



Actively caring for

PEOPLE'S SAFETY

The crucial difference between “caring” & “acting”

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What does it mean to actively care for people's safety? Is this the mission of behavior-based safety (BBS)? Let's understand the difference between “caring” and “acting.”

No one wants to see an individual get injured on the job. This is caring. Yet, when workers are asked to muster the courage to offer advice to a peer who is working at-risk, many admit they do not act on their caring by providing behavioral feedback.

And how many workers act to show sincere appreciation for a co-worker's safe behavior?

Many employees do not actively care for people's safety. They don't go beyond their intrinsic caring and provide proactive injury-prevention action.

BBS alone won't create caring

Many organizations seem to assume that putting a BBS process in place ensures employees will speak up when observing a co-worker's at-risk behavior. This is simply not the case. There is certainly value in performing BBS observations – safe and at-risk behaviors are recorded, and hazards are sometimes shared for useful education. But what about going a step further and taking the time to provide immediate and caring feedback to ensure employees continue their safe behavior and correct their at-risk behavior.

As you've heard before, “If you see

something, say something.”

Building feedback skills

Often AC4P training is needed to help people develop the confidence and the competence to communicate effectively on behalf of the safety of each other every day – on and off the job. Employees use a critical behavior checklist (CBC) to pinpoint safety-related risks when systematically observing each other. But the most important part of this observation process is the delivery of one-to-one behavioral feedback – being directive for supportive feedback and nondirective for corrective feedback.

BBS should be more about interpersonal AC4P communication when safety-related feedback is needed. The process should be developmental and inspirational – people becoming each other's brother/sister keeper.

Don't fear giving feedback

AC4P behavior can become a new normal among those who act on an AC4P commitment. Yet for many reasons, it's not always in our nature to actively care or speak up when we see something or someone safe or at-risk. People too often hold back proactive behavioral feedback because they fear the possibility of activating interpersonal conflict. This belief limits positive behavior-based communication and one-on-one win/win connections. In fact, people should feel grateful when someone gives them behavioral information that could prevent an injury. This is the

norm in an AC4P work culture.

An AC4P work culture is nurtured when people provide supportive feedback for desirable behavior -- saying thank you and showing genuine appreciation for people's AC4P behavior. Too often, we seem to forget how important it is to give more positive (or supportive) feedback than negative (or corrective) feedback.

Slow down and reflect

Obviously, AC4P behavior is easier said than done. Most of us are running at a fast clip, with so much information coming at us it's difficult to just relax and reflect on our AC4P values and entertain ways to bring these to life. To keep up with seemingly excessive responsibilities, we multi-task and resort to efficient reactive thinking, rather than effective reflective thinking. A commitment to actively care for the safety of others requires slow reflective thinking – looking daily for opportunities to prevent a possible injury and then acting effectively to make a beneficial difference with interpersonal AC4P conversation.

It does take a personal commitment to help cultivate an AC4P culture. People need to keep their eyes open for opportunities to help others. Then they need to hold themselves accountable to perform AC4P action that contributes to nurturing a safe and productive AC4P workplace – whether the AC4P act is a behavior-based conversation to support or correct safety-related behavior or simply performing an act of kindness to

make a better day for someone.


This should not be that difficult. Yet it's more difficult than it seems.

Acting takes courage

Honoring an AC4P commitment takes courage and competence. Such a commitment actually goes beyond performing AC4P behaviors. It includes activating and supporting the AC4P behavior of others. People need to know how to

intervene effectively and routinely on behalf of AC4P, which includes showing the moral courage to step to the plate whenever an AC4P opportunity is observed. When you connect with others for interpersonal accountability and share your AC4P stories, you contribute further to cultivating an AC4P culture.

Let's go well beyond the mechanics of behavior observing, CBC recording, and number crunching, and focus on inter-

personal communication that helps co-workers avoid personal injury everyday and in every way. 



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