A Fair Culture Approach

A rationale for accountability and road to self-reporting

Aim

The purpose of this document is to provide an understanding of best-practice approaches to promote a self-reporting and continually improving culture.

It is aimed for leaders to holistically think about developing a culture that connects the ideas and ingenuity of their organisation by employing a commitment-based management philosophy rather than overregulating behaviours using a control-based philosophy.

Instructions

This tool can be used by the Change Leadership Committee or a group of stakeholders involved in supporting the changes in your organisation.

- Provide copies of this document, alternative formats (when necessary) and any other relevant information before the meeting. This will give everybody time to prepare and generate ideas.

- At the meeting consider and discuss with relevant stakeholders how your organisation can benefit from a Fair Culture and how the elements of this culture can be embedded along with other systems (Grievances, Investigation, and Complaints process etc.)

- Discuss the question about the principals of a Fair Culture and record the group reflections and ideas in the space provided.

- Add any identified actions to your organisation's plan to support change.

What is a Fair Culture?

Any effective organisational system depends on the balanced accountability for both the individuals utilising the system and the organisation responsible for designing and improving the system. Crucial is the willing participation of the workforce, specifically the frontline workers who are in direct contact with people with disability and are in a better position to notice risks and non-compliance. In order for the workers to come forward and report errors or mistakes, an organisational climate conducive to such reporting must exist – A Fair Culture.

Fair Culture is:

- A culture where trust thrives and where people are encouraged, even rewarded for providing essential information to ensure safeguarding practices keep improving

- A culture where staff are clear about what is an acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- A culture of open communication where people speak up about errors without unnecessary fear of perceived unfair consequences. This fosters a learning culture, the prevention of repeat incidents and fosters accountability and responsibility to implement Quality and Safeguarding practices.

A Framework for Understanding Human Errors and Breaches

Processes and systems are put in place to mitigate risks and provide quality and safer services. From a human behaviour perspective, introducing a regime of sanctions may potentially lead to workers being hesitant to report errors for fear of retribution including the loss of professional credibility and even jobs. Instead of admitting to the mistakes and learning from them by discussing them openly with peers, the workers may instead hide them or not take responsibility. This can further undermine the provision of quality and safeguarding services to the people we support if the errors or mistakes are not identified and fixed. Organisations must put systems in place that serve to prevent quality and safeguarding errors while promoting a "Fair Culture" way of managing performance and outcomes.

A Fair Culture has to be applied with the knowledge that:

- All management systems can be continuously improved in their effectiveness and efficiencies
- The human brain is prone to making errors in pursuit of efficient processing
- People/groups at all levels may develop unhealthy/unsafe patterns of behaviour, and
- Reckless conduct and breaches should not be tolerated

Principles of a Fair Culture and Reflection

Principal: Is **not** a blame culture and neither is it a blame free culture. It is a culture of continuous learning environment (i.e. an environment that is not focused on attributing blame and punishment), with the need to hold persons accountable for their actions.

Reflection

How do we apply this principal in our organisation?

What can we do to ensure this principal is embedded in our practices?

Principal: Workers are not held accountable for systemic and/or organisational errors over which they have little or no control. Instead errors are treated with care, compassion, support, respect and dignity.

Reflection

How do we apply this principal in our organisation?

What can we do to ensure this principal is embedded in our practices?

Principal: Behaviours may fall below expectation, but there may be other considerations to take into account, as there may be underlying systemic deficiencies or work culture factors that could be affecting individual or group's decisions.

Reflection

How do we apply this principal in our organisation?

What can we do to ensure this principal is embedded in our practices?

Principal: A Fair Culture recognises that there will be situations where behaviours may fall below expectation and may or may not be intentional. It has processes and support structures for dealing with such issues transparently and equitably.

Reflection

How do we apply this principal in our organisation?

What can we do to ensure this principal is embedded in our practices?

Principal: Encourage employees to take greater personal responsibility for their actions and seek to improve the overall organisational culture. It does this by means of behavioural and or system modification.

Reflection

How do we apply this principal in our organisation?

What can we do to ensure this principal is embedded in our practices?

Principal: Firm actions may need to be taken and parties need to take accountability in circumstances where, despite the knowledge of safeguarding practices and/or clear instruction given, inappropriate behaviours were evident.

Reflection

How do we apply this principal in our organisation?

What can we do to ensure this principal is embedded in our practices?

Reference

Roadmap to a Fair Culture Enhancing the Safety Environment James Reason, 2004

Shell Hearts and Minds Project Hudson's Refined Fair Culture Model Patrick Hudson 2004