Building resilience
How to learn more from incidents

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Agenda

1. Why learn from incidents?
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2. Four common traps.
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2. Four common traps.

3. Four helpful practices.
Why should we learn from incidents?
How Complex Systems Fail
(Being a Short Treatise on the Nature of Failure; How Failure is Evaluated; How Failure is Attributed to Proximate Cause; and the Resulting New Understanding of Patient Safety)
Richard I. Cook, MD

https://aka.ms/csfail
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“Catastrophe is always just around the corner.”

https://aka.ms/csfail
Prevent a catastrophe

Respond to a catastrophe
Language matters
Trap #1: Attribution to “human error”
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The problem: “Human error” is a label which causes us to stop investigating at precisely the moment when we’re about to discover something interesting about our system.
Trap #2: Counterfactual reasoning
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The problem: we’re talking about things that didn’t happen instead of taking the time to understand how what happened, happened.
Trap #3: Normative language

Photograph by Nimish Gogri (https://flic.kr/p/8WXy8B)
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The problem: if we accept post-hoc normative judgment, we neglect to understand how the actions of operators made sense to them at the time.
Trap #4: Mechanistic reasoning
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➢ Human adaptive capacity is necessary to keep our systems up and running in the first place.
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Human adaptive capacity is necessary to keep our systems up and running in the first place.

The problem: mechanistic reasoning makes us believe that once we’ve found the faulty human, we’ve found the problem.
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1. Run a facilitated post-incident review
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- A meeting with incident participants.

- ~60-90m maximum.

- Neutral facilitator (not actively involved in the incident).

- Prepare with one-to-one interviews.

- Lots of incidents? Don’t try and do this for all of them right away.
2. Ask better questions
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- Language matters: prefer “how?” over “why?”
- Each participant has a different viewpoint: ask about that!
- Ask about what normally happens, too.
- Read Etsy’s Debriefing Facilitation Guide: https://aka.ms/etsydebriefing
3. Ask how things went *right*
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- Ask about how we recovered the system.
- What insights/tools/skills/people were involved?
- How do people know what they know? Decide what they decide?
- Remember: we care about response as well as prevention.
4. Keep review and planning meetings separate
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· Keep discussion of future mitigation out of the post-incident review.

· Hold a separate, smaller, planning meeting 24-48h later.

· Helps keep the focus on what actually happened.

· Allows “soak time” which will result in better repair items.
Debriefing Facilitation Guide

Leading Groups at Etsy to Learn From Accidents
Authors: John Ailspaw, Morgan Evans, Daniel Schauenberg

Etsy
Thank you

https://aka.ms/srecon19emea/lfi

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