

Transportation Research Board 103rd Annual Meeting

Culture Reform and Dignity: The Path to Safety and Wellbeing

ACS60 Operator Health and Wellness Subcommittee

January 9, 2024

Ed Watt MSILR

Principal WattADR

New Paradigms

Psychological Safety

Dignity at Work

Workplace Mental Health

Harvard Business Review April 2, 2022

Stop Framing Wellness Programs Around Self-Care

Principle 1: Frame Distress as a Collective, Not Individual

Why? Individualism Fosters Isolation, Pain, and Fear

Principle 2: Create and Foster Relational Pauses

Why? To Develop Collective Solutions

**Safety Culture is a Subset of
Organizational Culture**



Culture eats strategy for breakfast

-Peter Drucker



NewAgeLeadership.com

Attributes of a Good Safety Culture

- **Just**
- **Informed**
- **Reporting**
- **Learning**
- **Flexible**

WHAT IS TOXIC CULTURE?

- **Harassment**
- **Bullying**
- **Rudeness**
- **Incivility**
- **Microaggressions**

San Jose VTA shooting kills 10, including employee who opened fire

<https://www.ktvu.com/news/san-jose-vta-shooting-kills-10-including-employee-who-opened-fire>

Metro's rail control center a 'toxic workplace' where procedures put riders at risk, safety report says

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/metrorail-control-center-a-toxic-workplace-where-procedures-put-riders-at-risk-safety-report-says/2020/09/07/2442d5f0-ed53-11ea-ab4e-581edb849379_story.html

Harvard Business Review

Employee Retention

Why U.S. Frontline Workers Are Quitting

Lovich, Deborah, Julia Dhar, and Frances Joris. “Why U.S. Frontline Workers Are Quitting.” Harvard Business Review, March 14, 2022. <https://hbr.org/2022/03/why-u-s-frontline-workers-are-quitting>.

MIT Sloan Management Review

Toxic Culture Is Driving the Great Resignation

Donald Sull, Charles Sull. “Toxic Culture Is Driving the Great Resignation.” MIT Sloan Management Review, January 11, 2022. <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/toxic-culture-is-driving-the-great-resignation/>.

Safety concerns fuel Transit's driver shortage

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/editorials/2022/12/07/safety-concerns-fuel-transits-driver-shortage>

CTA Needs 1,000 Workers As It Struggles With Ghost Trains And Buses, Transit Boss Says

<https://blockclubchicago.org/2022/11/11/severe-workforce-shortage-to-blame-for-ghost-trains-buses-as-cta-struggles-with-1000-open-jobs-leader-says/>

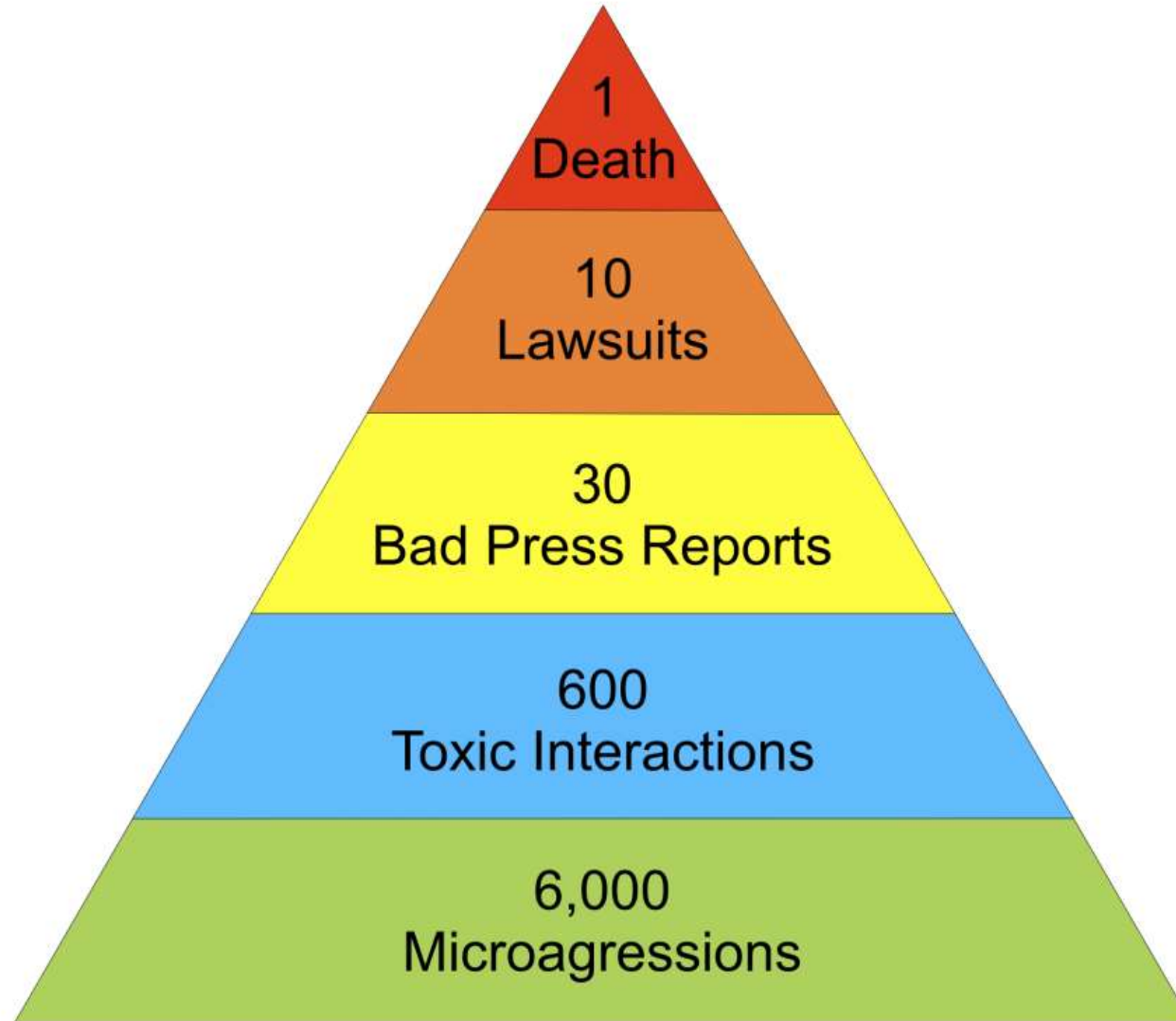
APTA Says Almost All North American Transit Agencies Face Worker Shortage

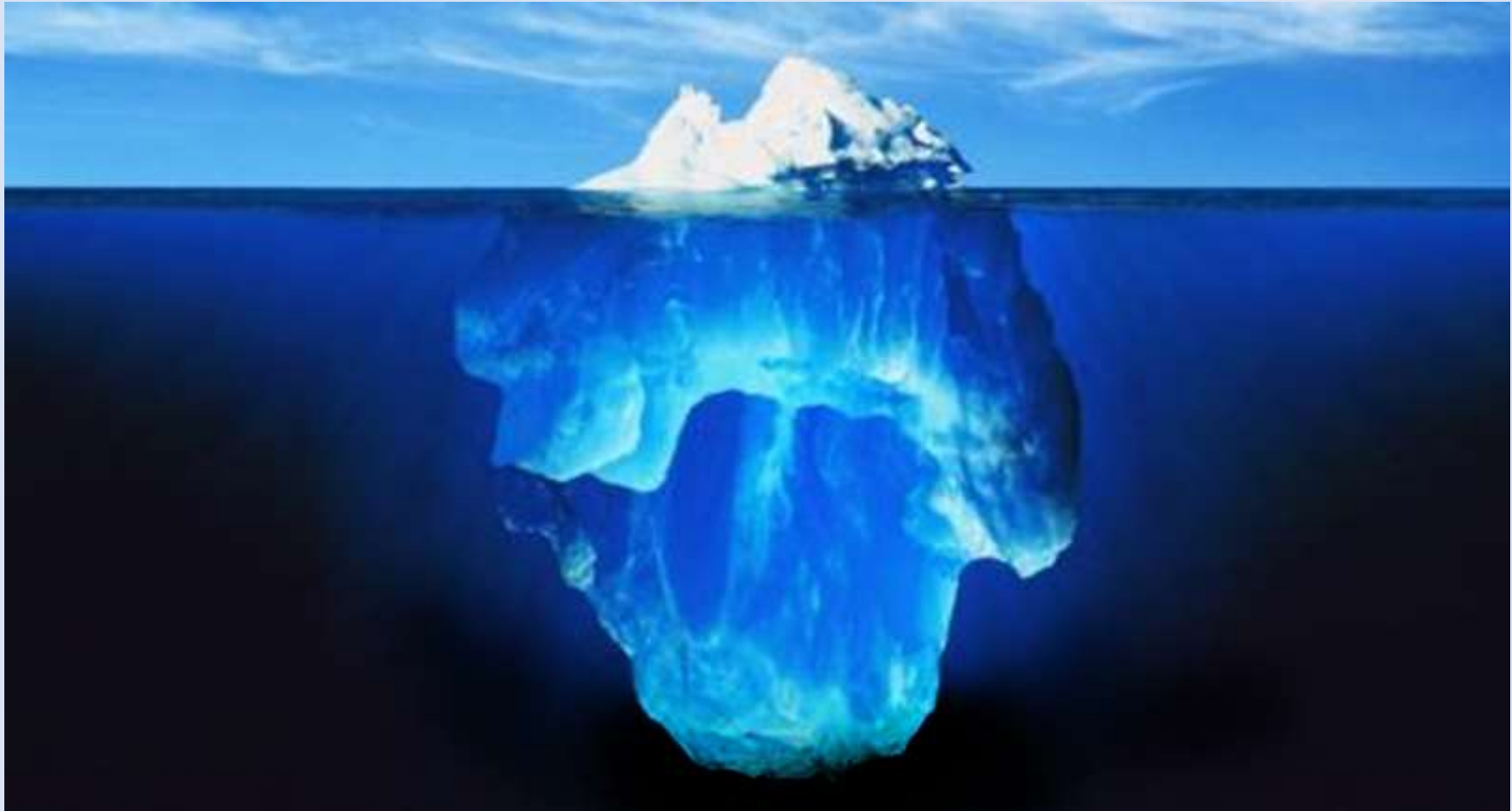
<https://www.rtands.com/passenger/apta-says-almost-all-north-american-transit-agencies-face-worker-shortage/>

Heinrich's Triangle Theory



Toxic Culture Triangle





Toxic Culture

An iceberg floating in the ocean, with a small tip above the water and a much larger, jagged mass submerged below. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a lighter blue with some clouds. The iceberg is white and blue, with some dark spots. The text is overlaid on the image, with the title at the top left and various terms listed on either side of the submerged part of the iceberg. At the bottom, a black bar contains the text 'Procedural and Institutional Injustice'.

Bullying

Favoritism

Nepotism

Sexual Harassment

Racial Harassment

General Harassment

Incivility

Exclusion

Rudeness

Lack of Support

Microaggressions

Threats of Violence

Procedural and Institutional Injustice

*From micro-aggressions to
the most heinous acts, these
behaviors can be summed up
in one word -indignities*

What is Dignity?

People tend to view dignity and respect as interchangeable, but they're actually very different. I define dignity quite simply as **our inherent value and worth**. Everyone is born with dignity; it's part of the human condition, and we're all vulnerable to dignity violations, such as being talked down to or treated unfairly.

Hicks, Donna. *Leading with dignity how to create a culture that brings out the best in people*.
New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.

- **The desire for dignity is universal**
- **It motivates all human interaction**
- **When dignity is violated, it can cause aggression, violence, hatred, and vengeance**
- **When dignity is acknowledged, there are more connections and meaningful relationships**
- **Surprisingly - little understanding of dignity**

Donna Hicks, Ph.D.

Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict

and

**Leading With Dignity: How to Create a Culture
that Brings out the Best in People**

Dr. Hick's Solutions

- 1. Introduce the Dignity Model**
- 2. Conduct a Dignity Assessment**
- 3. Implement a Culture of Dignity**
- 4. Create a Dignity Leadership Team**
- 5. Assess the Intervention`**

How to Change the Culture

USPS REDRESS Program

“Redress Testimonials.” REDRESS Testimonials - Who We Are - About.usps.com. Accessed May 8, 2023.
<https://about.usps.com/who/legal/redress/quotes.htm>.

National Institutes of Health, Ombuds Program

Gadlin, Howard, and Susan P. Sturm. “Conflict Resolution and Systemic Change.” SSRN, April 25, 2007.
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=982364.

Don't Sweep It Under the Rug



Thank You!
Questions?

Ed@WattADR.com