

Background: Our refreshed approach to safety

This document provides useful background / pre-read for team engagements on learner mindset in the context of Safety.

- **Intent:** Context for our journey to refresh our approach to safety, the relevance of Learner Mindset and Human Performance. Useful as a pre-read for team engagements.
- **Outcomes:** Consistent understanding of the case for change and relevance to safety performance improvement.

Cautionary Note

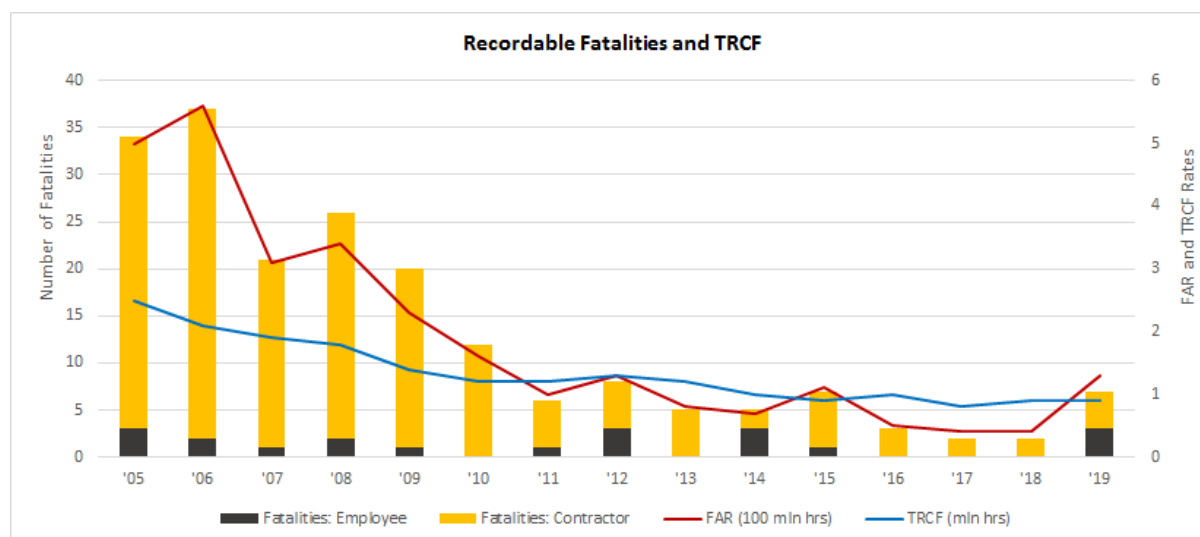
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SAFETY REFRESH BACKGROUND AND JOURNEY

In Shell we care deeply about people and Safety is the overriding priority. Since 2007 we have seen significant improvements on personal and process Safety. Our current Safety approach, including Life-Saving Rules and Process Safety Fundamentals, helped us save many lives. However, from 2014 onwards our Safety performance has plateaued, and in 2019 it was particularly regrettable when we unfortunately lost seven colleagues and there were a high number of life changing injuries.



One fatality since 2014 has a clear link to Life-Saving Rules violation, whereas almost half of our fatalities over the last five years were related to the complex interactions between people, equipment, systems and processes. Peer connects with other oil and gas majors as well as industry discussions with aviation and nuclear has helped identify ways in which we can continue to build upon our strong foundations to make a step change in our safety performance.

Externally there has been an increased focus on **Human Performance**, which starts with a simple truth – we are all human and as humans we can and do make mistakes. This doesn't mean that lower standards of performance are acceptable, rather we need to learn quickly from mistakes and design into the way work gets planned and done how to prevent mistakes leading to life changing injuries. It also acknowledges the complexity of the overall system (people, culture, hardware, processes) which we operate within. Embedding this concept in organizational culture and operational practices has been one of the key reasons behind the 95% reduction in fatal accident rate achieved by the commercial aviation industry in the last 20 years (whilst the industry more than doubled in size).

We already have many areas of good practice within Shell. These include work in Moerdijk and another example is 'Assist and Assure' which is a site-based safety leadership program developed in Wells and applied across multiple Lines of Business.

Based on the internal and external reviews the Executive Committee concluded that Group-wide consistent approach that reframes leadership beliefs on safety, work planning/execution and our response to incidents is required to break through the Safety performance plateau. To realise our ambition of Goal Zero, people need to be able to "fail safely" to avoid life-changing injuries.

See [Appendix 1](#) for Shell's Human Performance Principles.

Think about:

1. In your view, what needs to stay the same about the way we talk about and manage safety?
2. In your view, what needs to change about the way we talk about and manage safety?

LEARNER MINDSET

To bring the Human Performance principles to life, we are going to need to adjust a range of systems, processes, hardware as well as beliefs. Core to these beliefs is the concept of Learner Mindset. Learner Mindset incorporates the components of psychological safety, learning from mistakes and moving along a mindset continuum from 'fixed' to 'learner'.

We define Learner Mindset as: *“A shared belief that everyone can grow their ability, learn from mistakes & successes and speak up openly in a safe environment”*. It means that we are attuned to ways to improve ourselves and the environment (the mindset and belief part) and that people feel supported and respected to offer up the resulting ideas and observations (the psychological safety part). It requires leaders to be curious, humble, willing to listen and to welcome opportunities to learn from failure to drive subsequent improvements. In the context of Safety, Learner Mindset should enable us to learn from how work actually gets done and enable people to “fail safely” across the company.

Embracing a learner mindset, means you:

- Role model curiosity and reflection; encourage people to learn from mistakes and successes.
- Be inclusive and foster the psychological safety for everyone to speak up.
- Encourage intelligent risk taking and experimentation to create value.
- Be nimble, adapt, embrace change, replicate, transform and innovate.
- Make timely judgement calls under uncertainty and complexity

In practice this means creating the conditions that empower and compel people to share what is on their minds, what could go wrong before commencing work and be convinced in advance that they will be safe even when it does go wrong.

A Learner Mindset does not mean that we will accept lower performance standards, or that people should get along but without interpersonal challenge. Rather we need all need to understand the performance expectations and why our work matters and we need to be able to with candor, challenge and encourage each other.

Learner Mindset was an important topic offered for teams to discuss during Safety Day 10th June 2020. Teams are encouraged to keep discussing how learner mindset is relevant to the way we work together and create Safety together. This is important not only to help our safety journey but to help guide our response to operational challenges, to show care and strengthen inclusion within our teams.

Fully embedding Learner Mindset will be a multiyear journey. We will need to accept a certain level of learning as we go and to role model as leaders the essence of the change we are driving. Each of us can do things to adopt a Learner Mindset within ourselves and our teams, as leaders we can:

1. Frame the work to set expectations

2. Ask explicitly for active participation
3. Respond positively to ideas and concerns raised

As team members we can ensure we clarify expectations, participate, speak up and identify when our own and other people's behaviour is not in line with these beliefs. [Appendix 2](#) has more details on these three actions.

There are also circumstances where we are more likely to be 'triggered' and not show up with a Learner Mindset and we need to be aware of this in ourselves and in others. These four triggers are:

1. **Evaluative situations** are ones where we are judged by others, e.g. giving status updates or making presentations.
2. **High effort situations** are ones where we encounter new challenges or obstacles.
3. **Critical feedback** is when we receive development suggestions or criticism.
4. **Success of others** is when peers receive praise or promotion.

[Appendix 3](#) has more details on these four triggers.

Think about:

1. In the last 3-6 months:
 - a. When did you last find yourself significantly outside your comfort zone? How did you show up? What would other people say?
 - b. What did you learn from the last mistake or mis-judgment you made? Did you share your learning with anyone? What was the result?
 - c. When was the last time someone else opened-up to you and shared their thoughts, a mistake they made, or a misjudgement? How frequently do people do this with you, and how could you make these conversations more possible?
2. In your opinion, why do people avoid admitting mistakes or sharing dilemmas they face?
3. How do you encourage people to admit mistakes and share dilemmas they face?

MORE BACKGROUND

Subject	Content
Amy Edmondson, The relationship between learner mindset and psychological safety	Video (link)
Amy Edmondson, Stanford Medical Conference 2017, Making it Safe to Team	Video (link)
Energy Institute – Being Human	Video (link)

APPENDIX 1: SHELL HUMAN PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLES

Human Performance Principles

1. **We all make mistakes**
2. Organizations **influence their systems and people, the context drives behavior**
3. Actions are **rarely malicious**, but well-meaning behaviors intended to get the job done
4. Majority of errors associated with **incidents stem from latent conditions**
5. Understanding **how and why errors occur can help us prevent them**
6. We can **predict or prevent, and always have to manage error-likely situations**
7. How **leaders respond to failure matters**; we need to learn from mistakes
8. People who **feel valued are more engaged**
9. Our people are the **masters of their job and the key to solutions**

APPENDIX 2: LEARNER MINDSET: CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE EVERYONE FEELS SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE TO SPEAK UP

- *Frame the work to set expectations:*
 - Talk about why the team's work matters, what is at stake and how this creates a need for everyone to speak up.
 - Make explicit the uncertainty ahead and that while we strive for excellence, learning from failure is key to subsequent improvements.
 - Emphasise that it is rarely possible to get new things right first time, and so we need to learn fast and adapt.
- *Ask explicitly for active participation:*
 - Share that you do not personally have all the answers and that we can always learn and improve.
 - Create specific moments, e.g. in team conversations, for people to offer up ideas, concerns, risks, and share mistakes.
 - Appreciate bad news, ask good questions and listen intently.
- *Respond positively to idea and concerns raised:*
 - Thank and acknowledge people for speaking up
 - Offer support or guide next steps
 - Have feedback loops on how any ideas are taken forward or why they are not.
 - Visibly celebrate moments when the team learns from mistakes.

Adapted from Amy Edmondson, The Fearless Organisation

APPENDIX 3: LEARNER MINDSET: THE FOUR “TRIGGERS”

There are four main situational triggers to watch out for that can cause us to show up with a ‘fixed’ rather than ‘learner’ mindset:

1. **Evaluative situations** are ones where we are judged by others, e.g. giving status updates or making presentations.
 - a. If operating from a fixed mindset, our goal is to look smart at all costs. This leads to a focus on positive facts and avoiding sharing mistakes or challenges.
 - b. If we operate from a learner mindset, then our goal is to learn at all costs. We share a balance of positive and negative information and seek input to learn.

2. **High effort situations** are ones where we encounter new challenges or obstacles.
 - a. If working from a fixed mindset, we think that our ability should come naturally. So when we struggle, we tell ourselves that we will never be any good, worry that others will not be impressed if we have to try hard, and so give up more quickly.
 - b. Those with a learner mindset assume others will see extra effort as positive, will try new things, seek help and persevere against challenge or setbacks.

3. **Critical feedback** is when we receive development suggestions or criticism.
 - a. If we come from a fixed mindset then we aim to always be regarded as a top performer. We then respond defensively to criticism or hide mistakes to avoid getting critical feedback.
 - b. If we apply a learner mindset then feedback is seen as a chance to learn. We share mistakes and process any feedback more deeply so that we can improve going forward.

4. **Success of others** is when peers receive praise or promotion.
 - a. If operating from a fixed mindset then we feel threatened and will do anything to outperform, such as hold back information, take shortcuts.
 - b. If operating from a learner mindset then we are inspired by the success of others and seek to learn from the strategies that others have used.

Adapted from Mary Murphy and the Growth Mindset Institute

<https://www.growthmindsetinstitute.org/growth-mindset/growth-mindset-for-business/mindset-assessment/>