



# The COMMUNICATION DYNAMIC FOR OSH

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## ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING AN INJURY-FREE WORKPLACE

require a cultural transformation from dependency and interdependency to interdependency. In other words, it is not enough for workers to rely on the company to keep them safe through engineering technology and enforcement of safety rules. Nor is it sufficient for employees to count on only their own individual effort to keep them free from personal injury. Rather, people need others to remove environmental hazards they do not notice and to provide corrective feedback for at-risk behavior they may not realize they are performing. Such interdependency requires routine interpersonal communication.

The overall work culture and human dynamics of the situation determine whether interpersonal exchanges for personal safety are likely to occur and whether the impact of such interactions will be beneficial or detrimental to OSH. The human dynamics of an organization simultaneously both reflect and influence its culture. That is, certain aspects of a work setting affect human dynamics, and these personal and interpersonal dynamics in turn alter the culture.

This article defines and illustrates seven C-words, which reveal basic human dynamics that can inhibit or facilitate the achievement and maintenance of a brother's/sister's keeper work culture for OSH. The first C-word, communication, influences each of the six others: courage, commitment, choice, competence, community and compassion (Figure 1).

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Creating an injury-free workplace requires a cultural transformation from dependency and interdependency to interdependency.
- Such interdependency requires routine interpersonal communication, which is the first of seven C-words defined and illustrated in this article. These C-words reveal basic human dynamics that can inhibit or facilitate a brother's/sister's keeper work culture for OSH.
- Each C-word reflects evidence-based techniques for addressing the human dynamics of OSH and sustaining an injury-free work culture.

## Communication

The success of any intervention that involves people depends on appropriate communication, both interpersonal (between individuals) and intrapersonal (within one's self as self-talk). For example, effective communication is key to the success of behavioral observation and feedback, peer-to-peer coaching, employee recognition, injury analysis, and corrective-action development and implementation.

What part does communication play in a safety improvement process? Most, if not all, attempts to improve workplace safety include interpersonal communication. Indeed, the success of any intervention involving people is dependent on appropriate communication. Let's consider five types of communication introduced by Aquadro and Allbright (2003) with regard to the role each plays in safety-related intervention: relationship, possibility, action, opportunity and follow-up communication.

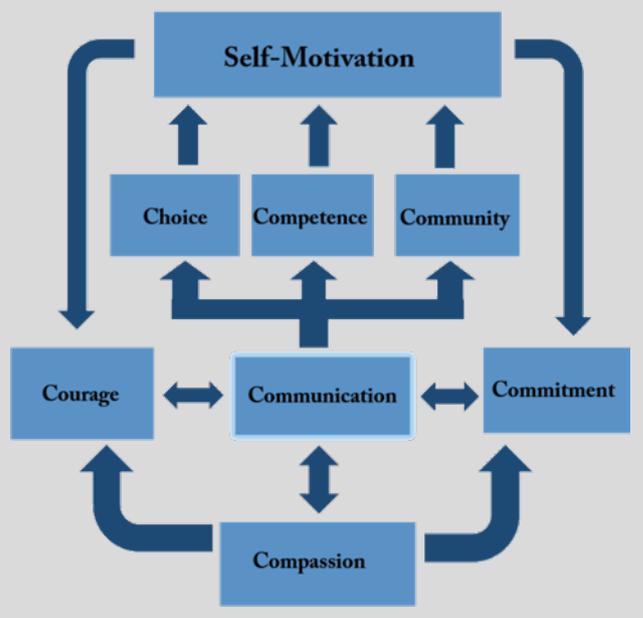
## Relationship Communication

Relationship conversations are relatively easy, yet critical to developing a brother's/sister's keeper work culture. Simply put, these conversations occur whenever people show sincere interest in others, from home life to work challenges. This happens, of course, with conversations about particular aspects of a person's family, health, hobbies, work processes or safety-related perceptions. As Carnegie (1936) put it years ago, echoed later by Blanchard and Johnson (1982), "Help people feel important at doing worthwhile work." This is relationship building.

Specific safety-related behavior might surface during a relationship-building conversation. If so, the occurrence of such behavior should be addressed, but the intention is more about developing interpersonal trust and support than influencing behavior. This approach to interpersonal conversation removes the perception of manipulation or behavior modification, and is therefore more acceptable to both the initiator and the receiver of this type of communication. Bottom line: Relationship communication reflects genuine interest in another person's situation, performance or perspective.

## FIGURE 1 SEVEN Cs FOR SAFETY SUCCESS

An organization of the seven Cs for safety success, depicting a focus on communication and indicating how certain C-words influence others.



### Possibility Communication

Relationship conversations often refer to an individual's past. Indeed, interpersonal relationships often begin by comparing one's prior personal experiences with those of the other individual and looking for commonalities. In contrast, possibility conversations focus on the future.

These conversations occur when ultimate visions are shared with another person. Of course, a primary vision for OSH is the achievement and maintenance of an injury-free workplace. However, possibility conversations target any future situation that reflects desired improvement in behavioral competence, job satisfaction or an environmental/engineering condition. Of course, the achievement of any vision requires action planning, the next communication category.

### Action Communication

Action communication is behavior-based communication. Given a vision or possibility for improvement, this conversation focuses on what an individual or work team could or should do to move in a desirable direction. The conversation might be between individuals as in behavior-based coaching (Geller & Geller, 2017; Geller, Perdue & French, 2003), or between members of a group or work team.

Action communication should define a number of different behaviors, some to continue and others to decrease or eliminate. When these conversations occur in group meetings, individual assignments are often given. Action goals might be set according to the SMARTS-goal acronym: specific, motivational, achievable, relevant, trackable and shared (Geller & Geller, 2017).

A goal-setting exercise should include an accountability system for tracking progress toward goal attainment. With work groups or teams, it is usually best to monitor both individual achievement with regard to specific assignments and the group's progress as a team. This two-directional accountability approach helps prevent social loafing (Latane, Williams & Haskins, 1979), when individuals slack off because they expect other team members to do more and cover for them. Next, people look for opportunities to perform their newly defined and desirable behaviors.

### Opportunity Communication

Consider that workers are trained and motivated to conduct behavior-based observation and feedback sessions (i.e., interpersonal coaching) and they know how to set a SMARTS goal for completing a certain number of observation/feedback sessions in a month. Now it is time to look for opportunities to conduct such one-on-one coaching sessions. In some cultures, this can be any work situation that involves human behavior. However, in other industrial settings workers must agree to be observed before the coaching process can be implemented.

Suppose an individual or work team chooses to adopt an achievement or success-seeking perspective to safety by tracking all safety-related behaviors performed beyond a person's daily work routine. This requires an action conversation about the types of behaviors that indicate going beyond the call of duty, as well as an opportunity conversation about the various situations that call for extra safety-improvement behaviors.

Bottom line: A practical action plan for achieving particular possibilities includes a definition of behaviors and circumstances: behaviors needed to fulfill the plan (action communication) and the times and places for these behaviors to occur (opportunity communication). After an action plan is completed, it is beneficial to celebrate small-win accomplishments and set the

stage for additional action and opportunity discussions. This is the fifth type of interpersonal communication.

### Follow-Up Communication

It is important to acknowledge the achievement of a SMARTS goal. Such follow-up communication is rewarding and promotes a success-seeking mind-set, an optimistic and achievement-focused perspective (Geller, 1996; 2001; 2016c). After noting the acquisition of an action/opportunity outcome, a follow-up communication turns to a discussion of a subsequent challenge. This could include communication types 2, 3 and 4: an identification of new possibilities (2), relevant and acceptable action plans (3) and opportunities calling for certain action (4).

Follow-up communication targets the end result or outcome of an action plan but should also occur during the achievement process. In other words, it is useful to have periodic follow-up conversations to check on progress toward a designated goal or outcome.

Suppose, for example, a safety professional communicates with a supervisor regarding a need to have more one-on-one interactions with line workers. After exploring possibilities, the safety professional discusses specific actions and opportunities for meaningful supervisor/employee contacts. S/he might set a SMARTS goal and even plan for a follow-up reward or recognition session following goal attainment. But process-focused monitoring could also be quite helpful. In other words, it would be useful for the safety professional to contact this supervisor periodically for follow-up communication regarding his/her progress toward achieving the interpersonal-contact goal.

### Communications in Summary

This discussion of five types of communication is simple, straightforward and practical. It provides an intuitive sequence for constructive interpersonal talk. For example, action plans will be all the more accepted and accomplishment all the more likely if they are preceded by appropriate relationship communication.

One type of communication does not stop with the implementation of the next in the sequence. Relationship communication, for example, continues throughout action planning, accomplishment and follow-up. And, while it makes sense to define the



behaviors in an action plan before considering opportunities, in actual practice people look for opportunities for the occurrence of their action-plan behaviors before performing them.

Indeed, interpersonal communication varies unsystematically between all five types of communication. Perhaps an understanding of these different types of communication and their differential objectives can contribute to increasing the quantity and improving the quality of verbal interactions for safety. Indeed, when it comes to injury prevention, quality interpersonal conversations about safety must become a daily routine.

### The Nondirective Stance

Sometimes, in their eagerness to keep employees safe, OSH professionals give directions and corrective feedback in a top-down, seemingly controlling manner. In other words, the passion to make a difference can lead to an overly directive approach to getting others to change their behavior. However, an indirect or nondirective approach to giving advice is usually more effective, especially over the long term. This is a basic tenet of humanistic therapy (Rogers, 1961).

Think about it: How do people respond when told exactly what to do? It certainly depends on who is giving the directive, but the reaction is likely not entirely positive. Top-down directions might be followed, especially if they come from someone with the power to control relevant consequences. But how will respondents feel?

Will they be self-motivated to make a lasting change? They might if they had requested the directions. But if the advice or corrective feedback was unsolicited, the recipients of the direction could feel insulted, embarrassed and even disrespected. It is critical to be nondirective when using interpersonal conversation to affect behavior change. This requires empathic compassion, as discussed later.

Whereas supportive feedback or recognition is directive (i.e., the desired behavior observed is pinpointed and sincere appreciation is delivered), corrective feedback should be nondirective. The objective is to get the individual to accept an observation of less-than-optimal (e.g., at-risk) behavior, then indicate a sincere intention to improve. This is more likely to happen if the observer or coach does not begin the corrective-feedback conversation by specifying the behavior needing correction, then providing direction for change.

Instead, corrective feedback begins with questions designed to learn the perspective of the person observed with regard to both the undesirable behavior and the environmental context that may have influenced that behavior. Often, this person is already aware of the behavior needing improvement and is likely to offer several explanations or excuses. The observer (or coach) should listen attentively to the person observed with an expectation to uncover potential environmental or system factors that facilitated the performance of the unwanted (e.g., at-risk) behavior or inhibited the occurrence of a desirable alternative (e.g., safe) behavior.

If occurrences of the undesired behavior have been documented on a behavioral checklist, the observer should remain nondirective by merely showing these data to the person observed and asking what s/he thinks of the results. "What does this behavioral record mean to you? Have I missed or overlooked something?"

Most people care, but too often people fail to act on their caring. They seemingly lack the courage to take action for the prevention of potential harm to another person.

The objective is to obtain some ownership of the undesirable behavior, even with excuses, along with an indication of personal intention (even commitment) to improve. This is most likely to happen if the observer is not perceived as passing judgment, but rather is viewed as an actively caring mentor interested in facilitating improvement. The following C-words show further how nondirective communication facilitates the achievement of this objective.

### The Courage to Actively Care

Most people care, but too often people fail to act on their caring. They seemingly lack the courage to take action for the prevention of potential harm to another person. All the six sigma, behavioral safety and customer-focus directives will not make a difference unless people have the courage to speak up and act on behalf of a particular performance-improvement process. Indeed, without courage most well-intentioned initiatives become just another flavor of the month.

Courage is not an inherent human trait; it is a temporary disposition or person-state that varies according to the situational context and interpersonal interactions. These are given practical relevance in a realistic novel that illustrates the role of competence and commitment in activating courage (Geller & Veazie, 2017a). However, the authors treat courage as a human characteristic distinct from competence and commitment, two C-words discussed in more detail later.

Individuals with greater competence and commitment than others in a given situation are more likely to demonstrate courage. However, an individual could have substantial competence and commitment in a particular context and not be courageous, as illustrated elsewhere (Geller, 2016b). Nevertheless, one's propensity to show courage under certain circumstances is increased whenever relevant commitment or competence is augmented. These dispositions or person-states are explicated next.

### Commitment

Commitment reflects motivation to perform, and is determined by the extrinsic (extra) and intrinsic (natural) consequences of a task, as well as one's personal interpretation of those consequences.

When people sign their name to a petition or pledge card, they are making a commitment to behave in a certain way. Later, they behave in this way to be consistent with their commitment. Consistency is another important C-word in this context. Safety professionals can use the consistency principle to increase safety-related behavior. After a discussion about a particular work procedure, for example, ask the participants to make a commitment to perform a relevant safe behavior within this work process. What kind of commitment should be requested?

A behavior-based commitment is most effective (or influential) when it is public, effortful and perceived as voluntary or not coerced. Thus, it is more beneficial to have employees make a public rather than a private commitment to perform a certain safe behavior. And, it is better to have them sign their name to a promise card (Geller, 2016b) or on a public-declaration display rather than to have them merely raise their hand. In addition, it is important that those pledging to perform a particular behavior believe they made the commitment voluntarily, with at least some personal choice.

The reality might be that a decision to make a public commitment is dramatically influenced by external factors such as a compassionate appeal and peer pressure. However, if people write an internal script (i.e., self-talk) that they had some choice, the consistency principle is still likely to be activated by the commitment process. Thus, the presenter of a commitment strategy must realize the influence of personal choice and make statements that allow participants to believe the commitment is not coerced and is essentially their decision.

Behavioral scientists have revealed a powerful application of commitment to motivate the occurrence of safety-related behavior (Aranson, 1999): Ask people to commit publicly to perform a particular behavior for safety. Then ask these folks to think of times when their behavior has been inconsistent with their current commitment. This commitment-based intervention stirs feelings of being hypocritical and thereby enhances occurrences of the desired behavior.

Simply put, commitment develops from recognizing the positive consequences gained and the negative consequences avoided when applying one's skills. Whereas people perform many tasks for expected soon, certain and positive consequences, they use self-talk to avoid impulsive (e.g., at-risk) behavior and to work for long-term (e.g., safety-related) goals. Such self-talk reflects self-motivation, which is another determinant of commitment. Let's consider the three C-words that influence self-motivation and in turn enhance both commitment and courage.

## **The Psychology of Self-Motivation**

At times, people need an incentive/reward contingency to keep them motivated. Psychologists call these extrinsic motivators, and managers and teachers use them (e.g., wages, grades) to keep employees and students on track, respectively. But sometimes people develop self-motivation within the context of an external accountability system. In other words, it is possible to establish conditions that facilitate self-accountability and self-motivation. Let's consider ways to make this happen.

Deci and Ryan (1995) affirm we have three basic psychological needs and when these needs are satisfied we are self-motivated. Specifically, self-motivation is supported by conditions that facilitate fulfillment of our needs for autonomy (or choice), competence and relatedness (or community). According to Deci and Flaste (1995), "Self-motivation, rather than external (or extrinsic) motivation, is at the heart of creativity, responsibility, healthy behavior and lasting change" (p. 66).

### **Choice**

In this context, choice (or autonomy) is the condition or quality of being self-governing or having personal control, a person-state or mind-set related to one's propensity to actively care for the safety, health and well-being of others (Geller, 2016d). Autonomous behavior is self-initiated, self-endorsed and authentic. It reflects one's true values and intentions. Geller and Veazie (2017b) refer to this attribute as choice, and research shows that people are more self-motivated (or self-directed) when they have opportunities to choose among action alternatives (Geller, 2016d).

The language used in interpersonal communication (e.g., compliance vs. commitment, mandate vs. expectation, requirement vs. opportunity) affects this disposition, as well as the contribution of participants in selecting safety-related goals and procedures for achieving an injury-free workplace (Geller, 2016a).

### **Competence**

Chance (2008) says, "People are not successful because they are motivated; they are motivated because they are successful" (p. 95). This provocative statement reflects the powerful role of perceived competence (or self-efficacy) in motivating people to do the right thing for safety

when no one is watching. Much behavioral science research has demonstrated that people become more self-motivated when they feel competent at performing worthwhile work (Deci, 1975; Deci & Flaste, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1995). Genuine behavior-based praise for a job well done can make that happen. Such recognition is considered a now-that reward ("Now that you have shown such competence, you deserve this positive recognition"), compared to an if-then incentive/reward ("If you do this behavior, you will receive this positive consequence") (Geller, 2016d).

Several researchers of human motivation have proposed that people naturally enjoy being able to solve problems and successfully complete worthwhile tasks (White, 1959). In their view, people are self-motivated to learn, explore possibilities, understand what is going on and participate in achieving worthwhile goals. The label for this fundamental human motive is competence. In the words of Deci and Flaste (1995), "All of us are striving for mastery, for affirmations of our own competence" (p. 9).

Researchers of self-motivation assume the desire for competence is self-initiating and self-rewarding. Behavior that increases feelings of competence is self-directed and does not need extrinsic or extra reinforcers to keep it going. In this case, feeling competent at doing worthwhile work motivates continued effort. In other words, when people feel more successful or competent at work, their self-motivation increases.

## **Developing Competence**

Behavior-based training increases one's competence at a particular task. This involves: a) describing and demonstrating a desirable behavior or skill set, b) giving specific behavior-based feedback during a participant's role-playing of the target behaviors, c) practicing the desirable behaviors with both corrective and supportive feedback, and d) implementing the new competency in real-world situations. Subsequently, when learners have opportunities to teach their skill set to others, their perception of personal competence increases further, along with their personal commitment.

## **Community**

An interdependent community perspective reflects systems thinking and interdependence beyond the confines of family, social groups and work teams, as explicated by Block (2008) and Peck (1987). In other words, community is an actively-caring-for-people (AC4P) mind-set for humankind in general, an interconnectedness with others that transcends political differences and prejudices, and profoundly respects and appreciates diversity.

## **How to Increase Self-Motivation**

Geller and Veazie (2017b) use the C-words, choice, competence and community, as labels for the three evidence-based dispositions or person-states that determine self-motivation. Interpersonal and environmental conditions that enhance these propensities increase self-motivation. Researchers of human motivation have offered the following 10 guidelines for increasing self-motivation by affecting one or more of the three noted person-states (i.e., C-words). Readers will likely be able to connect these recommendations to policy, procedures or specific interventions they could implement to make these guidelines a reality in their work, educational or home culture.

1) Provide a rationale for behavior that is not naturally reinforcing. Thus, rules and regulations should be accompanied with a meaningful explanation.

2) Show empathy by acknowledging that people may not want to do what they are being asked to do. For example, admit that the required safe behaviors are relatively inconvenient and uncomfortable, but given the reasonable rationale provided, the potential benefits are worth the personal response cost.

3) Use language that suggests minimal external pressure. When leaders activate the initiation of an action plan with expectations rather than mandates, they enable feelings of personal control or choice. For example, the common phrase “Click it or ticket” reduces autonomy, whereas the slogan “Please buckle up, I care” implies personal authenticity and interpersonal relatedness.

4) Provide opportunities for choice. The term *participative management* implies that employees have choice throughout the planning, execution and evaluation of their jobs. Deci and Flaste (1995) concede that some management decisions cannot include choice from subordinates and maintain that “people adapt to being controlled and act as if they don’t want the very thing that is integral to their nature—namely, the opportunity to be autonomous” (p. 148).

5) Set autonomy-supportive limits. Even safety regulations can be autonomy-supportive. In other words, it is often possible to incorporate some choice within some safety rules. The author once consulted with a company that required all employees to wear safety glasses and steel-toe shoes all day, regardless of their work area or assignment. The rationale for this all-inclusive gate-to-gate PPE regulation was that it eliminated the possibility of misplacing or forgetting to use PPE.

Many employees objected vociferously, complaining that they were being treated like children. The administrative staff was particularly put off by this mandate because their work site never called for PPE use. The company mitigated the employee outrage by purchasing two pairs of comfortable safety shoes and glasses per each of the 600 employees. Thus, the culture accepted this lack of autonomy, while the company endured significant financial and implementation costs. Substantial self-motivation among the workers was also likely sacrificed.

6) Customize individualized performance goals with individuals and teams. The most effective goals are SMARTS, as noted. When participants are involved in selecting a SMARTS goal, they are more likely to be self-motivated to achieve that goal.

7) Administer now-that rewards and recognition programs to express appreciation for demonstrations of competence but limit the use of if-then incentive/reward programs (Geller, 2016d).

8) Communicate to boost a sense of competence and correct with empathic coaching. When offering corrective feedback, allow the person to make excuses and do not argue about these. Be nondirective and emphasize the positive (e.g., safe behavior) over the negative (e.g., at-risk behavior).

9) To increase a sense of community, increase team-building discussions, group goal-setting and feedback sessions, as well as group celebrations for both process and outcome achievements.

10) Implement strategies for increasing interpersonal trust throughout the workplace. The following C-words capture the essence of building AC4P trust and a community perspective: communication, caring, candor, consistency, commitment, consensus and character (Geller, 2002).

## A Paradigm Shift

This discussion of self-motivation as enhanced by perceptions of choice, competence and community calls for a paradigm shift: a change in perspective about AC4P behavior. Instead of calling on guilt or sacrifice to get people involved in procedures for improving the health, welfare or safety of others, it should be assumed that people are naturally self-motivated to help others.

Plus, people dislike feeling incompetent or helpless. They want to learn, discover, become more proficient at worthwhile tasks. People want opportunities to ask questions, study pertinent material, work with people who know more than they, and receive feedback that can increase their competence and subsequent self-motivation.

Thus, AC4P behavior for OSH is not a thankless job requiring self-sacrifice or a special degree of altruism. Participation in an AC4P process provides opportunities to satisfy two basic human needs: the need for relatedness and competence (Deci, 1975; Deci & Flaste, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1995). The effective application of the C-words defined and illustrated here will certainly improve the quality of an AC4P brother’s/sister’s keeper process, as well as cultivate feelings of self-motivated commitment to achieve an injury-free workplace.

## Compassion

Compassion follows from empathy (Covey, 1989). In other words, compassion (the inclination to give aid or support) requires empathy (the identification with and understanding of other’s situations, feelings and motives). So, let’s understand the meaning of empathy and consider how to acquire it.

Whether the topic is empathic listening, empathic leadership or empathic performance appraisals and corrective action, the focus is on the other person’s feelings, needs or perceptions. Starting with this viewpoint makes every other management strategy more effective. It is more than the Golden Rule (treat others as you would like to be treated); it is the Platinum Rule, “Treat others as they want to be treated” (Alessandra & O’Connor, 1998). We sympathize when we express concern or understanding for another individual’s situation, but we empathize when we identify with another person’s situation and realize what it is like to be in the other person’s shoes.

## The Compassionate Coach

Compassionate coaching reflects the highest level of interpersonal AC4P behavior and it can do wonders to facilitate mutual learning and behavioral improvement. It starts with empathy—sincere understanding and appreciation for other people’s circumstances—and leads to optimal AC4P behavior. For example, directives based on an empathic diagnosis of the situation are most effective.

Compassionate conversations are not efficient, but they are effective. They require patience. It takes time to learn, mostly through questioning and listening, what it is like to be in the other person’s situation. Then the objective shifts to designing an action plan that fits the circumstances. This requires mutual understanding, which is easier said than done. But the payoff can be great.

When we show more empathy and compassion in our conversations, we have more impact on improving attitude and behavior. When we show others through empathic listening that we truly understand their position, we maximize the chance that our compassionate AC4P support will be effective.

## Achieving Empathic Compassion

Let’s consider some basic strategies for achieving an empathic level of awareness and appreciation, leading to compassionate AC4P behavior:

- Take off your blinders. Minimize the reactive filters that bias interpersonal conversations. These are barriers to listening with empathy to another person and finding the best plan for your compassion.

- Ask more questions. This is how you truly understand the other person’s position, diagnose the problem and design an optimal action plan.

- Listen for more than words. Not only must we hear every word in a conversation, we must be sensitive to personal feelings, passion and commitment. This comes across as much in body language and manner of expression as in the words themselves. For example, listen for more than words when workers give an evaluation of their at-risk behavior and offer a recommendation

for self-improvement. Listen for feelings or emotions that reflect concern for errors and commitment to improve.

- Use your imagination. When observing another person's work practices, try to view the situation from that individual's perspective. When listening to someone explain why s/he took a risk or became injured, try to see yourself in the same predicament. Imagine what defense mechanisms you might use to protect your ego or self-esteem. This will activate your compassion to improve the situation.

- Weigh alternatives. When considering action plans for improvement, try to view various alternatives by putting yourself in the same steel-toe shoes of the other person. Use your empathy to fuel compassion and AC4P behavior.

Bottom line: Approach AC4P safety conversations with an empathic mind-set. Learn what motivates someone to risk his/her safety; put yourself in the other person's place. From that understanding, derive an action plan you would be willing to follow. You do this by bringing empathy to your safety conversations. With more empathy, more compassion is energized and more beneficial impact results from an AC4P plan to achieve and maintain an injury-free workplace.

## Conclusion

The seven Cs reflect humanistic behaviorism, a strategic integration of applied behavioral science and select principles from humanism, to make behavior-improvement techniques accepted, owned and applied effectively on a large scale and over the long term. Each C-word reflects evidence-based techniques for addressing the human dynamics of OSH and sustaining an injury-free work culture.

As shown in Figure 1 (p. 45), which depicts the seven Cs for safety success discussed in this article, communication is the focal point, influencing each of the other C-words. Most connections are given as bidirectional, with communication affected by the other Cs. It is intuitive, of course, that the style and content of communication is determined by the presenter's courage, compassion and commitment. Communication directly affects an individual's perception of choice, competence and community, and these Cs determine a person's self-motivation. In turn, self-motivation fuels courage and commitment.

Let's conclude with a practical suggestion for engaging workers in proactive injury prevention that illustrates applications of the safety C's. With courage and compassion, ask a group of wage workers or line operators to write down their prediction of where the next workplace injury or close call will occur, and to recommend a prevention intervention. Then ask the participants to explain why they made that prediction and chose those prevention suggestions for injury prevention. As you listen with empathy, you may be surprised by the consistency among the participants' reports, including a need for compassionate corrective action.

A variety of injury predictions in diverse situations can be disconcerting, perhaps challenging the perceived competence of the company safety professionals or the commitment of management to put safety above production priorities. Several suggestions will likely imply realistic possibilities for injury prevention and implicate the need for action planning and follow-up communication.

One thing is certain. This exercise will demonstrate the value of including conversations with wage workers in diagnosing safety-related issues and soliciting ways to remove an injury waiting to happen. Plus, when these employees see safety-related change follow from their suggestions, they will become more self-motivated and committed to participating in AC4P communication about proactive improvements in the safety of their workplace. They have chosen to help cultivate a brother's/sister's keeper workplace. **PSJ**

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