



Building a Safety-First Culture

Presented By BHHC Loss Control

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AGENDA

1. Understand the Foundations of Safety Culture
2. Unsafe Acts and Conditions and the Control Hierarchy
3. Introduce the Bradley Curve
4. Determine Where Your Organization is in the Bradley Curve
5. Discuss Moving through the Stages of Culture
 - A. Reactive Phase
 - B. Compliance Phase
 - C. Dependent Phase
 - D. Interdependent Phase
6. Identify Pitfalls to Avoid
7. Emphasize Employee Engagement

Foundations of Safety Culture

Safety Culture Fundamentals

- **Definition of Safety Culture**
 - The shared values, beliefs, and behaviors which influence how safety is prioritized and practiced within an organization.
- **Beyond Compliance**
 - A positive safety culture involves proactive risk management and open communication
 - Beyond rule-following.
- **Key Characteristics**
 - Leadership commitment
 - Employee engagement
 - Consistent safety practices



Leadership Commitment

“It takes leadership to improve safety” Jackie Stewart

- Leadership commitment is critical to building safety culture
 - Sets Tone
 - Allocates resources
 - Drives accountability
 - Influences engagement
 - Supports Continuous Improvement
 - Builds Trust
- Participate in safety activities
- Dedicated Safety Personnel
- Dedicated Safety Budget
- Use of investigations and audits to drive change
- Prompt Response to safety concerns
- Support for innovation in safety
- Open Channels for reporting hazards
- Benchmarking vs. Industry
- Safety Goals in performance evaluations
- Safety embedded in company values
- Regular safety performance
- Third party safety certification
- Investment in safety equipment and training
- Clear enforced safety policies
- Leaders model safety behaviors

Empathetic Communication

EMPATHETIC COMMUNICATION

What makes it successful:

- Shows genuine concern for employee wellbeing.
- Builds psychological safety and trust.
- Encourages openness about near misses or unsafe conditions.



Practice active listening



Observe nonverbal cues



Acknowledge and validate emotions

Seven ways
to build empathy in
communication skills



Ask open-ended questions



Use empathetic presentations



Be open-minded



Seek feedback

Why Effective Safety Communication Matters

- **Promotes Hazard Awareness** - Clear communication helps employees recognize and respond to risks before incidents occur.
- **Encourages Safe Behaviors** - Regular coaching and feedback reinforce safety protocols and correct unsafe actions.
- **Builds Trust and Openness** - Employees are more likely to report near misses or unsafe conditions when they feel heard and supported.
- **Improves Response Time** - Timely communication ensures quick action during emergencies or when hazards are identified.

Why Effective Safety Communication Matters

- **Reduces Misunderstandings** - Clear instructions and expectations prevent errors caused by confusion or assumptions.
- **Strengthens Safety Culture** - Consistent messaging from supervisors sets the tone for safety as a shared responsibility.
- **Enhances Training Effectiveness** - Communication tailored to different learning styles ensures better retention and application of safety knowledge.
- **Supports Continuous Improvement** - Feedback loops allow for ongoing refinement of safety practices based on real-world observations.

Unsafe Acts and Conditions

Comparison

Unsafe Acts

- Operating Equipment Without Authorization
- Failure to Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Bypassing Safety Devices
- Using Defective Equipment
- Improper Lifting Techniques
- Horseplay or Reckless Behavior
- Working at Unsafe Speeds
- Failure to Follow Procedures
- Improper Use of Tools or Equipment
- Taking Unsafe Positions or Postures
- Failure to Warn or Signal
- Disabling Alarms or Warnings
- Working Under the Influence
- Inattention or Distraction
- Improper Housekeeping

Unsafe Conditions

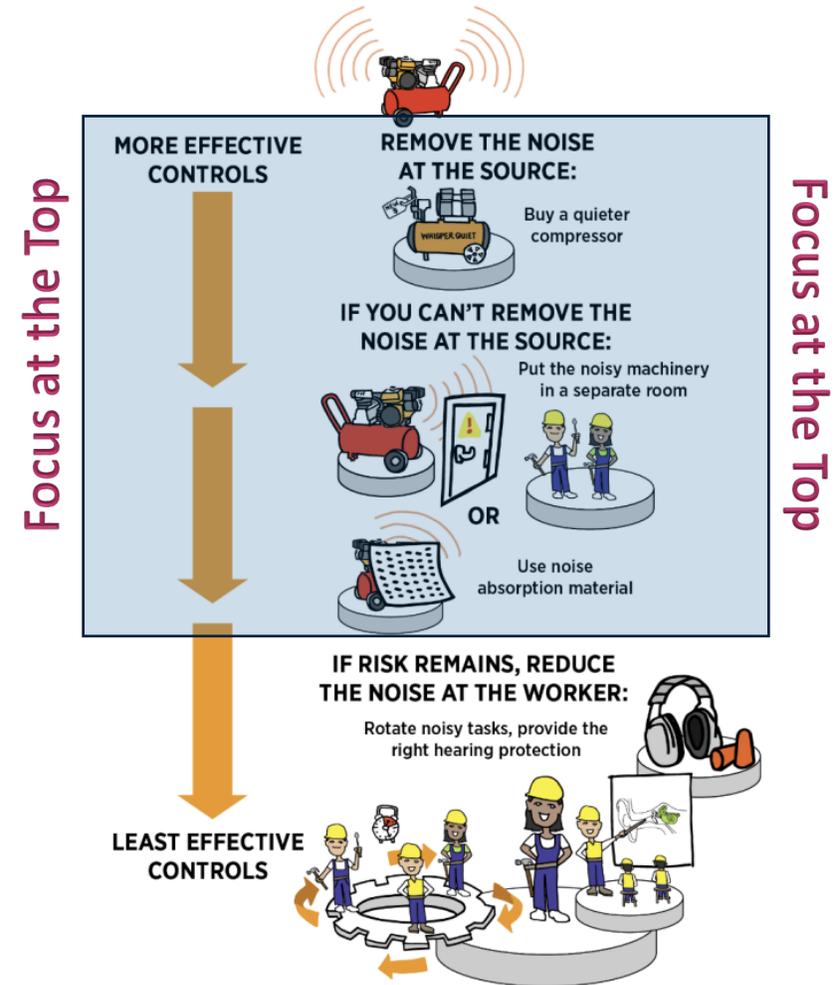
- Poor Housekeeping
- Inadequate Lighting
- Defective Tools or Equipment
- Unguarded Machinery
- Exposed Electrical Wiring
- Improper Ventilation
- Blocked Emergency Exits
- Slippery or Uneven Surfaces
- Inadequate Warning Signs
- Excessive Noise
- Poor Ergonomics
- Inadequate Fire Protection
- Extreme Temperatures
- Improper Storage
- Inadequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Availability

Using the Top of the Control Hierarchy

Effective Controls Make a Difference

- Training alone rarely makes a significant impact unless training about a change in status quo
- PPE is very dependent on employee adherence
- Engineering controls are much more positive to control loss
- Substitution and Elimination of the hazard are the most effective controls

EXAMPLE HAZARD: A Noisy Compressor



From:
OSHA IDENTIFYING HAZARD CONTROL
OPTIONS: The Hierarchy of Control

A close-up photograph of a person's hand raised, palm facing forward, in a classroom or training setting. The hand is dark-skinned and is wearing a white sleeve. In the background, a blurred figure of a woman in a white shirt is visible, suggesting a professional or educational environment.

Importance of Effective Training

○ **EMPLOYER BENEFITS**

- Reduces workplace accidents and injuries.
- Ensures compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Promotes a culture of safety.
- Increases productivity and job efficiency.
- Builds worker confidence and morale.
- Mitigates financial and legal risks.

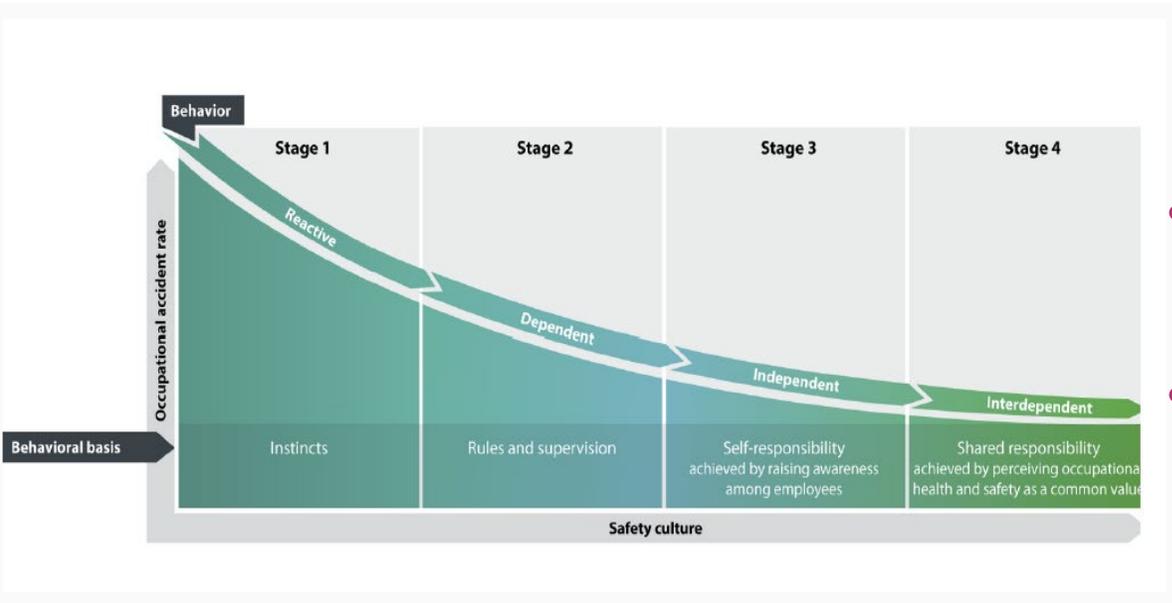
○ **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

- Reduces workplace accidents and injuries.
- Enhances skills for career advancement.
- Opens doors to new job opportunities.

Bradley Curve

Bradley Curve

Roadmap for Industry Expectations



- **Safety Culture Stages** - The Bradley Curve defines four stages of safety culture maturity in organizations.
- **Reactive Stage** - Safety is addressed only after incidents occur in the Reactive stage.
- **Dependent and Independent Stages** - Management drives safety in Dependent stage; individuals take responsibility in Independent stage.
- **Interdependent Stage** - Teams actively look out for each other in the Interdependent stage promoting strong culture.

Bradley Curve

- **Stage 1: Reactive occupational safety based on instinct**
 - Employees do not take responsibility for occupational safety.
 - Safety is mainly a matter of chance and accidents are seen as an inevitable part of day-to-day work.
- **Stage 2: Dependent occupational safety based on rules and supervision**
 - Employees regard occupational safety as rules set by the management.
 - Management assumes that the accident rate will fall if employees simply follow the rules.
 - Involves exerting pressure on employees.

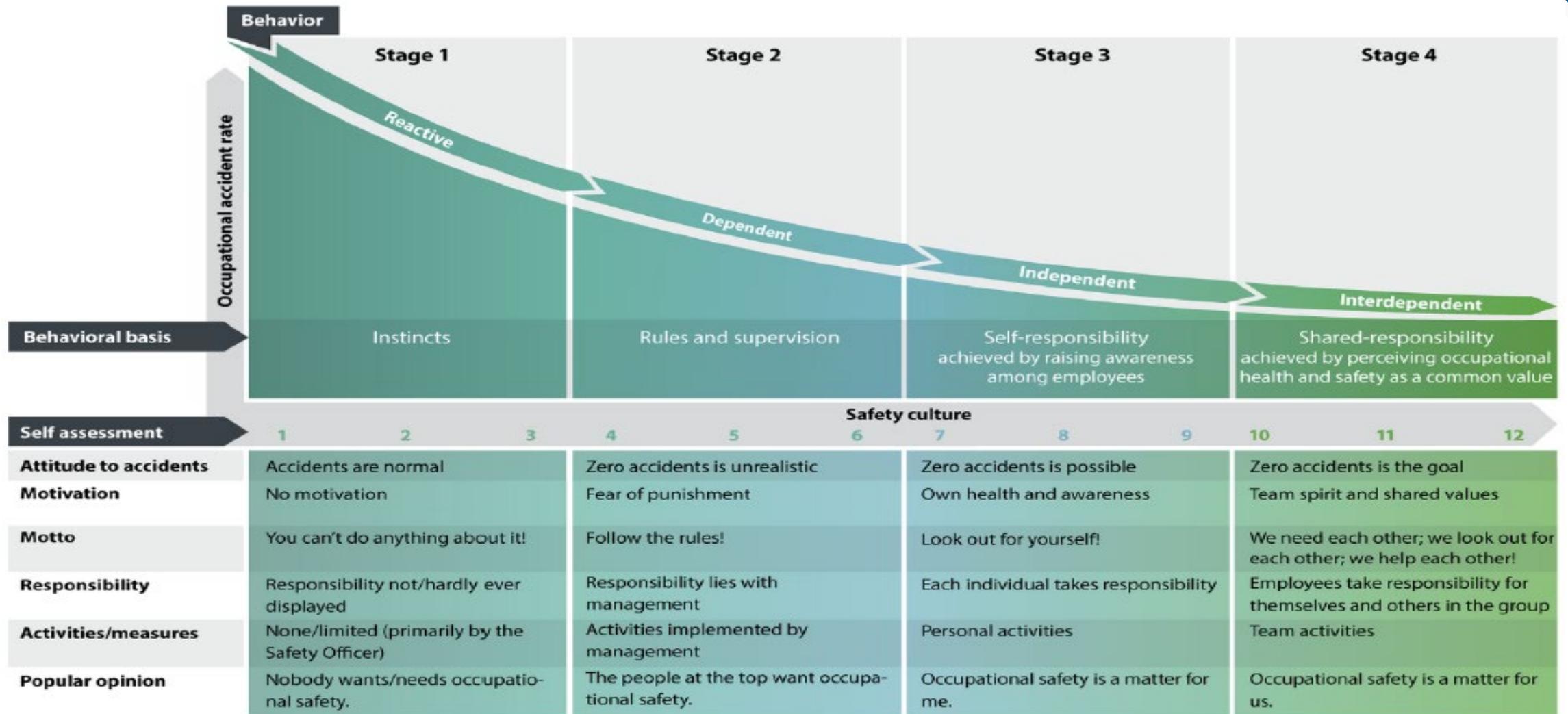
OSHA regulations establish essential baseline safety standards that protect workers nationwide. However, best practices and emerging safety research often advance faster than regulatory updates.

Bradley Curve

- **Stage 3: Independent occupational safety based on employees' self-responsibility**
 - Employees regard occupational safety personally.
 - They take responsibility for themselves.
 - Understand the underlying significance of occupational safety measures.
- **Stage 4: Shared responsibility (Interdependent Stage)**
 - Achieved by perceiving occupational health and safety as a common value.
 - Occupational safety is an integral part of a company's DNA
 - Employees are responsible for themselves and others. They do not accept low standards or risks. Work as a team!

Organizations committed to excellence should view OSHA compliance as the starting point and strive to go beyond these minimum requirements by adopting proactive measures and continuous improvement strategies.

Determining Your Safety Culture Maturity



Moving through the Stages of Safety Culture

Moving through the Stages

- Determine where your company is currently
 - Safety Culture Survey
 - Review types of accidents occurring
 - ASK!!!
- Place your company in the curve
 - Reactive
 - Dependent
 - Independent
 - Interdependent





Moving to the Next Stage

- Look at the characteristics for the next stage and consider what tools and measures could help you get there
- The following questions can drive forward your company's development:
 - Where are we on the Bradley Curve at present, and what approaches and actions can we derive from that?
 - How can we encourage people to see themselves as part of a team – and what regulations and standards can help to create a safe corporate culture?
 - What can management do to support this cultural change?
 - Words Matter – Us, We, Team, Together, rather than I or You.
 - How can leadership become more prominent and stand for change in our company?
 - Where are our employees on the curve?
 - How do employees assess management?

Determining Your Safety Culture Maturity

Self Assessment	Attitude to accidents:	Motivation	Motto	Responsibility	Activities measures	Popular opinion
1 (low)	1. Accidents are normal	1. No motivation	1. You can't do anything about it	1. Not hardly ever	1. None/limited to safety officers	1. Nobody wants/needs safety
2 (intermediate)	2. Zero accidents are unrealistic	2. Fear of punishment	2. Follow the rules	2. Lies with management	2. Activities by management	2. The people at the top want safety
3 (advanced)	3. Zero accidents are possible	3. Own health and awareness	3. Look out for yourself	3. To each their own	3. Personal activities	3. Safety is a matter for me
4 (professional)	4. Zero accidents are the goal	4. Team spirit and shared values	4. Look out for, need, and help each other	4. Everyone looks out for everyone	4. Team activities	4. Safety is a matter for us

Determining Your Safety Culture Maturity

Create structure

Come into OSHA Compliance

Identify safety tasks and assign responsibility

Write Programs

Develop and implement accountability systems

Engage Employees in decision making

Implement safety committees

Train and involve staff

Empowerment, identification and integration

Cede decision-making to employees

Best in class safety solutions

Safety rewarded at individual, management, and team levels

Pitfalls to Avoid

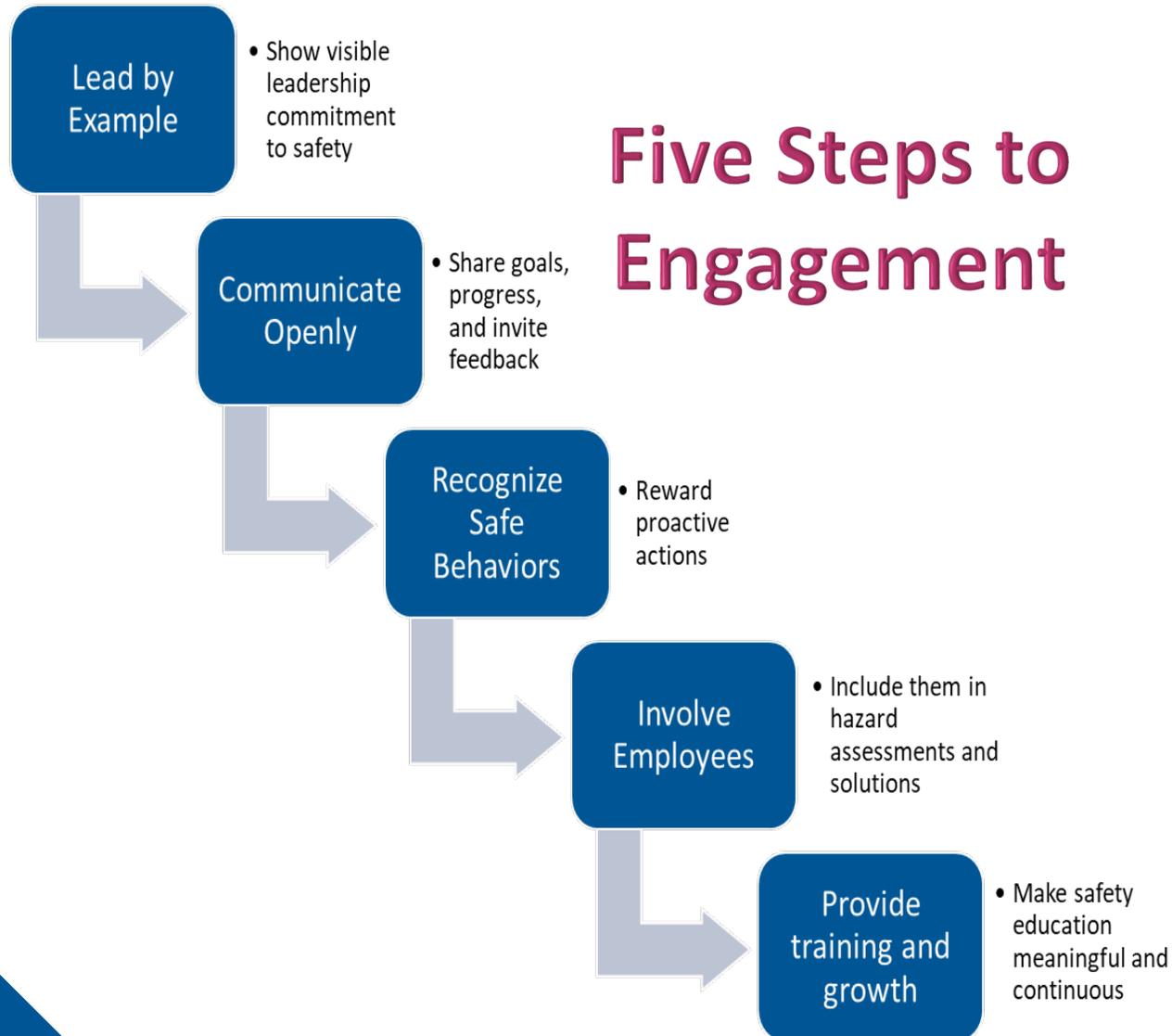
Pitfalls

- **Lack of Leadership Engagement:** Without visible commitment, efforts stall.
- **Overemphasis on Compliance:** Focusing only on rules prevents cultural growth.
- **Insufficient Communication:** Employees may not understand the “why” behind changes.
- **Failure to Involve Employees:** Top-down approaches reduce buy-in.
- **Ignoring Behavioral Reinforcement:** Not recognizing safe behaviors slows progress.
- **Underestimating Time and Effort:** Cultural change is gradual, not immediate.
- **Inconsistent Accountability:** Mixed messages erode trust and commitment.

Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement

Five Steps to Engagement



- Employee engagement is vital
- Safety culture thrives when employees:
 - Actively participate
 - Take ownership
 - Feel empowered to prevent incidents.
- Engaged employees:
 - Identify hazards
 - Follow procedures
 - Support peers
 - Reduces risk and improves morale.

Summary

Summary

- Improvements in occupational safety provide benefits across the board!
- If you can refine your company's culture, then improved occupational safety, quality, productivity and employee motivation will all go hand in hand.
- For occupational safety to become a practiced part of a company's culture, every manager needs to regard this matter close to their heart.
- Leaders must lead by example! Active listening and empathetic communication are keys to gaining trust.



BHHC Loss Control can help!



37 Members of BHHC Loss Control



Data Driven and Business Focused



Industrial Hygiene, Ergonomics and Specialty Services



Supporting policyholders...onsite, remote & digitally

- Create safety & health programs
- Audit existing practices and programs
- Provide training support and assistance
- Hazard assessment
- Solution development

The background is a solid dark blue color. It features several semi-transparent, light blue speech bubbles of various sizes and orientations. Some of these bubbles contain a white question mark. The overall theme is communication and inquiry.

Questions?

Please email additional questions to losscontrol@bhhc.com