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The Role of Organizational Climate in Creating a Safe and Healthy Work Environment

Bob Sinclair, Department of Psychology

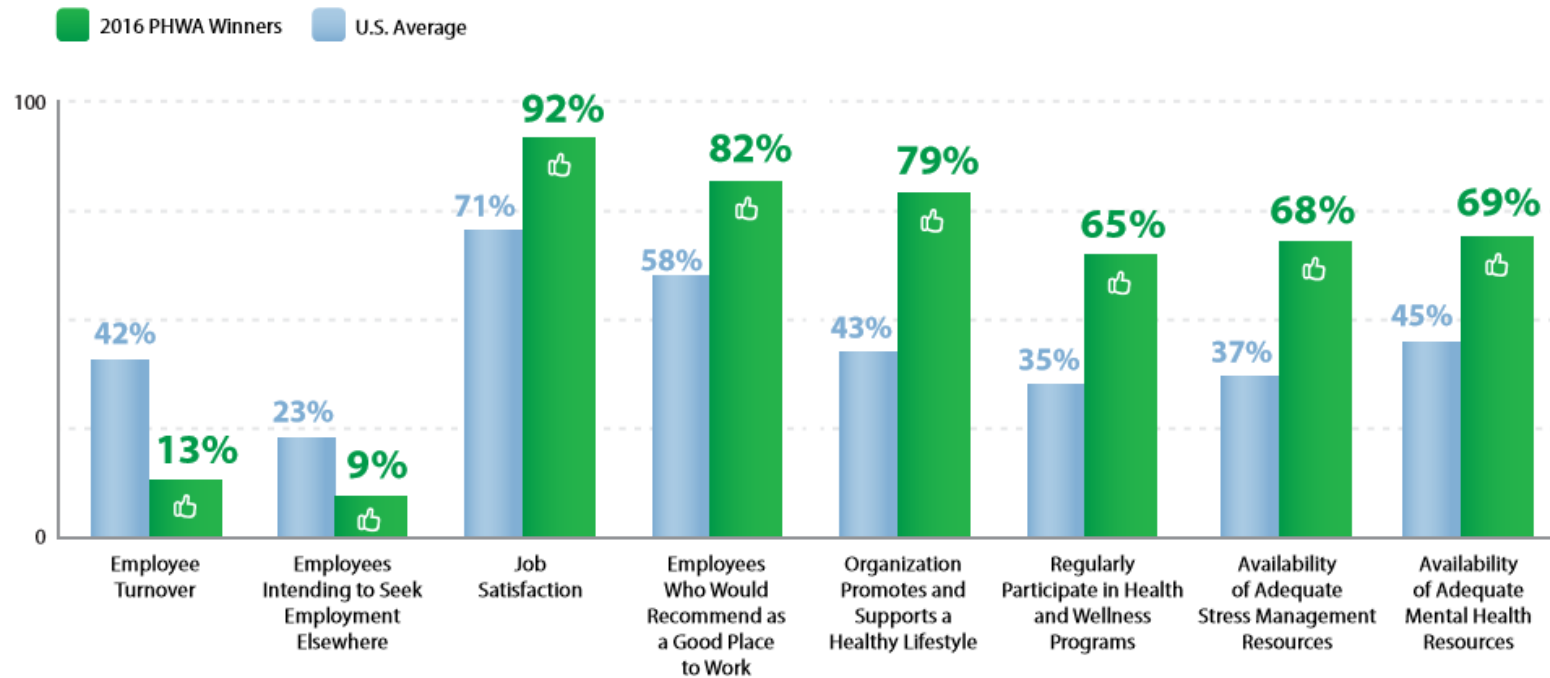
Goals for today

Discuss IO Psych Perspective on Organizational Climate

Explain how to Leverage Organizational Climate for occupational health

Organizational Climate

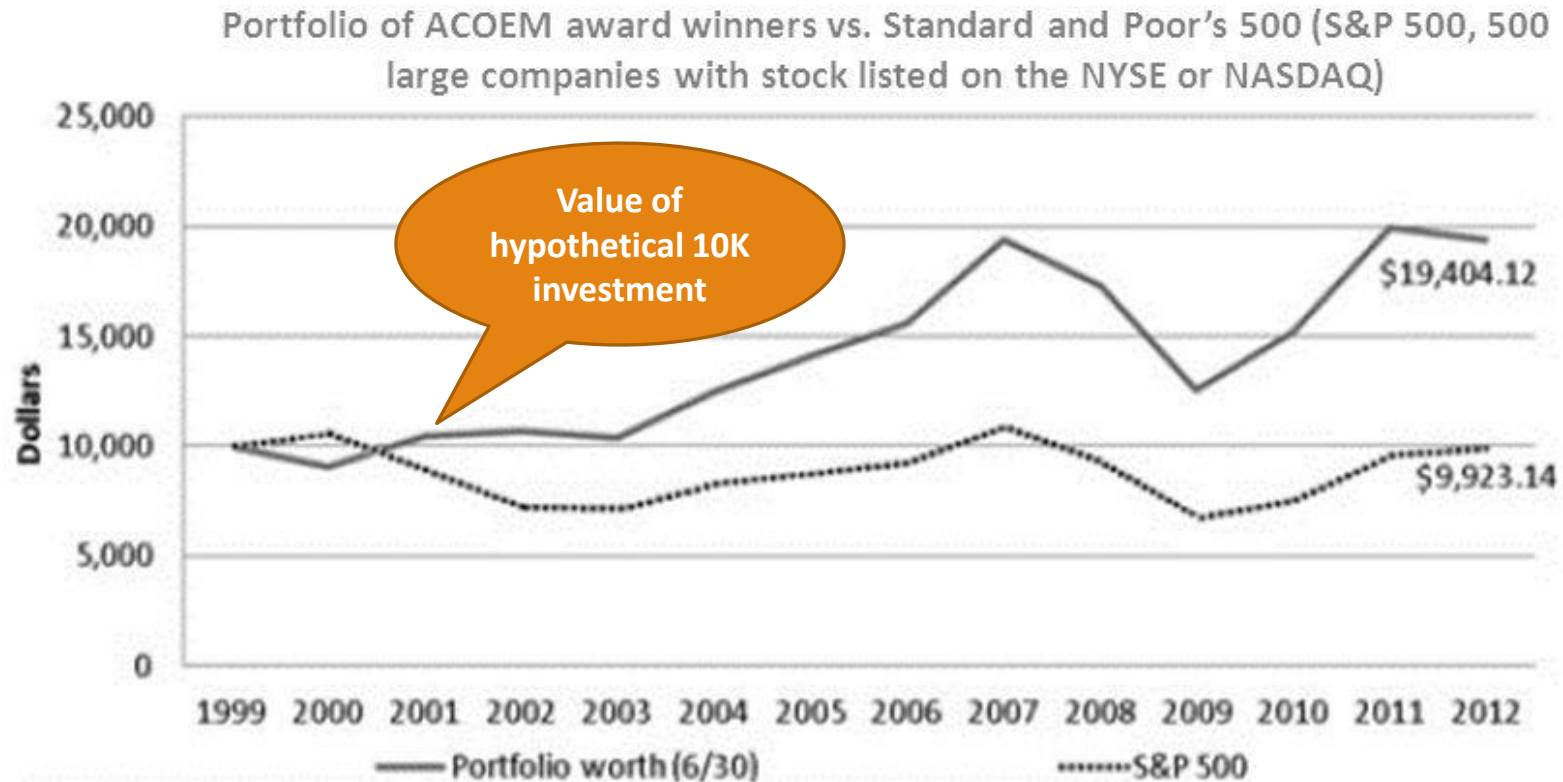
Data Reveal the Benefits of Psychologically Healthy Workplaces



Sources: American Psychological Association (APA), Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program; APA's 2015 Work and Well-Being Survey; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015 Total Separation (with preliminary data for December).

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Effective Workplace Health Programs Show Solid Financial Returns to Investors



The portfolio of companies that won awards for nurturing a “Culture of Health” outperformed the market over a 13 year period

Deepwater Horizon

April 2010 – explosion

**Largest marine oil spill in
history – 210M Gallons**

**11 workers missing; 17
injured**



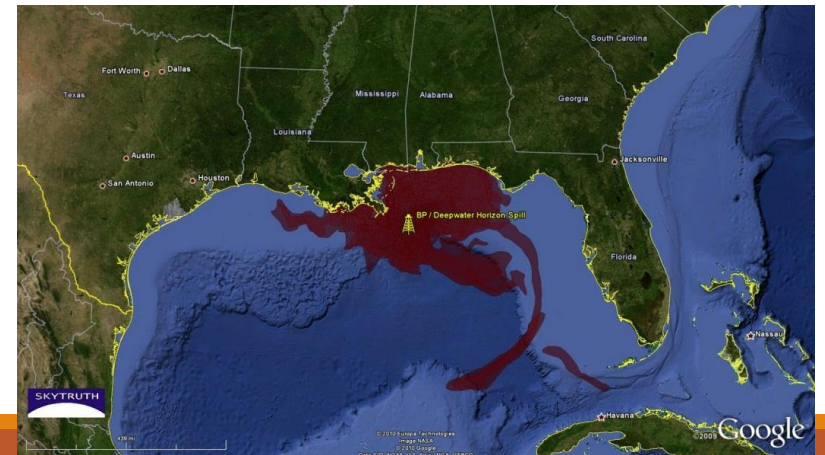
Deepwater Horizon

British Petroleum charged with 11 counts of manslaughter.

\$60+ Billion in fines, settlements, and other payments.

Thousands sickened.

Widespread natural & economic devastation.



BP & Deepwater Horizon

WASHINGTON — A confidential survey of workers on the Deepwater Horizon in the weeks before the oil rig exploded showed that **many of them were concerned about safety practices and feared reprisals if they reported mistakes or other problems.**

- “I’m petrified of dropping anything from heights not because I’m afraid of hurting anyone (the area is barriered off), but because **I’m afraid of getting fired,**” one worker wrote.

Deepwater Horizon Investigation

- *Some workers also voiced concerns about poor equipment reliability, “which they believed was as a result of **drilling priorities taking precedence over planned maintenance,**”*
- Many **key components** — including the blowout preventer rams and failsafe valves — **had not been fully inspected** since 2000, even though guidelines require inspection every three to five years.

Deepwater Horizon Investigation

- Investigators also said “nearly everyone” among the workers they interviewed believed that Transocean’s **system for tracking health and safety issues on the rig was “counter productive.”**
- ***workers entered fake data to try to circumvent the system, known as See, Think, Act, Reinforce, Track — or Start. As a result, the company’s perception of safety on the rig was distorted, the report concluded***

Takeaways from Deepwater Horizon

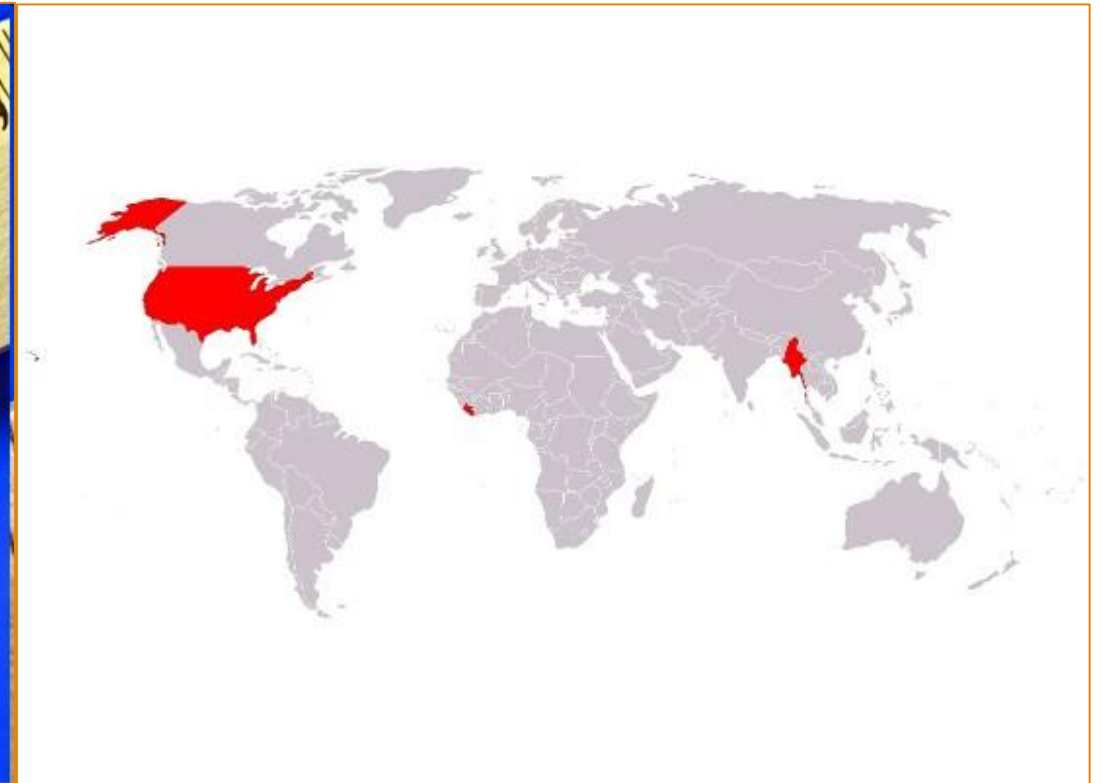
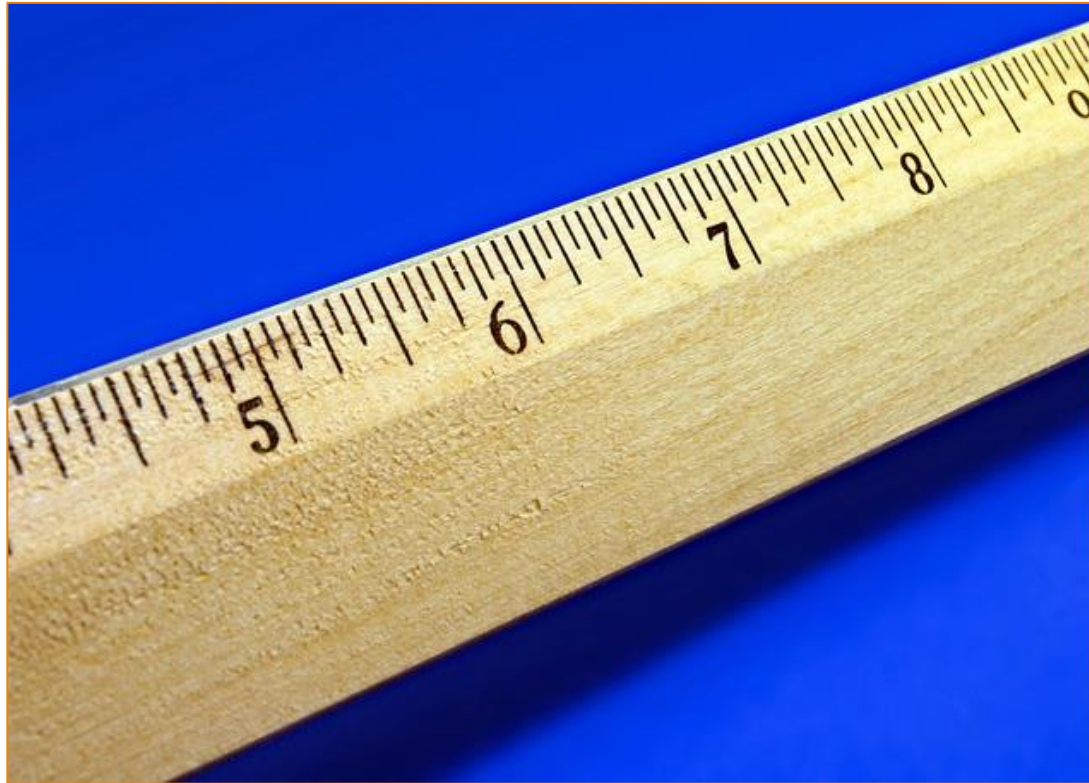
Organizational policies, procedures, and practices have behavioral implications.

Employees' infer company priorities from policies, procedures, and practices.

Employees' perceptions may not match stated intentions of the organization.



Why does the United States use the English measurement system?



Countries that don't use the metric system

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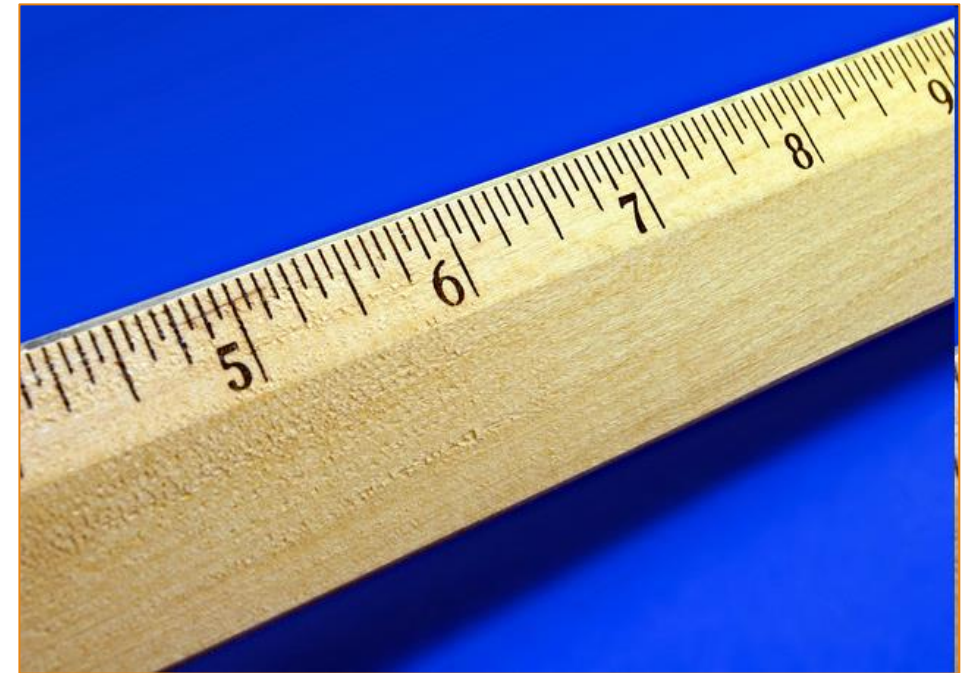
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Because Freedom...



Defining Organizational Culture

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to think, perceive, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1985).

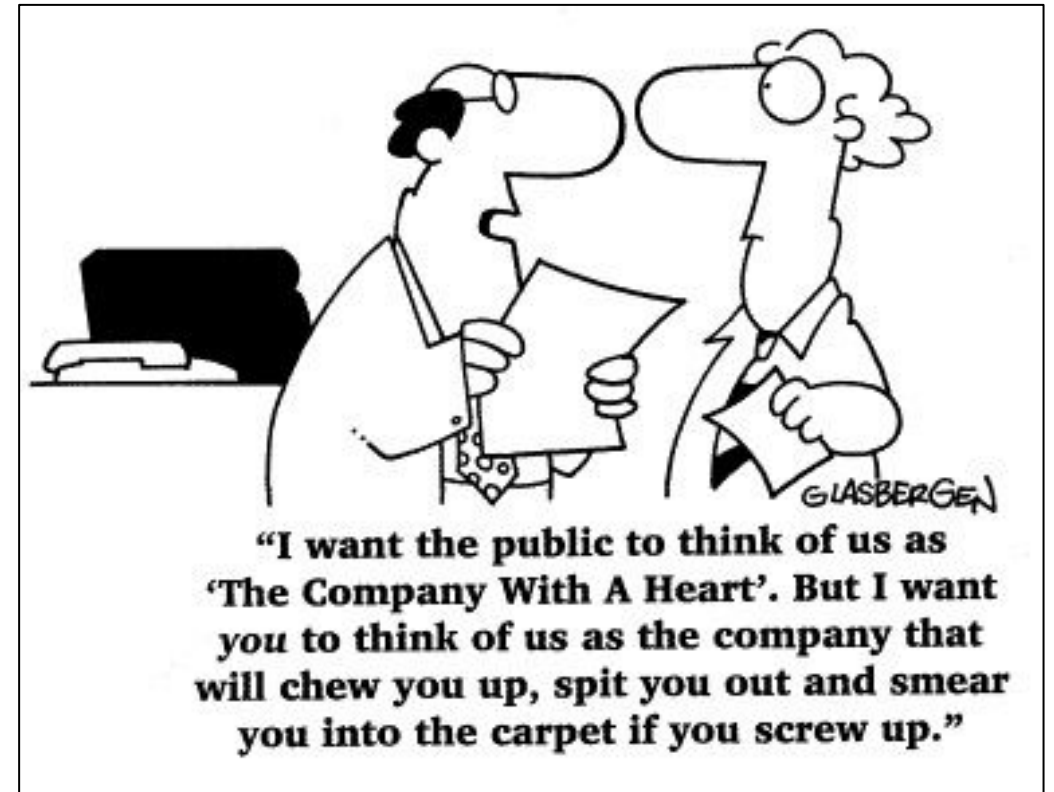


Organizational climate reflects employee perceptions about organizational culture.

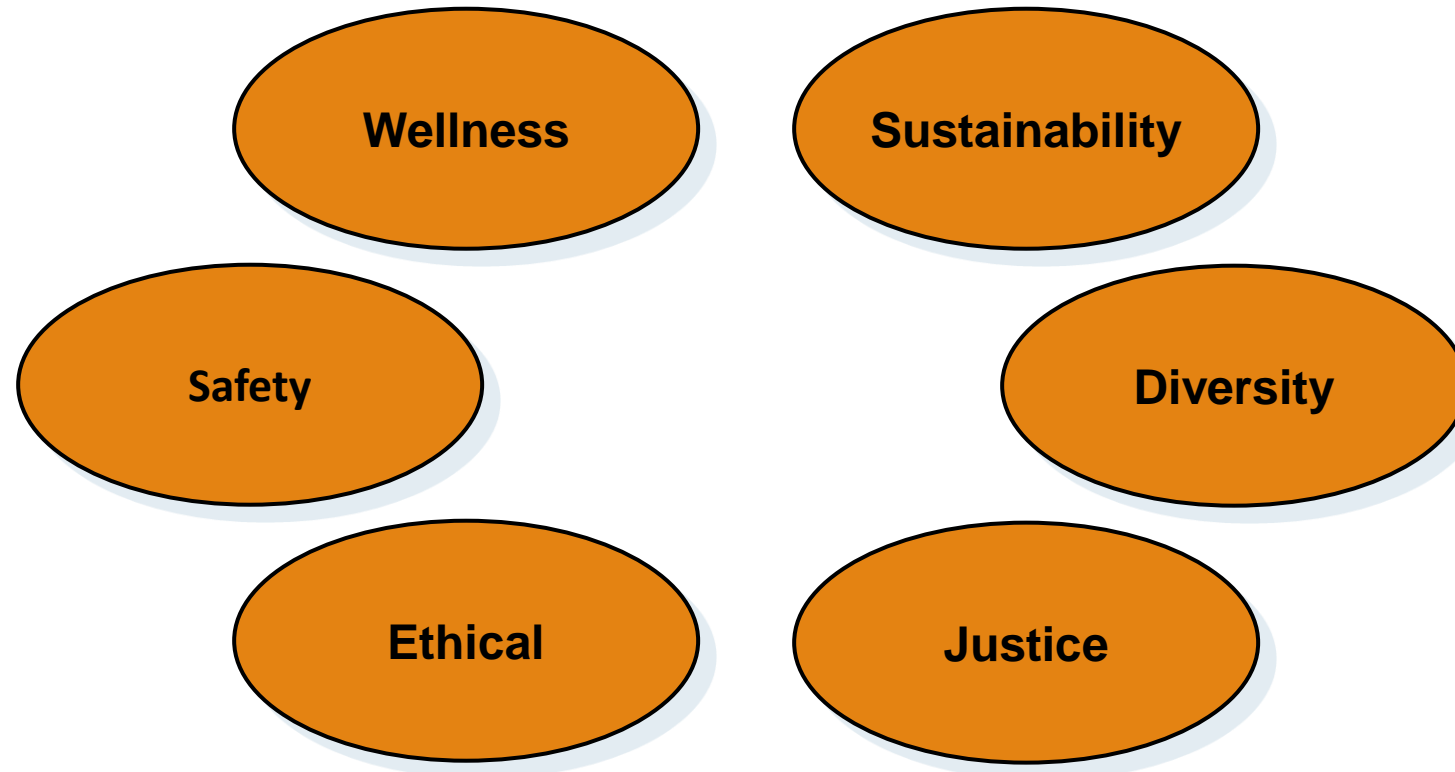


Defining Organizational Climate

Organizational climate is made up of shared perceptions among employees concerning the procedures, practices and kinds of behaviors that get rewarded and supported with regard to a specific strategic focus (Schneider, 1990).



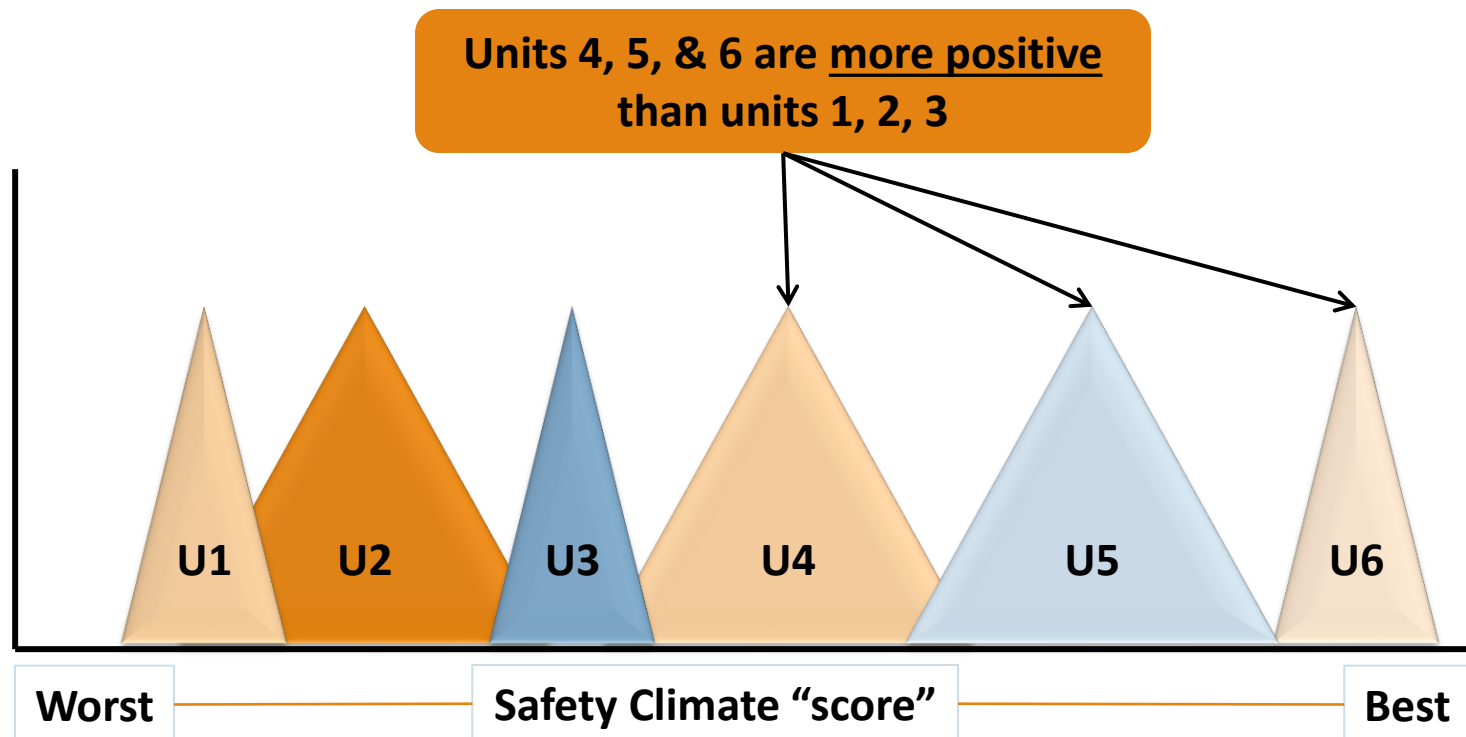
Multiple health-related climate constructs (each with a different strategic focus)



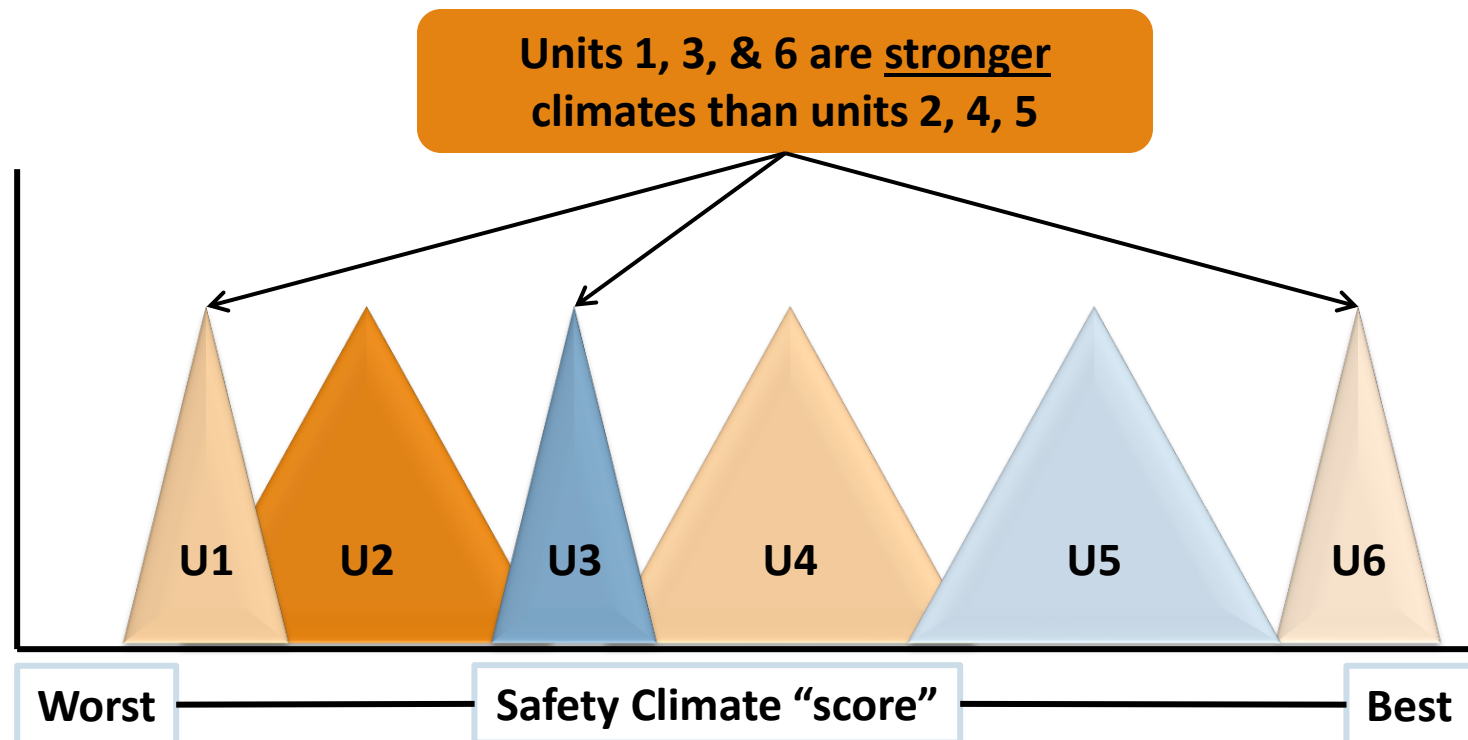
Climate reflects shared perceptions of culture (norms, values, etc.).

		<u>Measurement Level</u>	
		<i>Group Level</i>	<i>Person Level</i>
<u>Inference Level</u>	<i>Group Level</i>	<p><u>Culture</u></p> <p><i>Structural</i> features of work environment</p>	<p><u>Climate</u></p> <p><i>Shared</i> perceptions of work environment</p>
	<i>Person Level</i>	<p>{Not really used in org research}</p>	<p><u>Psychological Climate</u></p> <p><i>Individual</i> perceptions of work environment</p>

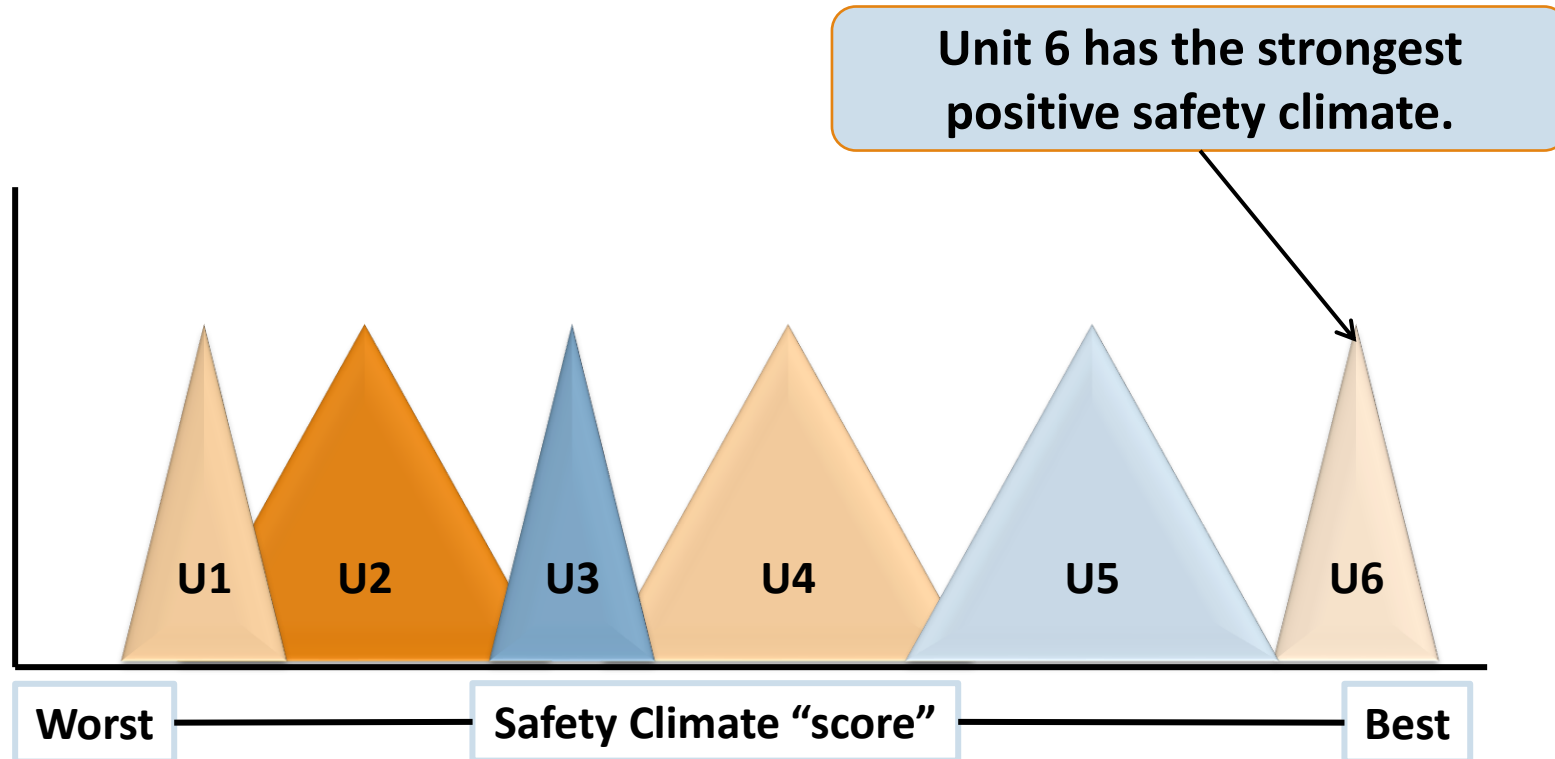
Positive climate implies higher relative priority of safety/health/well-being.



Level of within-unit variability reflects climate strength (consensus).



The goal: Create a strong positive climate (e.g., for employee safety).



Ten science-based suggestions about how to promote a strong positive healthy workplace climate.

#1 Understand what motivates people

SMART Goals (specific, measurable, attainable, etc.)

Fair, Respectful, Supportive Treatment

Predictability & Control

Participation/Voice

Opportunities for connections with others

#2 Remember that what managers say they do may not match what employees say.

Supervisor inquires about and provides assistance with associates' work and non-work issues.

- **Supervisors 97%** **Associates 74%**

Supervisor is good role model for work and non-work balance.

- **Supervisor 94%** **Associates 80%**

Can depend on supervisor to help with scheduling conflicts.

- **Supervisors 99%** **Associates 82%**

Supervisors work with associates to creatively solve conflicts.

- **Supervisors 99%** **Associates 76%**

#3 Align HRM practices with intended goals.

Selection

On-Boarding

Compensation

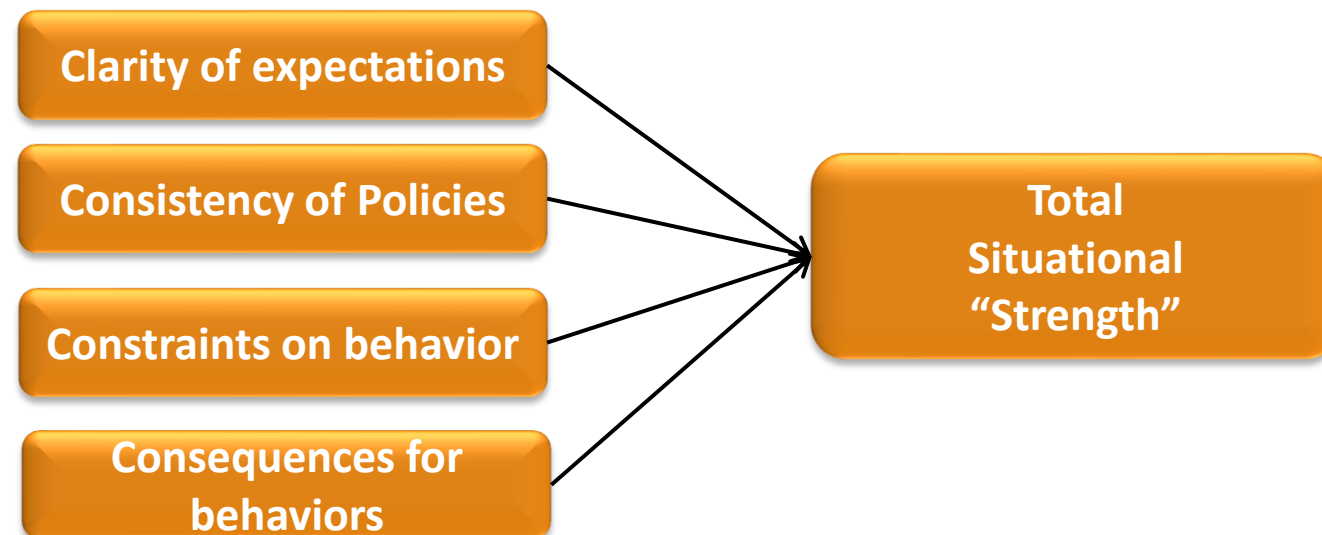
Performance Management

Examples of incentive issues for wellness programs

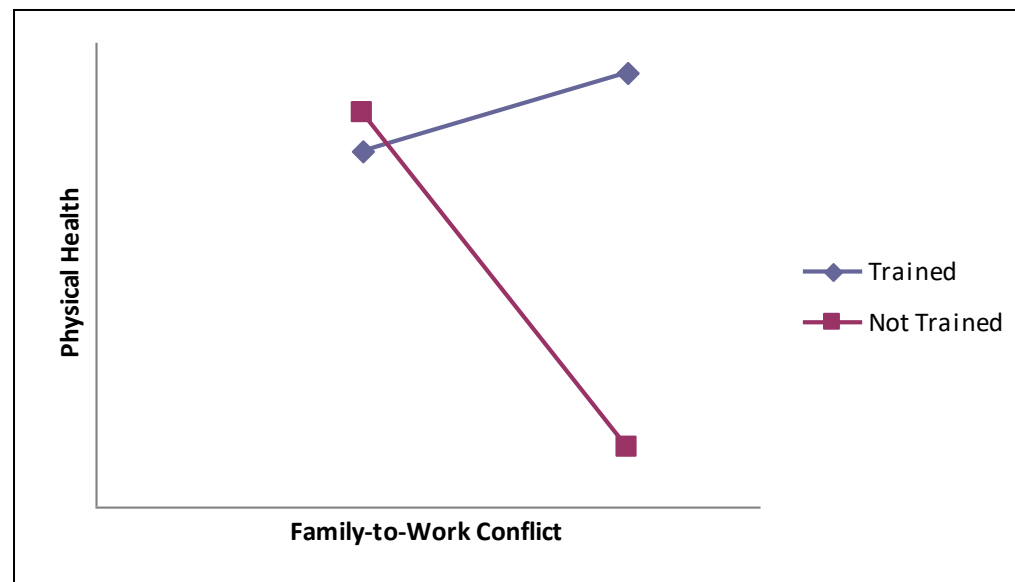
- Self-confidence
- Carrots versus sticks
- Pay at risk
- Team versus individual incentives

#4 Create strong situations for safety, health, and wellness.

Messages about the desirability of safety, health, and wellness behaviors.



#5 Recognize the importance of supportive leadership.



Family Supportive Supervisor Training benefits for retail employees

Family Supportive Supervisors Provide:

- Emotional support
- Problem solving
- Role Modeling
- Creative Solutions

#6 Foster Employee Participation in Occupational Health Initiatives.



New design for plant potting station

www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2001-111/

Goals:

- Provides control/voice
- Uses employee perspective
- Facilitates change

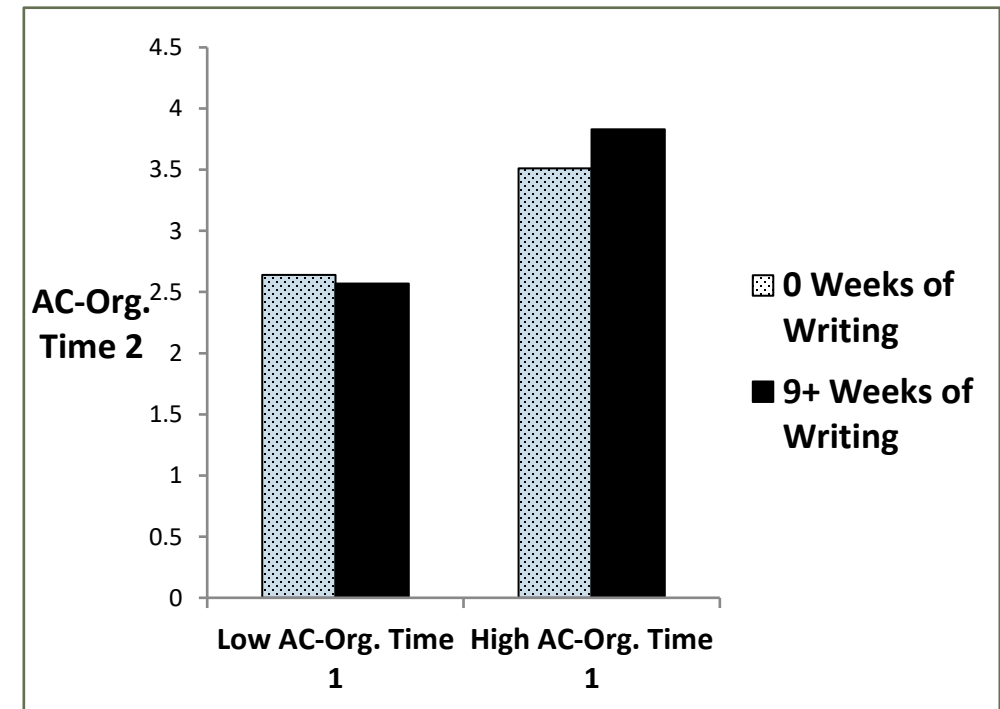
Example:

- Participatory Ergonomics*

#7: Expect individual differences in how people react to interventions.

Writing about work experiences affects organizational commitment more strongly for nurses more committed at the outset.

Healthy people like health promotion programs.



AC-Org = Organizational Commitment

#8 Overcome barriers to culture change.

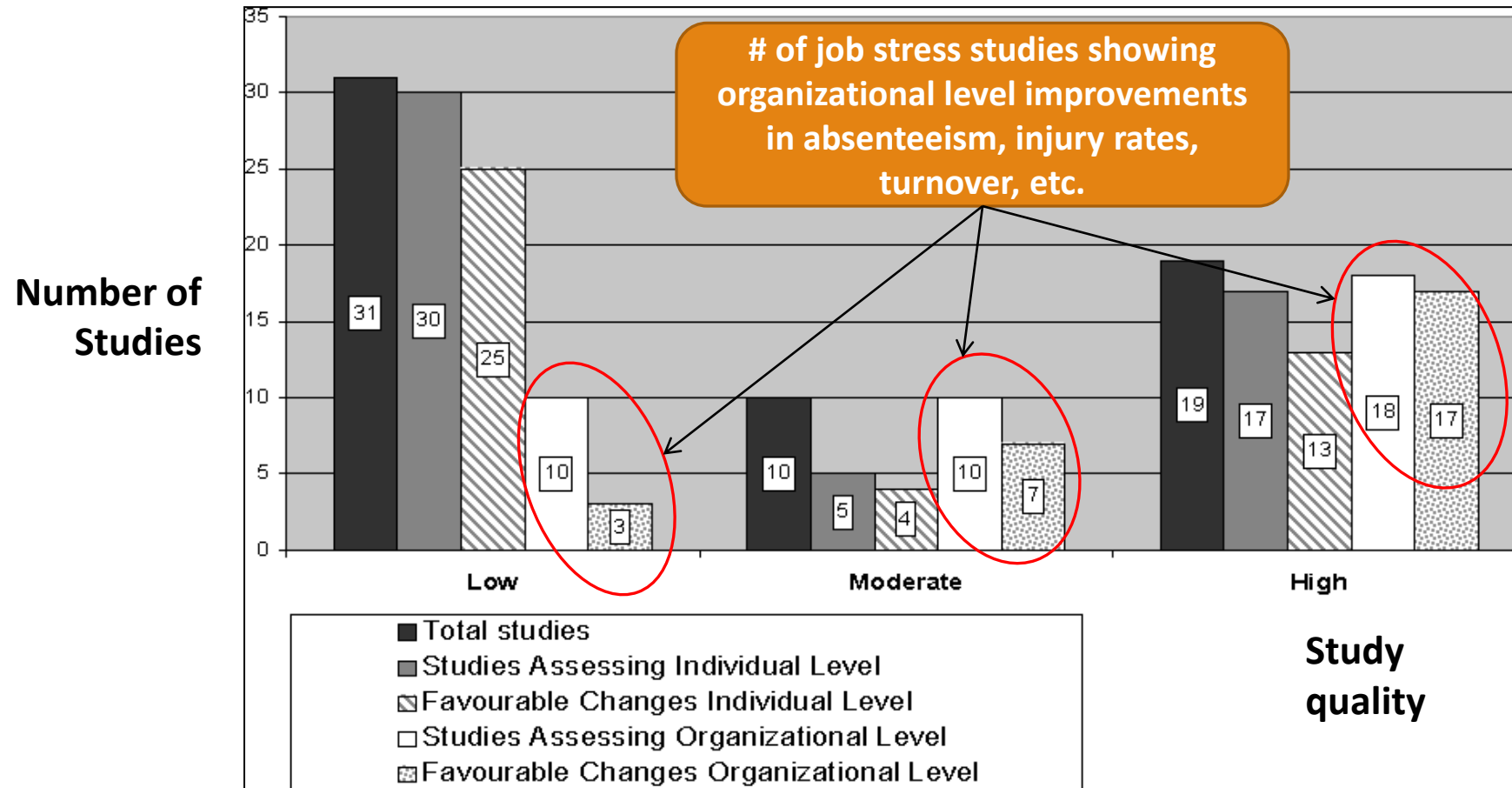
Leaders' leaders to understand organizational history, politics, culture, mission

Failing to communicate the need for change

Disempowered subordinates

Failure to consider all stakeholder perspectives

#9 Realize that high quality interventions lead to better outcomes.



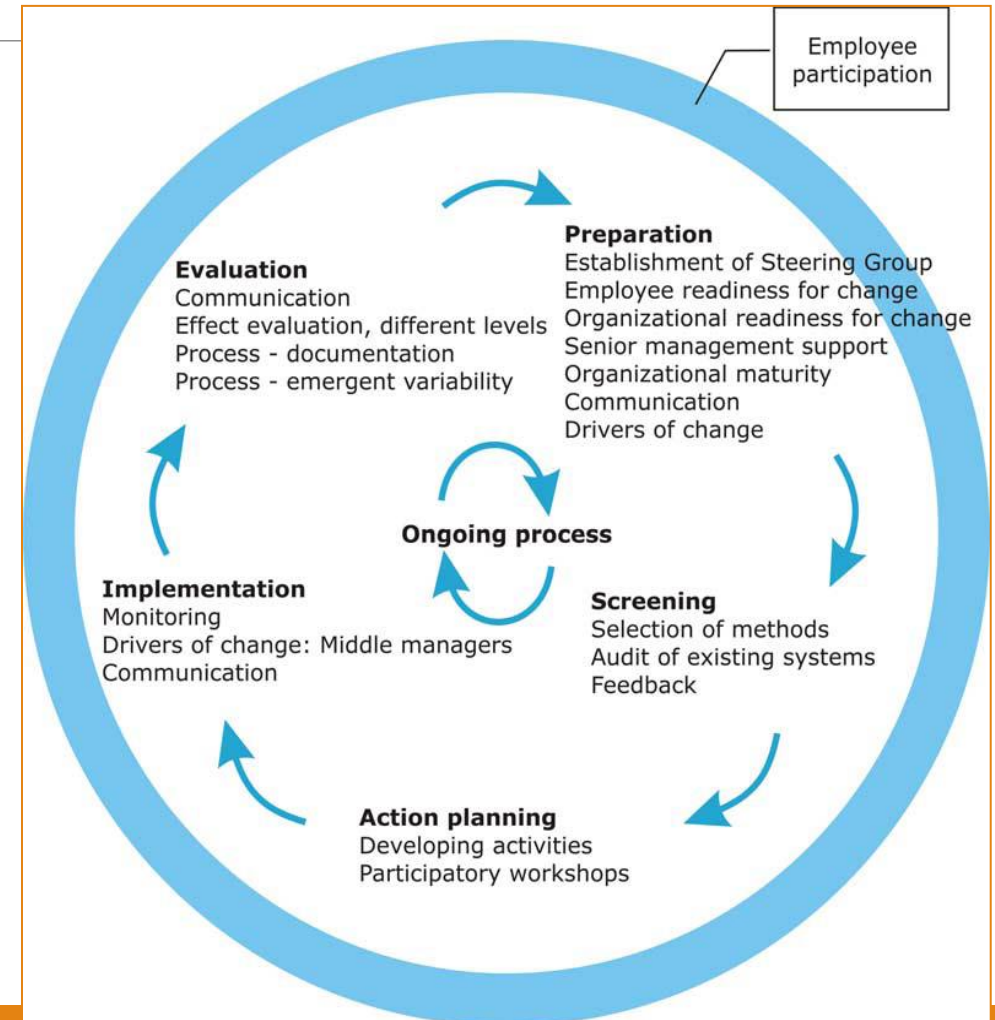
Characteristics of High-Quality Interventions

Prevention focus

Employee participation

Systematic consideration of all phases from planning to implementation

Integrated into existing culture



#10 Look to a future involving increasing emphasis on *Total Worker Health*[™]

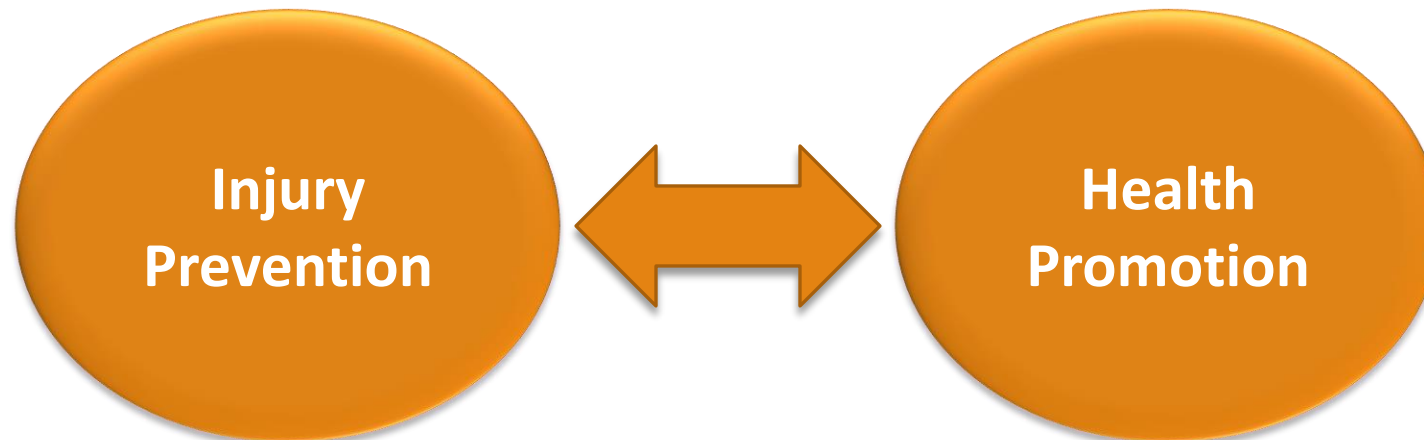
Health risks of asbestos exposure are far greater for smokers.

Obesity is associated with increased risk of physical injuries and longer recovery time.

Stress is associated both with poor health practices (e.g., coping skills) and environmental exposures (e.g., job demands).

Total Worker Health™

Total Worker Health® is defined as policies, programs, and practices that **integrate protection** from work-related safety and health hazards with **promotion** of injury and illness prevention efforts to advance worker well-being.”

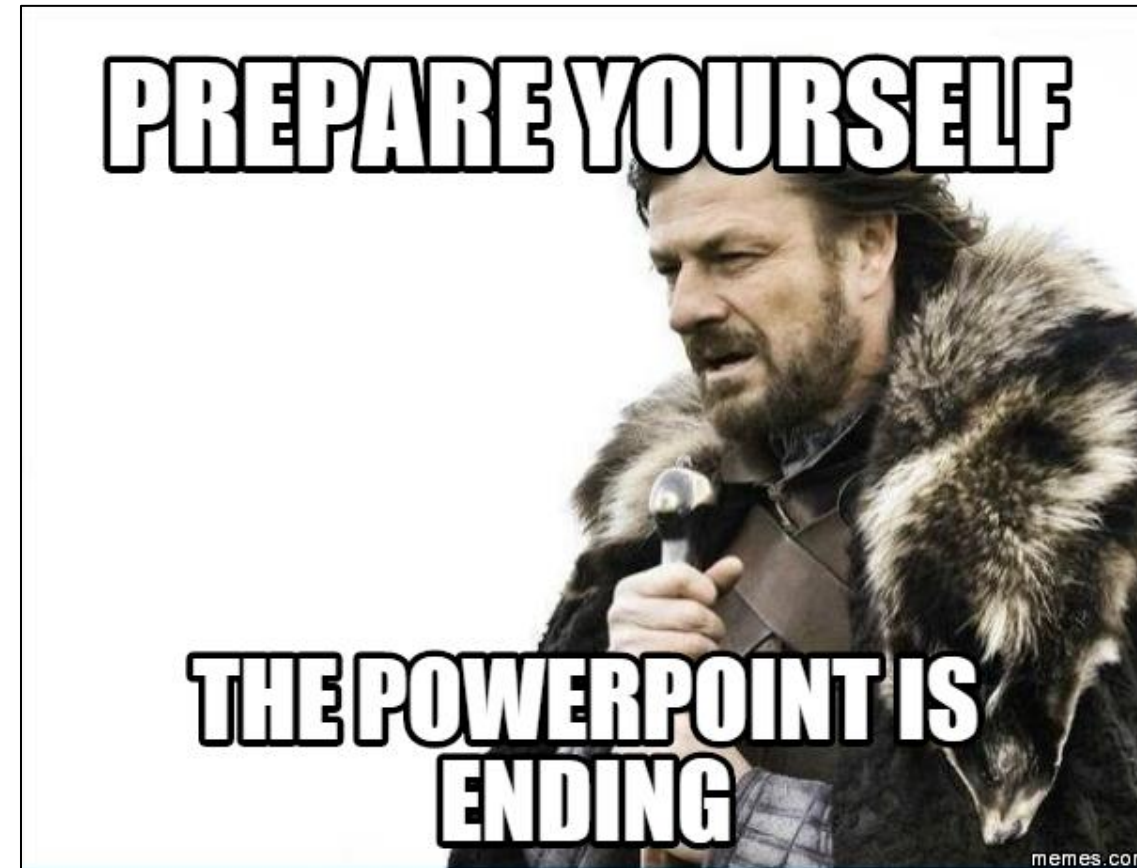


How can employers integrate safety and health concerns?

- **Joint meetings of safety teams and health promotion teams**
- **Combined safety and health promotion steering committees**
- **Respiratory protection programs that simultaneously address tobacco use**
- **Stress management efforts that first diminish workplace stressors and then build worker resiliency**

Wrapping up

- Extensive data reveal the financial, social, and human impact of occupational health.
- Organizational climate reflects employees' perceptions about organizational priorities, including those related to safety, health, and well-being.
- Organizational science offers data-driven recommendations for developing a strong positive climate for employee health.



Thanks! Any questions?

