

# SafeCare BC Workplace Health and Safety Culture Framework

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## What is the Workplace Health and Safety Framework?

The SafeCare BC Workplace Health and Safety Framework is a tool that enables you to understand workplace health and safety in your organization. It provides a concrete framework to help you reflect on your organization's safety culture. The tool is based on the *Manchester Patient Safety Framework (MaPSaF)*, as well as the *Patient Safety Culture Improvement Tool*, developed by Mark Fleming and Natasha Wentzell (2008). It has also been developed to reflect OHS legislation and regulation and aspects of Accreditation Canada's *Required Organizational Practices*.

## What is it used for?

The Framework has four purposes:

- 1) Enable you to understand safety culture as a multi-dimensional concept with observable and measurable characteristics,
- 2) Illustrate what different levels of cultural maturity look like across a variety of dimensions,
- 3) Facilitate self-reflection and encourage dialogue about safety culture in your organizations, and;
- 4) Provide a reference point for the development, implementation, and assessment of continuous improvement initiatives.

## Who can use it?

Anyone can use the Framework, although the language in sections is advanced. If you use the it, you are strongly encouraged to seek feedback from a wide audience, including, but not limited to: frontline staff, Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee members, supervisors, managers, and senior leaders. The wider your audience, the more accurately the feedback will reflect your organization.

## Why use it?

The culture of an organization plays a key part in any initiative. If you are looking to improve workplace health and safety at your organization, it's very important to understand the state of your current workplace culture. Any new program will need to fit with the existing culture. If the program doesn't fit, you'll either need to change the program or change the culture. Otherwise, the program will likely fail. Understanding your workplace culture is the first step to ensuring a program's success.

## How does it work?

The Framework has eleven dimensions, each of which can be rated along a spectrum. A dimension that falls in the "Pathological" category is a dimension that is performing poorly. A dimension that falls into the "Generative" category is a dimension that is performing exceptionally well.

To use the Framework, you'll proceed through each of the dimensions and rate your organization. Because everyone brings a different perspective to the discussion, it's important that you seek out a diverse range of viewpoints from within your organization. You can work through the Framework as a group, in pairs, or as individuals.

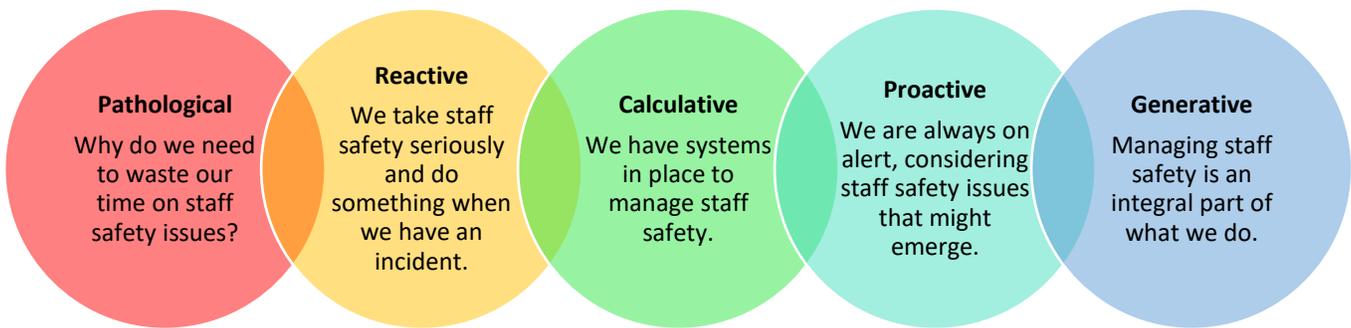
## How is the Framework organized?

The Framework has eleven dimensions:

| Dimension   | Description   |
|---|---|
| <b>1 Commitment to prevention and continuous improvement</b>                          | Examines general commitment and attitudes towards prevention and continuous improvement, including purposes of policies and procedures.   |
| <b>2 Priority given to staff safety</b>   | Examines organizational priorities, the role of risk management systems and the extent to which they are implemented.   |
| <b>3 Perceptions of the causes of staff safety incidents and their identification</b> | Examines organizational understanding of the causes of incidents, reporting systems, and whether incidents are recognized as opportunities for blame or organizational improvement.           |
| <b>4 Investigating staff safety incidents</b>   | Examines extent to which incidents are investigated, how the information gathered is used, and the timeliness of responses.   |
| <b>5 Organizational learning</b>  | Examines extent to which organizational learning is systematically integrated, and how change is implemented and managed.   |
| <b>6 Communication and consultation</b>   | Examines the extent to which there are formal communication strategies and record keeping systems in place, and the degree of transparency between and within all levels of the organization. |
| <b>7 Staff and safety issues</b>  | Examines organizational approach to recruitment, selection and retention of staff, including systems of support and evaluation.   |
| <b>8 Staff education and training about safety issues</b>                             | Examines organizational approach to staff education, including motivation for training staff members, and extent of resources and support made available for training purposes.               |
| <b>9 Team and partnership working</b>   | Examines the extent to which the organization encourages team and partnership working between and within all levels of the organization.  |

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| <b>10 Leadership commitment</b> | Examines the extent to which leaders are trained regarding safety leadership behaviors, including interpersonal competencies, and techniques used to evaluate leadership performance. |
| <b>11 Workload management</b>   | Examines the extent to which the organization recognizes and adheres to evidence-based staffing levels, and implements and monitors an active fatigue management plan.                |

Each dimension is ranked along the following spectrum, and is broadly described below:



Detailed descriptions of Pathological, Reactive, Calculative, Proactive, and Generative categories are provided for each dimension.

For example, an organization that is “Calculative” for the dimension “Communication and Consultation” would be best described as:

“The organization has a communication strategy in place but its effectiveness is limited. A great deal of safety information is available to staff, however, there is limited opportunity for bottom up communication. Health and safety initiatives are frequently introduced. However, there is limited effort to consult with staff regarding the development, implementation and effectiveness of these preventative measures.”

### What does an exceptional workplace health and safety culture look like?

In the language of the Framework, exceptional means “Generative”. An organization that falls in the “Generative” category for all dimensions has an exceptional workplace health and safety culture. The next page summarizes all the features of a fully Generative culture.

## Descriptions of a generative safety culture

\*\*\* In the Framework, the term *staff* is taken to refer to all employees, contractors, volunteers and management operating with an organization. The term *leader* is taken to refer to senior managers, physician and nurse leaders, middle managers, and front-line managers.

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| <p><b>1 Commitment to prevention and continuous improvement</b></p>                             | <p>A culture of prevention and continuous improvement influences all levels of the organization and decision-making processes, supported by a shared belief in the value of safety. Management is actively committed and, through visible leadership, motivates staff to work safely, providing them the resources and skills to do so.</p> <p>Teams are responsible for audit process, with systematic identification of risks and hazards integrated into daily activities and effectiveness is continuously monitored.</p> <p>Robust policies and procedures are in place, however reliance on them is minimal as all staff are skilled in applying best-practices and are highly attuned to safety risks. Staff input is sought in all prevention and continuous improvement initiatives.</p> |
| <p><b>2 Priority given to staff safety</b></p>    | <p>It is a moral and ethical imperative to protect and promote the health and safety of staff. Hazard analysis and risk assessments are central to daily practice. Safe work procedures are continuously monitored, reviewed, and refined, with input from all levels of staff welcomed.</p> <p>Safety is everyone's responsibility, and is reflected in all contracts and job descriptions, including support staff. Cost-saving measures and safety are held in balance.</p>  |
| <p><b>3 Perceptions of the causes of staff safety incidents and their identification</b></p>  | <p>There is culture of accountability throughout the organization, and root causes are sought when conducting incident investigations.</p> <p>Staff feel empowered to report near misses, errors and incidents due to the clarity of the evaluation process and the fair judgements made following a report. As a result, staff have confidence in the reporting and investigation processes (both internal and external). This is a "just" culture, characterized by high levels of trust and transparency.</p>  |

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| <p><b>4 Investigating staff safety incidents</b></p>  | <p>Policies, procedures and systems are in place to ensure that staff safety incidents are investigated in a timely manner, complete with root cause analysis and corrective actions implemented and monitored for effectiveness.</p> <p>Information is obtained from a variety of incidents to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the causes of incidents. The process is participated in and reviewed by all stakeholders, and staff feel safe, secure and supported during the process. Investigations enhance organizational learning, rather than give out blame. As a result, fewer incidents occur. The organization is characterized by a culture of inquiry.</p>   |
| <p><b>5 Organizational learning</b></p>               | <p>Organizational learning is a core value, evidenced by the organization's commitment to continuous improvement and willingness to learn from incidents (internal and external), and share these learnings widely.</p> <p>Systematic incident reporting, reviews and audits are routine, and outcomes are used as opportunities to engage all stakeholders in dialogue. Input from all levels of staff, as well as clients, is considered equally when assessing potential improvement initiatives. The shared belief that learning is an ongoing process wards off complacency, and staff are self-motivated to seek out safety issues. Organizational learning itself is also evaluated.</p>                                |
| <p><b>6 Communication and consultation</b></p>        | <p>There is a strong commitment to open communication between and within all levels of the organization. Communication processes are characterized by transparency, and consultation with all staff is highly valued.</p> <p>Senior staff and management recognize and value the wealth of knowledge and insight staff have to offer. It is expected that all staff share openly about their experiences to enhance organizational learning, and communicate their ideas about strategies for risk management and continuous improvement. This is a "praising" organization, where innovative ideas are encouraged, full participation expected, and open communication an integral part of daily operations and practice.</p> |
| <p><b>7 Staff and safety issues</b></p>             | <p>The organization is genuinely committed to staff's personal development, physical safety and psychological health and well-being. Personnel management is not an isolated domain but is integral to daily operations. Safety performance is routinely reviewed at all levels, and managers receive organizational support to implement necessary health and safety processes. Everyone shares responsibility for safety.</p> <p>When incidents occur, a systems analysis is conducted. To ensure consistency and fairness throughout the process, incidents are investigated using a standardized tool.</p>   |

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| <b>8 Staff education and training about safety issues</b><br><br> | <p>Leadership recognizes the importance of developing interpersonal skills, and shaping staff attitudes. Education is not approached as a "one-off" event, but is understood and approached as an ongoing process.</p> <p>Staff are actively involved in their professional development, and are not simply "receivers" of regulatory training.</p>  |
| <b>9 Team and partnership working</b><br><br>                     | <p>Team membership is fluid and flexible, with new members joining in when their expertise and experience are appropriate for the immediate circumstances. Partnership working is integral to daily practice, with strong levels of communication between and within teams. Team-based care, supported by team building and interpersonal skills training, facilitates better risk management.</p> <p>These are high-functioning teams, with a shared vision and compelling purpose to encourage safety leadership at all staffing levels. Staff feel they are valued equally and can contribute at all levels of the organization, without fear of overstepping hierarchical boundaries. There is effective partnership working at strategic and operational levels.</p>  |
| <b>10 Leadership commitment</b><br><br>                           | <p>Mandatory training in the form of tailored individualized learning programs is provided to all leaders. The form and content of this training is premised on the outcomes of previous performance evaluations (based on leading indicators), and behavioural observation monitored through a formal, ongoing process.</p> <p>Peer-to-peer feedback is routine practice, fostering an open and collaborative learning environment.</p>   |
| <b>11 Workload management</b><br><br>                           | <p>A holistic approach is adopted when managing staff workload. Factors such as intensity of work, resident acuity, and skill levels of team members are all taken into consideration. Additional supports and resources are made available in times of need, for example when situations or staff skill levels mean staff safety is put at risk.</p> <p>With a formal fatigue management program in place, there are processes to document the effects of fatigue on staff health and safety, retention and recruitment. The organization supports open acknowledgement and identification of fatigue, as it is understood as posing an unacceptable risk to staff and client safety.</p> <p>The organization and all staff share and are guided by the ethical obligation to maintain "fitness to practice".</p> |

## Where can I learn more?

SafeCare BC offers education on the Framework as part of its PEER Resource Network initiative. For more information on the PEER program, please contact [info@safecarebc.ca](mailto:info@safecarebc.ca).