S.A.F.E.R. Leadership
Transforming Safety Leadership
E. Kevin Kelloway, PhD.
The Problem With Safety Leadership
The age-old question:

What **IS** Leadership?
“Leadership is an intangible quality with no definition. That’s probably a good thing, because if the people being led knew the definition, they would hunt down their leaders and kill them.”

-Scott Adams
The Working Definition of Leadership

To take people\textsuperscript{1} to places they would not have gone by themselves, and get them to do things they otherwise would not have done … and think it was all their own idea!

\textsuperscript{1} Could be followers/subordinates, peers or supervisors
Safety Leadership

To have people demonstrate both safety compliance and safety initiative because... it is their own idea!
What We Know About Safety Leadership

• Over multiple studies employee perceptions of safety leadership emerge as one of the best predictors of safety outcomes (Mullen & Kelloway, 2011)

• Safety Leadership can be taught
Safety Leadership Works

• Leadership is associated with improved attitudes, perceived safety climate, safety knowledge, safety behavior, safety events and injuries

• Extensive anecdotal reports
Barling, Loughlin & Kelloway (2002)
Barling et al. (2002)
Barling et al. (2002)

- Transformational Safety leadership
- Perceived safety climate
- Safety Knowledge
- Safety-Related events
- Occupational injuries
Kelloway, Mullen & Francis (2006)
Safety Leadership Can Be Taught
(Mullen & Kelloway, 2009)

- 84 health care managers from 21 different sites in NS
- 648 employees (direct reports)
- Managers participate in a .5 day workshop
- Pre-tests and 3 month post-tests
- Randomly assigned to 1 of 3 conditions
  - General Transformational Leadership Training
  - Safety Specific Transformational Leadership Training.
  - Control Group (No Training)
Results of Training: Managers’ Data

- No differences at Pretest
- At Post-test, significant differences in managers’ self-efficacy, safety attitudes, and intent to promote safety
- Safety TFL training is most effective

Safety Attitudes

Intent to Promote Safety
Results of Training: Employee Data

- No Differences at pretest
- Post-test differences on safety leadership, safety climate, safety events, and injuries
Conclusion

• Safety specific transformational leadership training resulted in improved self-efficacy, attitudes and intent among managers

• Safety specific transformational leadership training resulted in improved safety climate, events and injury rates among employees

• Safety specific transformational leadership training appears to be a low cost effective intervention
S.A.F.E.R. Leadership

What do transformational safety leaders do?
A Starting Point

- Years of doing safety and general leadership training with behavioral goal setting
- Two WCB (NS) conferences with industry leaders who have achieved positive safety outcomes – coded their stories for themes
S.A.F.E.R. Leadership
(Wong, Kelloway & Makhan, in press)

- **S**peak – talk the talk
- **A**ct – walk the walk
- **F**ocus – unrelenting concern for safety
- **E**ngage – get others involved
- **R**ecognize – when we are doing the right thing
Speak

• Talk about the importance of safety
• Tell Stories
  – Giving life to safety
• Ask Questions
  – Safety first
  – Data analysis
• Zohar’s work on supervisory safety communication
• Model the behavior you want to see
  – Safety first, accountability etc.
• Safety an explicit consideration
  – Safety, Productivity and Profit
• Make Safety your first priority
  – Explicitly consider safety
• Stand up for safety
  – Call people on their behavior
Focus

- Create accountability
  - Leadership scorecard
  - Define roles
  - Plans, systems, goals
  - Thematic focus

- Safety is not a program
  - Takes time, resources maybe years
Inconsistent Leadership

(Kelloway, Mullen & Francis, 2006; Mullen, Kelloway & Teed, 2011)

• Compared the effects of “passive” and “transformational” safety leadership

• Passive leadership degrades safety climate and safety outcomes

• When leaders engage in passive leadership (Inconsistent) they are less effective
Engage

• “Safety Champion” is the wrong model
• Need to involve everyone in safety
• Nobody knows the job as well as the person who does it.
• Importance of listening (especially to new people, junior people)
• Need to engage internal and external partners
• Value and recognize (not reward)
  – Effort, commitment, performance, achievement
• Tell the story
  – Provide feedback (good and bad)
  – Consequence management (full range)
• Cannon & Kelloway (2014) – power of positive recognition
THE RESEARCH

• Develop 360 measure and validate
• Develop training and coaching process
• The NB trials – to commence in September
• Research opportunities
  - Developing safety leaders
  - Does senior “leadership” affect safety performance?
  - How does leadership interact with safety systems?
  - Other??
“Learning is defined as a change in behaviour. You haven’t learned a thing until you can take action and use it.”

-Don Shula and Ken Blanchard
THANK YOU!!!!!

Kevin.kelloway@smu.ca
References


E. Kevin Kelloway, PhD.

• Canada Research Chair in Occupational Health Psychology and Professor of Psychology at Saint Mary’s University.
• Authored over 150 articles and book chapters
• Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science, the Canadian Psychological Association, the International Association of Applied Psychology and the Society for I/O Psychology