



# SAFETY SAGES

**Safety Sages** is a small-group, invitation only, video-conference with the objective of deepening our thinking on safety cultures. It is designed to bring together a thoughtful group of people from across industries to debate and discuss topics of relevance. The forum is open quarterly.

**Discussion Primer:** A new study surveyed 1,000 drivers and found that 98% of those who text everyday and drive frequently say the practice is dangerous. Still, nearly 75% say they do it anyway. Similar research exists on people's perspective about unprotected sex.

**The Objective:** Through discussion, distill our core beliefs about people so that this behavior makes sense. What is it about our human nature, and perspective on safety, that allows people to embrace this contradiction?

**Discussion Question:** Why do we commit unsafe acts in life?

## Results:

Our Initial beliefs:

1. My underlying psychological needs drive my behaviors and decisions regarding safety.
2. Behaviors are justified based on the outcomes delivered.
  - a. I get rewarded for performance; not for being safe at the expense of performance.
  - b. People get set-up to make trade-off decisions.
    - i. Trading-off my boss yelling at me for not getting the job done quickly vs. getting it done without short-cuts.
    - j. My competence allows me to take short-cuts.
    - k. My unsafe behavior compensates for design failures in the system.
3. Time creates a perceived reduction of severity.
  - a. 20 years before asbestos exposure harms me; not a problem today, drive on.
  - b. Delay of harm creates a false sense of probability.
4. Since I haven't seen the harmful outcome then my perception of the risk is low.
  - a. I watch a person walk into a room with cyanide gas and they drop dead will have greater impact on my behavior than watching a person go into a room with second-hand smoke.
  - b. My belief in the "probability of occurrence" impacts my decision regarding risk.
5. Instant gratification overshadows my consideration of safety issues.
6. Failure is forever, bodies heal...take the risk.
7. If it doesn't kill you, it makes you stronger.
8. Within an organization, self-interest can cloud the creation of a safety culture.
9. Safety cultures drive us to examine the process used as well as the outcomes delivered.