Parks Aviation Safety Newsletter

Cultivating a Positive Safety Culture

By GRACE KANE

Often in class or the training environment, you may hear the term "positive safety culture." What is a positive safety culture? How does Parks foster a good safety culture? A good safety culture is not measured by the absence of incidents or accidents, but it is more so a conglomerate of how all levels of individuals in an organization value and commit to safety.

The term culture is not used to describe something created by a singular being. It is a collection of the behaviors and practices of a group. At the Center for Aviation Science, management personnel, dispatchers, students, mechanics, and instructors all contribute to our safety culture.

A positive safety culture cannot be maintained solely through conversation. Instead, it is the net result of the organization's practices, mindset, and commitment towards safety. As a committee, we have been working tirelessly this summer to reaffirm the community's trust by making improvements to our PEDALS program and setting out clearer documentation regarding the process involved when a report is received.

However, psychological safety is also fundamental to safety culture, as studied and described by Kimberly Perkins, a Gulfstream 650 pilot and aviation researcher, in her article "Building Strong Safety Culture through Human Factors Training." In our training environment, where some individuals may fear failure or being wrong, possessing psychological safety means one does not fear negative consequences of their self-image, status, or career for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. As students in training, we are at the very forefront of our training careers, so in order to reach our maximum growth and potential we must find our voice and use it to gain new knowledge and have thought provoking conversations. Some of us may come from different training backgrounds and others may have hundreds or thousands of hours of experience, but by recognizing the various perspectives each person in our organization has, we can maximize the benefits and cultivate a positive safety culture.

As one would not sit at the controls and watch the autopilot jostle the aircraft through extreme turbulence without making adjustments, it is unwise to refrain from speaking up when you notice necessary changes may be advantageous to preventing hazards for the safety of a system. Trusting our peers and instructors to converse with us and being able to learn from them is especially crucial at this stage in our training so that we may carry a strong sense of psychological safety for the remainder of our careers. If you see a hazard in the Parks environment, we encourage you to submit a PEDALS report, as your report can make us all more aware of the hazards that may disrupt our operations. Whether you are a student, instructor, mechanic, or manager – you contribute to our safety culture, and your opinion and voice are truly valued in our system.

https://www.ainonline.com/aviation-news/business-aviation/2021-03-01/building-strong-safety-culture-human-factors-training