

Building a positive organizational culture in healthcare

After this huddle, staff should be able to:

- **Identify** specific behaviours and characteristics that contribute to a positive or negative organizational culture.
- **Explain** how our team's culture influences psychological safety, teamwork, and resident or client safety.
- **Recall** Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat.

How to run the safety huddle

As the huddle leader, do the following:

- Before the huddle, review the huddle content and huddle leader notes.
- Have resources ready, such as policies, employee assistance programs, or SafeCare BC resources.
- Choose a scenario that fits your workplace and read it aloud.
- Use the guiding questions to lead the discussion.
- Use huddle leader notes as support while leading the discussion.
- Keep the discussion short to about 5-10 minutes.



Definitions

Organizational culture consists of the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that shape how we work together. It includes our leadership styles, communication patterns, and the overall workplace environment. A positive culture creates a safe, respectful, and high-performing space that benefits both staff and the people we care for.

Scenario for long-term care

Arjan, a care aide at Willow Creek Care Home, has noticed a pattern in how Mrs. Yamamoto's care is scheduled — and he has an idea for a small change to the timing of her daily routine that could make things calmer and easier for her. But he's hesitant to bring it up.

In a previous team meeting, he watched a colleague share a suggestion only to be brushed off and spoken to dismissively by a supervisor in front of everyone. Arjan doesn't want the same thing to happen to him. He's standing at the nursing station during shift change, looking at the communication log, and weighing whether to say something or let it go.

Guiding questions for long-term care

- How does the fear of being dismissed impact Arjan's willingness to contribute ideas?
- What behaviours would show Arjan that his team has a positive, supportive culture?
- How could the team leader foster a culture where Arjan feels safe to address this care discrepancy openly?

Facilitation tip: Watch for participants who seem hesitant to speak up or suggest changes. Remind them that a positive culture allows for respectful disagreement and open communication.

Scenario for home care

Fatima is a community health worker visiting Mr. Benson. She notices that his mobility has declined and that the transfer belt feels unsafe. Fatima wants to call her supervisor to request a new assessment, but she hesitates, fearing it will be seen as a failure to handle the situation independently.

In the past, she has seen colleagues excluded from conversations when they asked for help. This lack of support creates unnecessary stress and puts Fatima and Mr. Benson at greater risk of injury. Now, Fatima is in Mr. Benson's home, preparing for the transfer. She feels her heart racing as she weighs the risk of an injury against the risk of being judged by her team. She reaches for her phone.

Guiding questions for home care

- What characteristics of her organization's culture make Fatima feel unsupported in this situation?
- How can we create a culture where staff feel comfortable asking for help without fear of judgment?
- What are the potential consequences for client safety when a worker feels they cannot communicate concerns?

Facilitation tip: If the discussion shifts to technical "how-to" for transfers, redirect by asking: "What workplace factors support or hinder Fatima's ability to communicate her safety concerns?"

Huddle leader notes

1. Create a safe space:
 - Listen, respect all views, and be mindful of others' challenges.
 - Guide the discussion to focus on what participants can control.
 - Move the conversation from complaints to solutions, strengths, and helpful actions.
 - Invite anyone with specific concerns to talk with you after the huddle.
2. Key discussion points: Use the objectives and key discussion points below to guide the huddle if needed.
 - **Culture and safety:** A strong culture fosters engagement and productivity, while a toxic culture leads to dissatisfaction and high turnover.
 - **Civility vs. incivility:** Small, rude behaviours (incivility) compromise the social norms of mutual respect.
 - **Team support:** In a positive culture, colleagues actively listen and explore ideas, even if those ideas aren't ultimately adopted.

Additional resources

SafeCare BC | [Civility Matters toolkit](#)

SafeCare BC | [The incivility epidemic: Why workplace rudeness is on the rise and what we can do about it \(article\)](#)

SafeCare BC | [Creating a culture of respect: A leader's guide to preventing workplace incivility \(CEO blog\)](#)

SafeCare BC | [Incivility vs. bullying \(safety huddle\)](#)

SafeCare BC | [From burnout to balance: Trauma-informed culture change \(webinar\)](#)

SafeCare BC | [The culture effect: Safety minute \(video\)](#)

SafeCare BC | [Collective well-being](#)

WorkSafeBC | [Towards a respectful workplace handbook](#)

Workplace Strategies for Mental Health | [Putting organizational culture on the agenda](#)

Workplace Strategies for Mental Health | [Evidence-based actions for organizational culture](#)



Safety Huddle | Building a positive organizational culture

Huddle leader: _____

Date: _____

Attendance:

Name:

Initial

Notes