



# A Just Culture

A Safer System



...when a person purposefully harms or recklessly endangers another, the proper response is fairly clear to all...

What about inadvertent, unintentional human errors?...

‘Somewhere along the way, we’ve lost the practical differentiation between human error, at-risk, and reckless behaviors. In doing so, we’ve created only one standard: perfection...’

*Whack-a-Mole, David Marx*



# CULTURE

The way we do things when no one is looking





# Culture

Culture is the unwritten rules and attitudes that influence the behavior of a group of people.

- Not necessarily the same throughout an organization.
- Differs between units, shifts, hospitals, disciplines, etc.

**Culture is at the very heart of  
an organization.**

**Culture shapes the way  
people think, behave, and  
approach their work.**



# **PUNITIVE CULTURE**

**People are punished for making errors...**

**People are afraid to speak up...**

**People don't feel safe**



The single greatest impediment to error prevention in the medical industry is “that we punish people for making mistakes.”

*Dr. Lucian Leape*  
*Professor, Harvard School of Public Health*



# Characteristics of a Punitive Culture

- Blame
- Communication is not open
- Fear of retaliation and/or reprisal
- Severity of punishment is impacted by severity of undesirable outcome
- People tend to hide their mistakes
- Focus is on the individual when an adverse event occurs, not on contributing factors

**In a punitive culture there is a belief that errors are evidence of personal carelessness. Many health care workers report only what they cannot conceal.**

# BLAME-FREE CULTURE

**Human fallibility acknowledged...**

**'No-blame' response to errors ...**

**No personal accountability...**







# 'Blame-Free' Weakness

Failure to confront individuals even when appropriate for

- Unsafe behavioral choices
- Repeated unsafe behavior
- Disregard of a substantial and unjustifiable risk

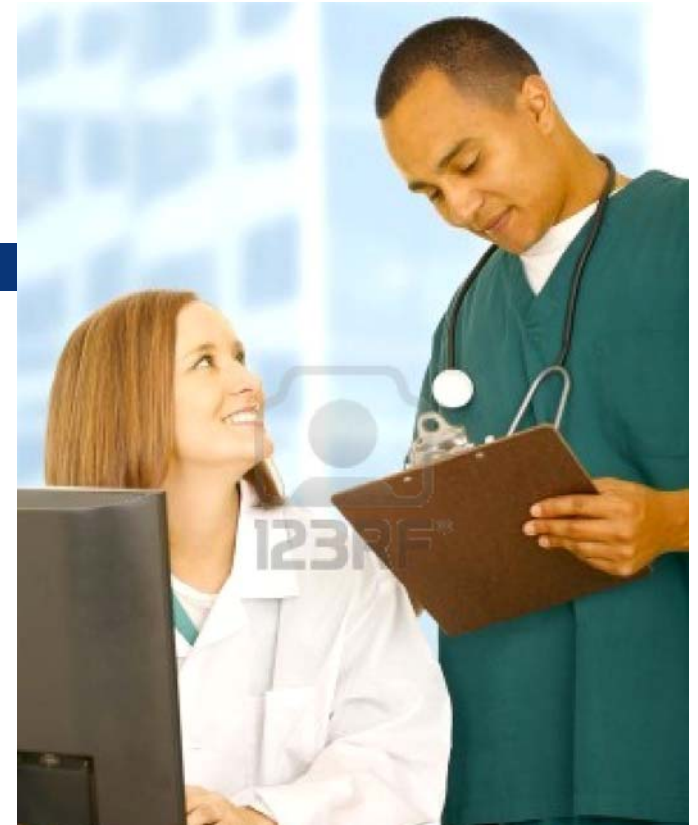
**The failure to discipline staff  
involved in errors  
caused by reckless behavioral choices  
presents a valid objection to a  
blame-free culture.**



# JUST CULTURE

**Culture of Safety**

**Middle ground between punitive and blame free**





# Characteristics of a Just Culture

- Staff report without fear
- Staff speak up
- Open communication
- Risks are openly discussed between managers and staff
- Hunger for knowledge
- Staff recognize that we generally have control of behavioral choices
- Staff are accountable for behavior choices
- Recognition that humans are fallible

**Shared accountability between staff and system**  
**Good system design + Good behavioral choices**  
**= Good results**



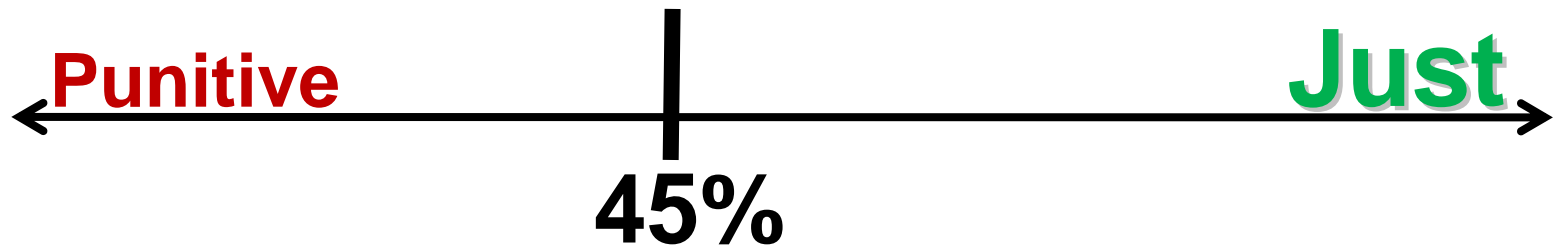
# Shared Accountability

- System acknowledgement of human fallibility and errors
- Expectation of accountability for behavior choices

**A just culture balances the need to have a non-punitive learning environment with the need to hold persons accountable for their actions.**



# 2011 Safety Survey





# CULTURE IMPACTS REPORTING

Reporting impacts safety





## Just Culture

Staff feel safe —————→

Open communication —————→

Objective response to errors →

Safe systems & processes —————→

Accountability for choices —————→

Errors are opportunities —————→

## Reporting

Readily report

Speak up & 'Stop the Line'

Full disclosure of failure points

Unsafe processes identified

Staff will accept accountability

Learning will increase

## Result:

Systems become **SAFER** and **SAFER** and **SAFER**

# JUST CULTURE ALGORITHM

A Critical Thinking Tool

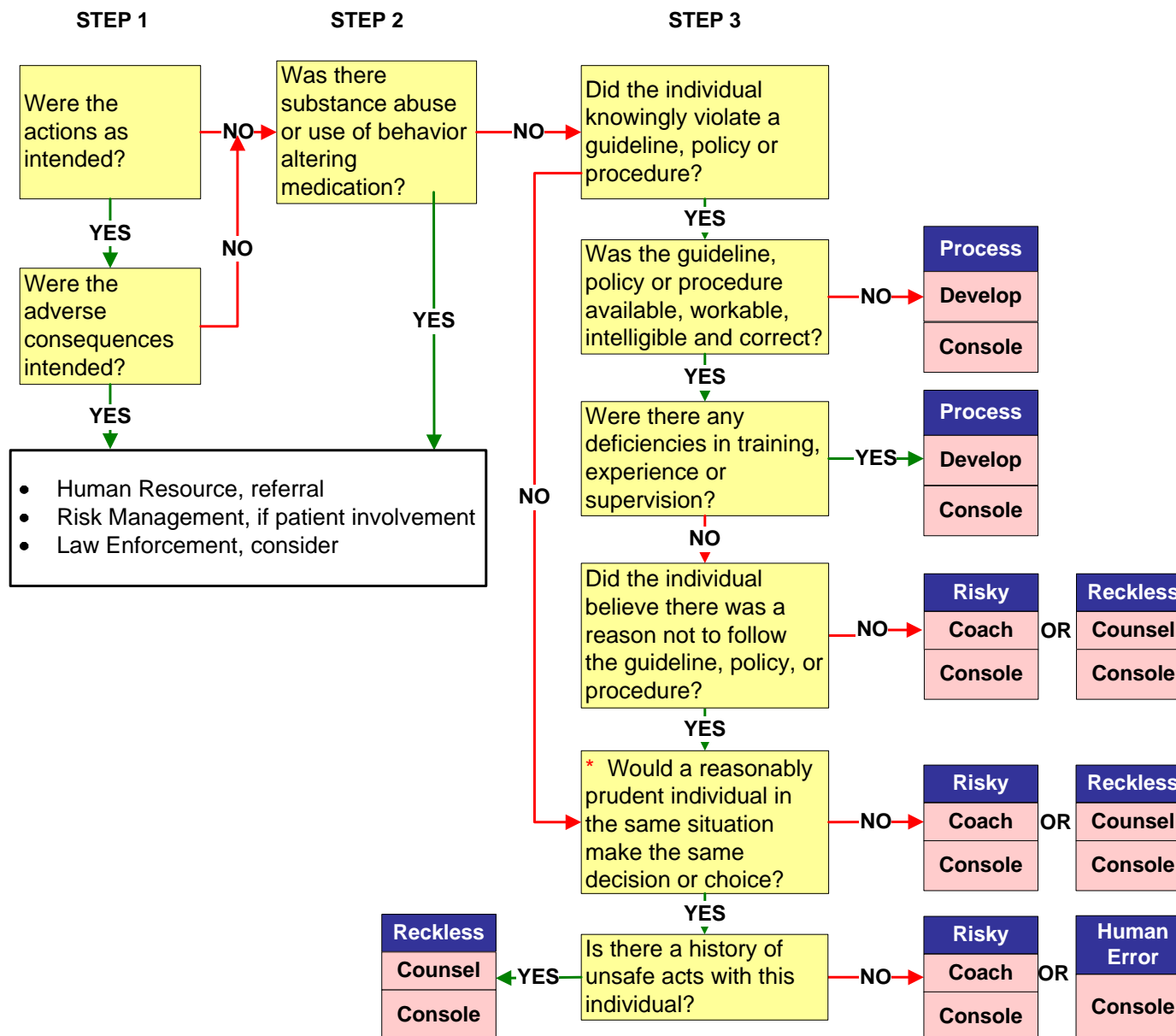






- What is the algorithm and when will it be used?  
It is a critical thinking tool for managers to use when evaluating an individual's behavior choices regarding an adverse event.
- Why do we need an algorithm?  
To ensure managers have a tool that will assist them in providing a consistent, objective response to an individual involved in an adverse event.
- Are all the managers going to use this tool?  
Yes, this is a system expectation.
- This sounds like a good thing...am I missing something?  
This is a very good thing. Staff will now know that each situation will be evaluated using the same tool for guidance.

# Just Culture Algorithm



## Definitions

### Reasons for Errors

#### Human Error

- A slip, lapse or mistake

#### At Risk / Risky

- A choice
- The risk may not be recognized or thought to be justified

#### Reckless

- A conscious disregard of an unreasonable risk
- intentional risk taking

#### Process Deficiency

- A necessary but non existent process
- ineffective or incomplete process to support safe practice

### Responses to Errors

**Console** – Support and encourage

**Coach** – Supportive discussion on the need for safe choices

- May encourage education & training

- May or may not document in employee file

**Counsel** – Disciplinary action regarding unacceptable performance

- May require education & training
- Documented in employee file using HR form
- Refer to HR Policy 4.05, Corrective Action

**Process** – Steps necessary to accurately complete a task

**Develop** – Identify and design action(s) to improve safety

An HR Representative may be contacted as a resource for coaching and counseling.

\* Would another individual coming from the same professional group, possessing comparable qualifications and experience, behave in the same way in similar circumstances?

## Reasons for Errors

Human Error	Risky Behavior	Reckless Behavior	Process Deficiency
A slip, lapse, or mistake	A choice Risk may not be recognized Risk is thought to be justified	Intentional risk-taking	A necessary but non-existent process; Ineffective or incomplete process to support safe practice

## Responses to Errors

Console	Coach	Counsel	Develop/Improve Process
Support and encourage	Supportive discussion on the need for safe choices	Disciplinary action; HR referral Consider termination	Identify and design action(s) to improve safety
Not documented in the employee file	May encourage education and training  May or may not be documented in the employee file	May encourage education and training  Is documented in the employee file using HR form Refer to HR Policy 4.05, Corrective Action	Implementation of identified actions to improve safety



# Children's believes...

1. A Just Culture is important because it leads to a safer system for all.
2. The organization is responsible for safe processes and systems.
3. Each employee is accountable for his/her behavior choices.
4. Each employee deserves consistent and objective evaluation of behavior choices anytime decisions are in question.