can start giving recognitions</td>
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<td>• Include staff in safety walks</td>
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Conclusions

**Psychological safety impacts:** team performance, quality, and safety of the project.

**Leading by example:** the way site managers and superintendents behave plays a key role in shaping craft workers’ feelings and behaviors.

**Willingness to act when workers observe hazards:** it can change as humans then to care more about people they know.

**Share experiences:** when mistakes occurred in the project but did not lead to rejection, but rather the was support to solve the issue together and learn from it.

**Our own behavior influences whether other feel safe or unsafe working with us.**
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Conclusions
Show how much you care...
And they’ll start caring about you