



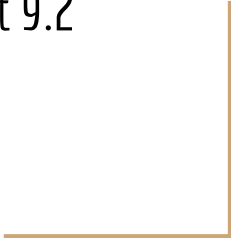
Barriers or challenges to implementing a just culture?





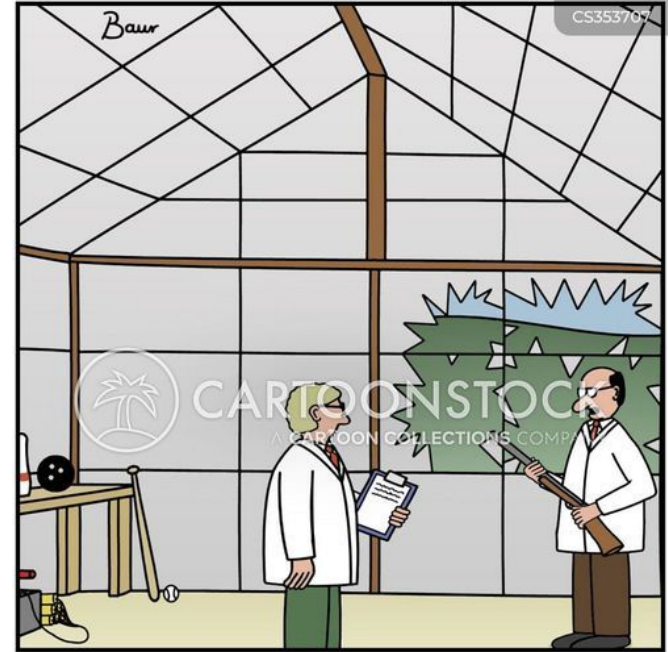
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What is a Just Culture?

A Just Culture is one that acknowledges that everyone makes mistakes and emphasizes the importance of systems that are resilient to human error.



"WELL, HAMILTON, WE CAN ADD 'DISCHARGE SHOTGUN' TO THE LIST OF THINGS PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN GLASS HOUSES SHOULDN'T DO."

Lack of Trust

Trust is the foundation of Just Culture, and can easily be eroded by taking retaliatory or punishing actions. If employees fear that they will receive strict punishment for any mistakes they make in the office than your Just culture will not continue to thrive.

Unrealistic Guidelines

If your business puts forth a bunch of policies that have no hope of ever being met, an example laid out by Steven Shorrock of humanistic systems is “Zero Accidents” which they say is obviously unachievable. This type of goal can never be met and breaks the trust in an organization. By laying out more realistic and achievable guidelines members of the organization will feel more like the organization is providing a just culture.

Differences in belief

We all see the world differently and as a result we all have a different understanding of what is fair and just. Therefore it is important to establish a resetta stone of sorts to help people understand your organizations definition of fairness and be steadfast in maintaining it.

Outcome Bias

As humans we often use the outcome of an event influence our perception of what led up the event. By letting outcomes be too much of a driving factor of our perceptions of work done in an organization we can instill a culture of fear where employees are nervous to perform tasks because there is a greater possibility of a negative outcome than doing nothing at all.

Trying to force a culture from the top down

Culture is not driven by leadership though they can be examples of good culture instead it comes from those working inside of the system. As Steven Shorrock of humanistic systems writes "We may try to achieve a common culture across the organisation, but you can't 'design', 'engineer' or 'implement' a culture of any kind. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your perspective) culture is largely read-only/write-protected. There is change, but adaptive change is mostly bottom up, and slow. True cultural change means changing shared values, beliefs, assumptions, and practice. That's hard enough for one person trying his or her best! For a thousand people...? Good luck. So, culture change is not usually centrally directed or top down. Culture change is evolutionary – more glacial than galloping – as groups learn and pass on lessons for their survival." He goes on to explain that this does not mean leadership has no impact on culture and the mere act of bringing up the topic of a just culture can influence discussion and be the pebble that gets the ball rolling for an avalanche of ideas.

Failure to see mistakes as learning opportunities

Mistakes are often seen as problems and something that should be discouraged through punitive actions; however, if instead they are viewed as an opportunity for improvement individuals are more likely to come forward with their mistakes. When viewed through the lens of a learning opportunity organizations can become stronger as a result of their mistakes. Alison H. Page of AHRQ writes about a nurse that mistakenly gave sleep medication to the wrong patient, clearly a mistake, and rather than immediately punish the nurse as some sort of deterrent they looked into what happened. By investigating the issue they found that the nurse had recently been in a meeting stressing that sleep interruptions were the number one driver of low patient satisfaction scores. The nurse then attempted to make sure to improve scores by giving medication and made a mistake to avoid punitive actions. By researching what happened the hospital was able to identify that, while a mistake was made, the person making the mistake did so out of fear of negative consequences for not responding fast enough for a good score.

Just Cultures

A just culture thrives on trust and it is important for employees to perceive that they will be supported for their actions even if they make mistakes. By using mistakes as learning opportunities and avoiding harsh penalties the members of an organization will feel more confident in their ability to accomplish their job, less secretive about mistakes and the organization can become a better place for all involved by supporting those who provide services in the organization.

References

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