Building a Culture of Total Worker® Health and Safety

2025 California Unified Program (CUPA) Forum – Anaheim, California
March 27, 2025

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Introduction

- BSI EHS Senior Consultant, Al Roth, CSP (Irvine, California office)
  - Background/Experience:
    - Joined BSI in 2018, supporting clients in SoCal/Southwest region
    - 35+ years of corporate, divisional, and site environmental, health, and safety, quality systems, and human resources
    - Sectors include manufacturing (agriculture, semi-con, aerospace/defense, medical devices), retail, public works, education, logistics, and construction
    - Operational, safety, and cultural change management systems

  - BSI background
    - Originators of these key safety standards:
      - ISO 45001 Occupational Health And Safety Management Systems
      - ISO 45003 Occupational Health And Safety Management — Psychological health and Safety at Work (known as the "well-being" standard)

Take the Well-Being Culture Survey

"Most of us know at least one colleague who's struggling but won't come forward.

So, people hide it, push through it, and sometimes that has tragic consequences.

Yes, we need policy changes, but we also need a complete cultural shift in how aviation views mental health."

- Anonymous commercial pilot

How does your organization stack up?

Session Objectives

- Review how culture and behaviors influence each other and can impact any organization's workplace

- Understand how workplace culture, safety, and business performance can all benefit by utilizing a Total Worker Health® (TWH) approach

- Provide information on how organizations can be assessed to determine where improvements can be made

Defining Culture and TWH

Workplace Culture Definition

- Culture is the attitudes, **beliefs,** and behaviors of organizations, which create the atmosphere within the related work environment

- These attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are reflected in how employees respond to the various situations of daily business and overall experiences within the workplace

- **Success** or **failure** of an organization can hinge on what that culture states is the way to react to those situations, whether internally or externally generated

- The importance of workplace culture can be summarized in the saying:
  "Culture eats strategy"

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How Culture Influences Behavior

- Behavior is how we act under any given circumstance

- Constant influences, negative or positive, can affect organizational culture

- That culture defines an organization, whether real or perceived

- Understanding what influences those behaviors provides the key to change or sustain them for long term success

- Recognize that the tone and behaviors of leadership is what the rest of organization will model

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# Foundations and Goals of Positive Workplace Culture

- Foundations
  - Trust
  - People
  - Leadership
  - Communication
  - Attitudes
  - Visions
  - Values
  - Knowledge

- Goals
  - Expand trust!
  - Employee engagement
  - Innovation
  - Productivity
  - Quality
 - Collaboration
  - Empathy
  - Excellence
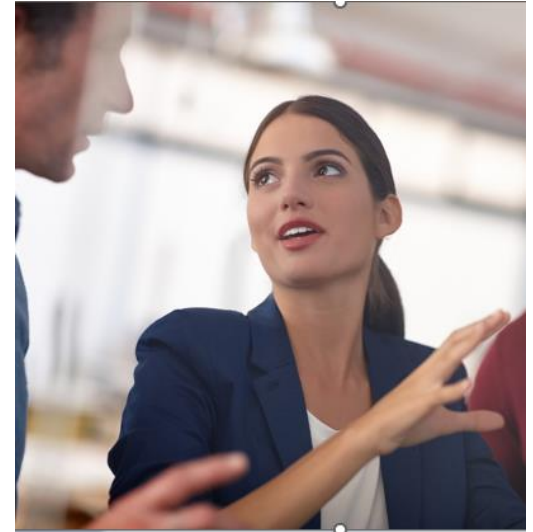
Challenged Culture is Easy to Spot

- Restricted growth
- Troublesome quality and output issues
- Poor productivity
- Talent and skills shortages
- Lack of innovation, agility, competitiveness
- Increase incidents, injuries, near misses

- Worker engagement metrics that fail to improve (or even get worse)
- Increased levels of complaints—internally and by clients/customers
- Increasing reports of stress, burnout, and mental illness
- Increasing absence, retention and retirement rates

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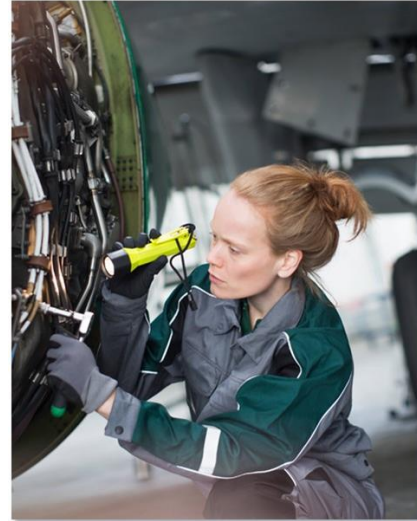
Challenged Cultures

- Workers do not feel:
  - Physically or mentally safe
  - Supported, heard, or appreciated
- Workplaces where there is a:
  - Blame culture
  - Bullying and harassment, unethical practices
  - Chasing profit is put before purpose, people, or the planet

- Workplaces that do not have:
  - Fair and equitable recognition and reward
  - Career development
  - Employee communication and engagement
  - Worker autonomy or flexibility
  - Work-life balance is undermined

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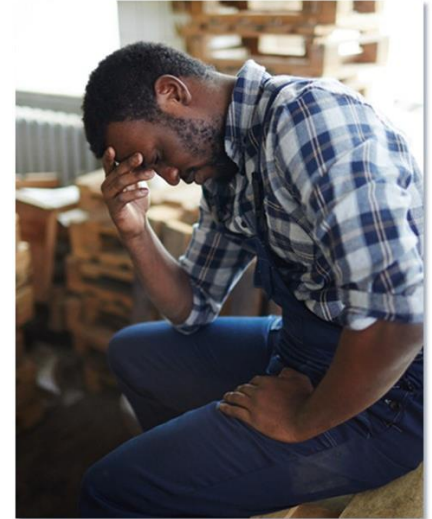
# Talents and Skill Supporting Workplace Culture

- Creative
  - Opportunities for new perspectives
- Flexible
  - Change is constant; can be tough, but work together to succeed
- Communication
  - Practice active listening; learn from each other individually and collectively
- Organized
  - Time management demonstrated; maintain priority commitments
- Motivational
  - Seek and provide honest recognition and feedback
  - Maintain a sense of humor – enjoy the ride!
- Change agents
  - Trusted
  - Confidence in self and in others – servant leadership traits
  - Lead by being positive example

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Defining Total Worker Health (TWH)

- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defines TWH:
  - "…policies, programs, and practices that integrate protection from work-related safety and health hazards with promotion of injury and illness-prevention efforts to advance worker well-being"

- TWH Program started at NIOSH in 2003; continues to evolve

- Consider your current workplace culture—does it currently support a TWH approach?

- If not, what would it take to do so?

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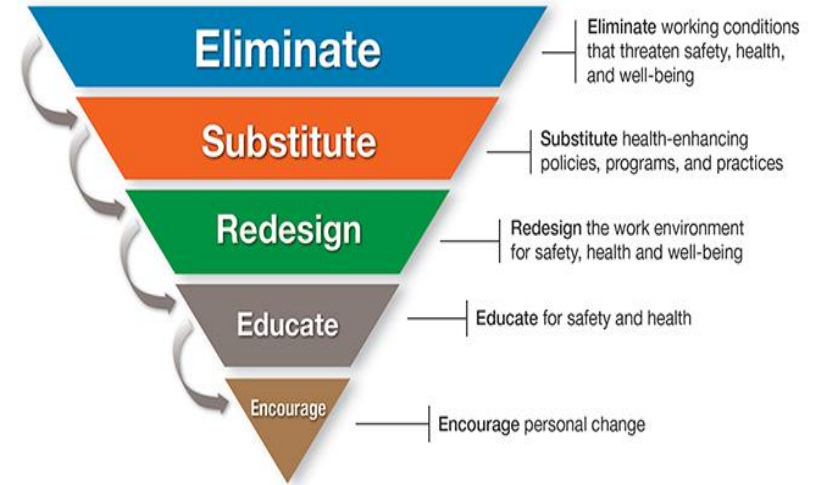# Fundamentals of TWH Approaches – NIOSH Guidance

- Guidebook for TWH development
  - Leadership/Commitment
  - Designing work for safety/well-being
  - Worker engagement
  - Confidentiality and privacy
  - Integration of systems
  - Worksheets
    - Self assessment
    - Action plan
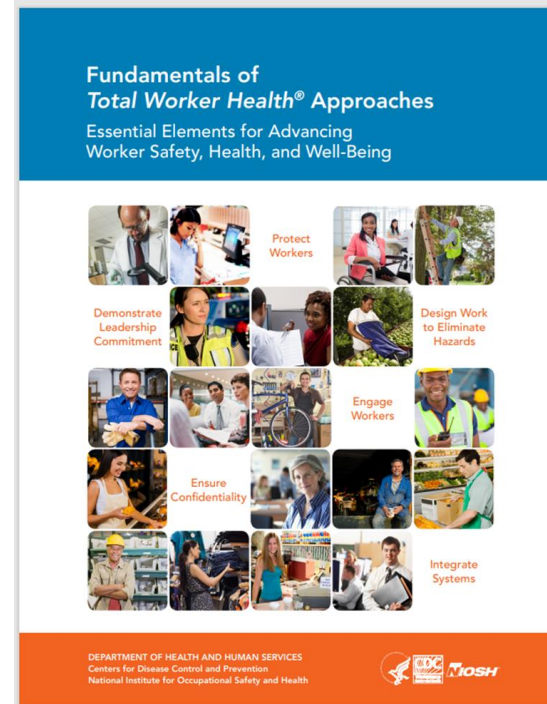
Fundamentals of Total Worker Health® Approaches — Essential Elements for Advancing Worker Safety, Health, and Well-Being

Hierarchy of Controls Applied to TWH

- Examples of applying to your workplace?
  - Engineering controls to improve workplace air quality (offices, warehouse, manufacturing)
  - Employee wellness education as part of medical benefits programs
  - Safety training that includes how to apply risk-control ideas at home
  - Rewards and recognition for workplace safety improvements and personal health

Eliminate — Eliminate working conditions that threaten safety, health, and well-being

Substitute — Substitute health-enhancing policies, programs, and practices

Redesign — Redesign the work environment for safety, health and well-being

Educate — Educate for safety and health

**Encourage** — Encourage personal change

Workplace Safety and TWH Approach – Example Areas and Solutions

- Workplace hazards
  - Chemical/Biological
  - Weather and environmental
  - Ergonomics
  - Outdoor/indoor heat illness
  - Electrical
  - Machinery, robotics, and equipment
  - Confined spaces
  - Transportation
  - Field service and sales tasks
  - Construction safety
  - Walking and work surfaces
  - Fall protection
  - Security

- Workplace safety solutions
  - Engineering, administrative, and personal protective equipment (PPE) controls
    - Work area/process/tool design, guarding
    - Regular industrial hygiene (IH) surveys, audits, assessments
    - Safety committees, toolbox talks
    - Focused and effective safety training
  - Employee and management partnerships
    - Flexible work and vacation schedules
    - Medical benefits
    - Career opportunities
  - Wellness initiatives
    - Healthy living incentives
    - Mental health resources & education
    - Nutrition and exercise programs

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Influence of Culture for TWH and Safety

TWH and Workplace Safety Culture – Not a New Concept

- "It appeared as if the whole world was one elaborate system, opposed to justice and kindness, and set to making cruelty and pain."

  – Upton Sinclair – The Jungle, 1906
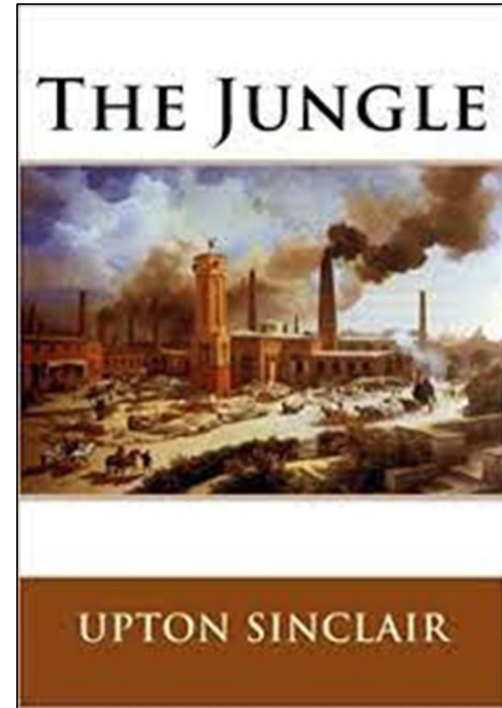
THE JUNGLE

UPTON SINCLAIR

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Organizational Resilience is Driven by Culture

People ➕ Trust ＝ Culture

Stakeholders for Your Culture

- Executive management (key influencer role)
- Supervisors
- Line employees
- Health providers
- Insurers
- Contractors
- Suppliers
- Stockholders

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Developing a Culture of Care

- Since recovering from pandemic impact, workplace cultures are resetting expectations
- Hierarchical barriers have broken down in organizations
- Realization in many companies that people drive organizational resilience, strong workplace culture, and success

- **Opportunities are** there to shape these cultures in the desired shape…
  - Operational initiatives of various scope
  - Ongoing evaluation and resetting business goals, systems, and processes

- **Realizing that a culture of care** is not easily attained
  - What's happening in yours? Are management, employees, stakeholders, and clients communicating? Are they on same page with goals and how to get there?

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Influences on TWH and Workplace Culture

- Workplace influences
    - Job/task demands, work/process flow
    - Employment and labor practices
    - Job autonomy, career opportunities
    - Physical and social environment
    - Psychosocial (interrelation of social factors and individual thought and behavior)

- Non-work influences
    - Personal medical history
    - Home environment (physical and emotional)
    - Exercise, hobbies, and social life
    - Sleep patterns
    - External social, economic, political environment
    - Social and news media

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Psychosocial Risk Factors – Examples to Consider

- Working in high-risk or hazardous conditions with inadequate equipment
- Conflicting job demands, repetitive/monotonous tasks
- Frequent organizational change, job insecurity
- No control over shifts, schedules, tasks, working methods
- Ineffective or lack of communication
- Harassment and discrimination
- Lack of management support
- Excessive workloads, unreasonable deadlines
- Limited opportunities for workplace social interaction
- Lack of recognition for high levels of effort and performance
- Intolerable life/work balance

Creating a Culture of Trust

Collaborative, communicative, emotionally intelligent leadership

Opportunities for lifelong learning and employability

A balanced effort, recognition and reward ratio

Workplaces that promote good physical and psychological health

Diverse, inclusive, and ethical workplace relationships based on respect and fairness

Work and workplaces that prevent physical and mental harm

Creating workplace and community social capital

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Developing and Sustaining a Positive and Safe Workplace Culture

Safety Culture Development and Employee Involvement – "Meet the Four R's"

- **Risks:** identify, control, and maintain awareness of workplace hazards

- **Requirements:** develop procedures, policies, and processes that meet regulations, address risks, and can be effectively implemented

- **Responsibilities:** training that educates employees on responsibilities for workplace safety and how to successfully perform their roles

- **Resources:** identify, provide, and improve when needed the tools, equipment, and support systems to safely perform workplace tasks

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Maintaining Employee Involvement

- Communicate, communicate, communicate…
- Follow-up to employee feedback should be as quick as possible – whether they like the answer or not, provide one
- Effective means for employees to make a positive impact on their own careers
- Support and welcome ideas and comments, no matter how "different"
- Related committees or teams should be a blend of all levels: employees, management, supervisors
  - Safety committees
  - TWH or well-being committees

Workplace Well-Being

- "Fulfilment of the physical, mental, social and cognitive needs and expectations of a worker related to their work their work" – ISO 45003

- Well-being is impossible without addressing psychological health and safety

- It's about creating the right conditions for individuals to be at their best

- The foundation for creating a **culture of trust**

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Health, Safety, and Well-Being (HSW) Challenges

- Note that there is no "one size fits all" for developing a culture of TWH and HSW
- Every organization has its own journey, which is great
- Current or potential challenges in your organization?
  - Poor leadership/management support
  - Mental health/substance abuse
  - Resource shortages (labor, budget, etc.)
  - Business, operational, and tech pace/changes
  - Cynicism, skeptics
  - Lack of communication, defined roles, responsibilities
  - Inconsistent or no **recognition**
  - Increasing injuries
- Some or all the above, others?

Photo courtesy of EHS Today

Photo courtesy of UL/Pure Safety

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How Can You Improve?

- Workforce engagement
  - Employee meetings, feedback surveys
  - Form partnerships
  - Identify risks, opportunities, solutions
  - Assessments: self and organization

- Optimize health and safety (H&S) program

- Leverage technology
  - Operational and training systems
  - Wellness apps
  - Communication tools

Why Integration of Safety and Business Culture is Crucial

- Safety and business culture must be aligned for any organization to thrive

- Consider the following examples to demonstrate that:
  - Having a strong safety culture supports productivity by reducing downtime caused by incidents
  - Business decisions driven by a solid safety culture prioritize sustainable and ethical practices
  - Balancing and integrating the two creates a resilient organization that values success and the well-being of its people

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Return on Investment (ROI) for TWH/HSW

- There can be an overall positive ROI for implementing a TWH/HSW program

- NIOSH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP), the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), and others agree that it is a key part of supporting organizational resilience and is a "best practice"

- Culture of TWH/HSW is a "win/win"

Case Study: Health Organization – TWH and Well-Being

Client (CONFIDENTIAL)

Health organization (Oregon, Washington)

Problem

Company awarded a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to reduce health care worker stress; improve employee health, safety, and wellness; and help retain workers

Solution

Provided support for evaluation and development of various elements for company TWH initiatives. Hired an industry expert in TWH to work not only internally and collaboratively with external experts and internal champions. Consulting team researched and evaluated national and global approaches, ultimately developing an evaluative model, which the team used to review programs, documents, and benchmark stakeholders throughout its system. Gap assessment report and presentation were delivered to the company management with excellent feedback

Outcome/Benefit

Consulting team interviewed dozens of stakeholders, all of whom have provided in-depth experience and insight into organizational, departmental, and personal commitment to well-being at the company; roles, programs, and systems supporting TWH/well-being; and prominent risks (current and emerging) to employee health, safety, and well-being to name a few.

Summary report included tactical and strategic recommendations providing a roadmap for overall TWH improvements. Supplemental project support and follow-up assessments were planned.
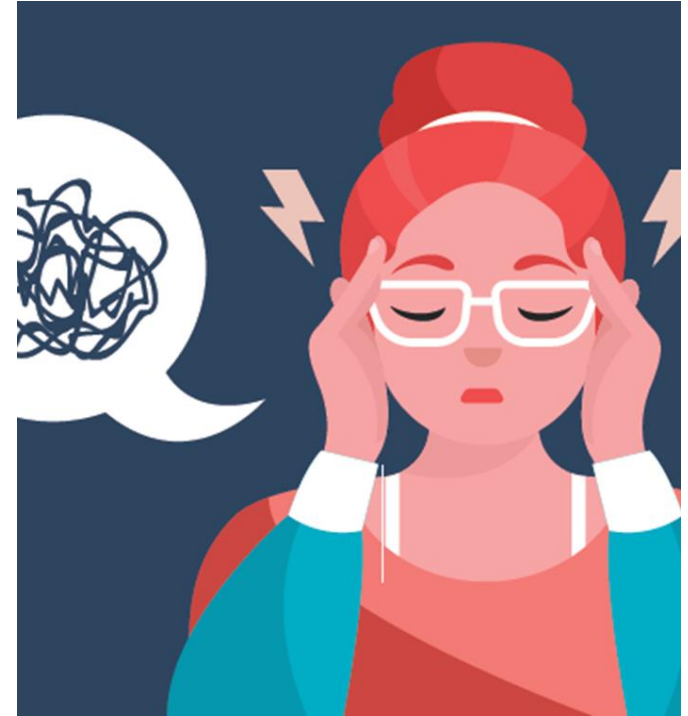
Rewards for These Efforts?

- Achieve a positive workplace culture, recognizing the value of TWH/HSW
- Increased employee engagement, higher productivity, profits and reduced turnover
- Lower injuries, absenteeism, and costs
- Risk-based approach to managing safety
- Remember: changing, building, or sustaining this is not easy
  - However, the rewards are lasting to your employees and business

"It's supposed to be hard. If it wasn't hard, everyone would do it. The hard is what makes it great."

Jimmy Dugan, character in "A League of Their Own"

Don't Forget the "Why" in These Efforts...

Resources – External Articles and References

- NIOSH TWH, Future of Work Initiative, Healthy Work Design and Well-being
  - https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/
  - https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/future-of-work/default.html
  - https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/hwd/default.html

- "When Fish Fly: Lessons for Creating a Vital and Energized Workplace from the World-Famous Pike Place Fish Market" – by John Yokoyama, Joseph Michelli PhD

- US Surgeon Generals Framework for Workplace Health & Well Being - 2022

- ISO & ANSI Standards: 9001(Quality), 45001(Occupational Health & Safety), 45003 (Workplace Psychological Health), ANSI Z10 (Safety Management)

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Well-Being Culture Survey

Well-Being Culture eBook

Thank You

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