

# Safety culture

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## Introduction

Safety Culture is the way patient safety is perceived, valued and prioritised in an organisation or department. It is indicative of the commitment to safety at all levels in an organisation or department and can be described as "how things are done around here," particularly when no external scrutiny is leveraged. An ED's Safety Culture is determined largely by a combination of Organisational (Trust or NHS) and Professional (speciality, nursing, allied professions) Cultures.

## Purpose

To enable ED leaders to assess or diagnose the Patient Safety Culture within their departments and offer a framework for improving or changing this culture.

Objective 1	Action	Evidence and Resources
<p><b>To understand what is meant by Safety Culture in the context of the ED.</b></p>	<p>It is crucial to understand what the features of a good safety culture are, so that this can be developed within the ED.</p>	<p><i>The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality briefly considers Safety Culture in healthcare settings.</i>  <b>Agency for Healthcare Research, Safety Culture</b>  <a href="http://psnet.ahrq.gov/primer.aspx?primerID=5">http://psnet.ahrq.gov/primer.aspx?primerID=5</a></p> <p><i>This report from The Health Foundation also describes the idea of a Patient Safety Culture and goes on to consider the evidence that this improves outcomes.</i>  <b>Does improving safety culture affect patient outcomes?</b> The Health Foundation, 2011  <a href="http://www.health.org.uk/publications/does-improving-safety-culture-affect-patient-outcomes/">http://www.health.org.uk/publications/does-improving-safety-culture-affect-patient-outcomes/</a></p> <p><i>There are few papers that look specifically at ED safety culture. This questionnaire survey from the US lists Safety Culture specific questions as part of a larger survey on safety perceptions.</i>  <b>The safety of emergency care systems: Results of a survey of clinicians in 65 US emergency departments,</b> Magid DJ, Sullivan AF, Cleary PD, Rao SR et al. (2009). Ann Emerg Med;53(6):715-23.  <a href="http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19054592">http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19054592</a></p> <p><i>This qualitative review of safety culture in the US hospital setting attempts to define what is safety culture and presents a conceptual framework of healthcare organisational safety culture.</i>  <b>What is patient safety culture – a review of the literature?</b> Sammer et al Journal of Nursing Scholarship Volume 42, Issue 2, pages 156–165  <a href="http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1547-5069.2009.01330.x/abstract">http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1547-5069.2009.01330.x/abstract</a></p>

Objective 2	Action	Evidence and Resources
<p><b>To establish the current safety culture within a department or organisation.</b></p>	<p>Safety culture influences safety outcomes and measuring a baseline identifies areas for improvement, identifies strengths and allows monitoring of changes/trends over time.</p> <p>Simply measuring or diagnosing safety culture can also raise staff awareness about patient safety.</p> <p>Measuring safety culture allows evaluation of the cultural impact of patient safety initiatives and interventions and facilitates internal and external benchmarking.</p>	<p>Several tools for measuring safety culture have been used in a variety of healthcare settings. This report from the Healthcare Foundation considers the common tools and the contexts in which they are used. Only a few have been used in ED settings, however.</p> <p><b>Measuring safety culture</b>, The Health Foundation, 2011  <a href="http://www.health.org.uk/public/cms/75/76/313/2600/Measuring%20safety%20culture.pdf?realName=rclb4B.pdf">http://www.health.org.uk/public/cms/75/76/313/2600/Measuring%20safety%20culture.pdf?realName=rclb4B.pdf</a></p> <p>The NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement has developed a slide set and facilitator guide for using the Manchester Patient Safety Framework tool for measuring safety culture. Although this is designed for primary care settings, many of the areas covered are relevant to EM and the set allows modifications.</p> <p><b>NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, Safety Culture tools</b>  <a href="http://www.institute.nhs.uk/safer_care/primary_care_2/lips_primary_care_delegate_library.html">http://www.institute.nhs.uk/safer_care/primary_care_2/lips_primary_care_delegate_library.html</a></p> <p>The Institute for Healthcare Improvement and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality have developed tools for measuring safety climate in organisations. Some of the principles set out are relevant to emergency settings.</p> <p><b>Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Safety Climate Survey</b>  <a href="http://w.primaris.org/sites/default/files/resources/Patient%20Safety/safety%20climate%20survey.pdf">http://w.primaris.org/sites/default/files/resources/Patient%20Safety/safety%20climate%20survey.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality</b>  <a href="http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/patientsafetyculture/index.html">http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/patientsafetyculture/index.html</a></p> <p><b>Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture</b>  <a href="http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/patientsafetyculture/hospital/resources/index.html">www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/patientsafetyculture/hospital/resources/index.html</a></p> <p>NHS Trusts completing the NHS Staff survey will already have some organisational measures of aspects of safety culture. Individual reports can be accessed from the <b>National NHS Staff Survey Co-ordination Centre, 2012 Results</b>. Key Findings 13-15 are primarily safety related.  <a href="http://www.nhsstaffsurveys.com/Page/1006/Latest-Results/2012-Results/">http://www.nhsstaffsurveys.com/Page/1006/Latest-Results/2012-Results/</a></p>

Objective 3	Action	Evidence and Resources
<p><b>To enable senior clinical leaders to change or improve the safety culture.</b></p>	<p>In order to embed safety in the normal work of the ED, it is important to apply core patient safety attitudes and practice as the norm and to engage staff.</p>	<p><i>This guide lists behaviours and activities which improve safety culture and also offers useful case studies on building a safety culture.</i>  <b>Seven steps to patient safety: full reference guide</b>, National Patient Safety Agency, 2004.  <a href="http://www.nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/resources/collections/seven-steps-to-patient-safety/?entryid45=59787">http://www.nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/resources/collections/seven-steps-to-patient-safety/?entryid45=59787</a></p> <p><i>This podcast from the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement is a short introduction to Safety Culture and basic steps to embed it in practice.</i>  <b>NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, Improving Quality and Safety Podcast</b>  <a href="http://www.institute.nhs.uk/safer_care/primary_care_2/improving_quality_and_safety_podcast.html">http://www.institute.nhs.uk/safer_care/primary_care_2/improving_quality_and_safety_podcast.html</a></p> <p><i>This article has some useful points about "teaching" safety culture. It lists the nine activities to improve safety in healthcare which have been adapted from the much more lengthy Institute of Medicine book.</i>  <b>Teaching the Culture of Safety</b>, Jane Barnsteiner, Online J Issues Nurs. 2011;16(3)  <a href="http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/758853_4">http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/758853_4</a></p> <p><b>Crossing the quality chasm: A new health system for the 21st century</b>, Institute of Medicine (IOM). (2001)  <a href="http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=10027">http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=10027</a></p> <p><i>The Institute for Healthcare Improvement has an interesting interview transcript from Lucian Leape, where he talks about creating a culture of safety.</i>  <b>Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Creating a Culture of Safety</b>  <a href="http://www.ihl.org/knowledge/Pages/ImprovementStories/CreatingaCultureofSafety.aspx">http://www.ihl.org/knowledge/Pages/ImprovementStories/CreatingaCultureofSafety.aspx</a></p> <p><i>Dominic Cooper's book, Improving Safety Culture, which is geared toward industry, has some useful ideas on the phases of safety culture improvement and tips which are relevant to healthcare.</i>  <b>Improving Safety Culture</b>. A practical guide. Cooper, D. Chichester. (2001).  <a href="http://www.behavioural-safety.com/articles/Improving_safety_culture_a_practical_guide.pdf">http://www.behavioural-safety.com/articles/Improving_safety_culture_a_practical_guide.pdf</a></p> <p><i>Behaviour that is counterproductive and undermines the fostering of a culture of safety should be addressed. This sentinel event alert from the Joint Commission offers some guidance on managing disruptive behaviour and mitigating its effects on safety culture.</i>  <b>Behaviours that undermine a culture of safety</b>. Joint Commission, 2008  <a href="http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/SEA_40.PDF">http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/SEA_40.PDF</a></p>