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2024 ODOT Transportation
Safety Conference

General Session

Tips for Growing Traffic Safety Culture

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MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY

**Center for
Health & Safety
Culture**



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We work alongside our clients to create cultures where new ideas and actions emerge and take root, creating effective and lasting positive outcomes.

- Prevention of misuse of substances
- Improving child development
- Traffic safety

Who's in the Room?

- Law Enforcement
- Engineers
- Public Health
- EMS / Healthcare
- Prosecutors / Judiciary
- Advocacy Groups
- Other

“Are we busy
or
are we
effective?”

Stephen Covey

Actions

- A thing done; an act.

Outcomes

- Something that follows as a result of your actions.



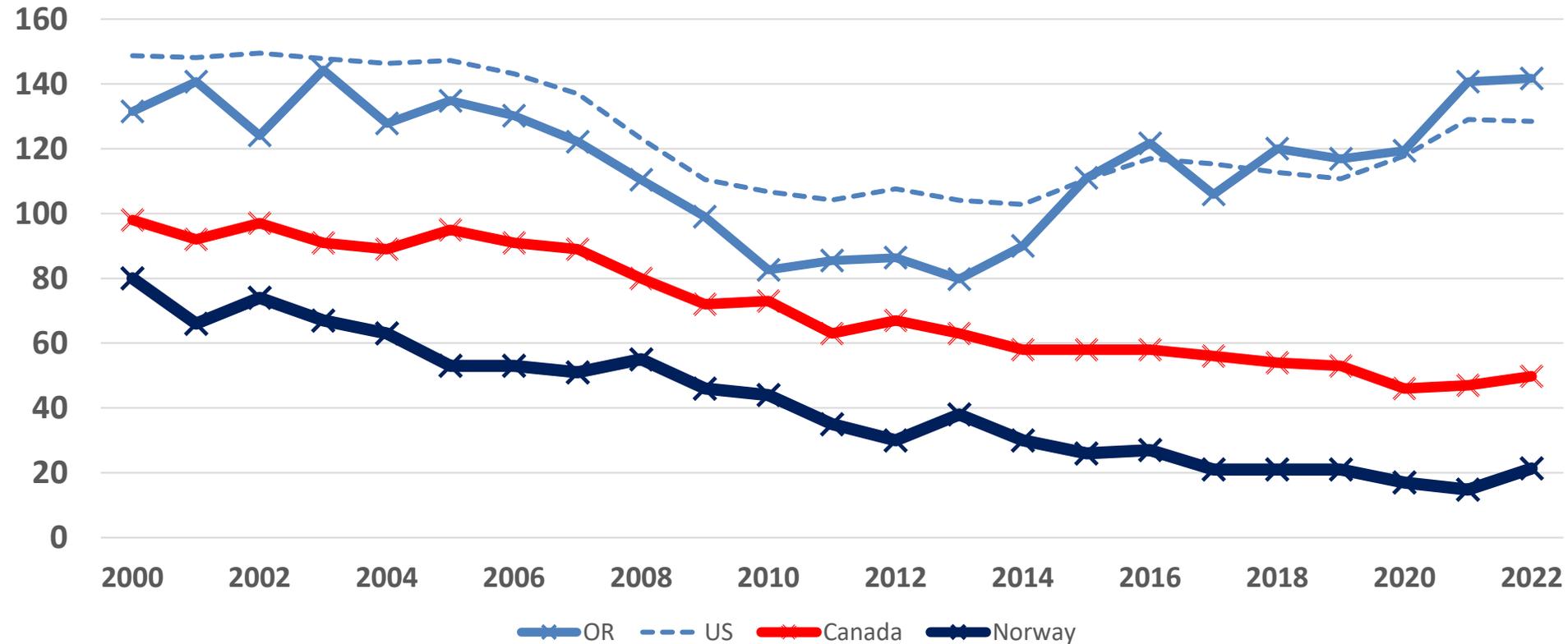
Concern: Traffic Safety is a **Public Health** issue

- Roadway crashes are a leading cause of death and serious injury
- Significant disparities in consequences

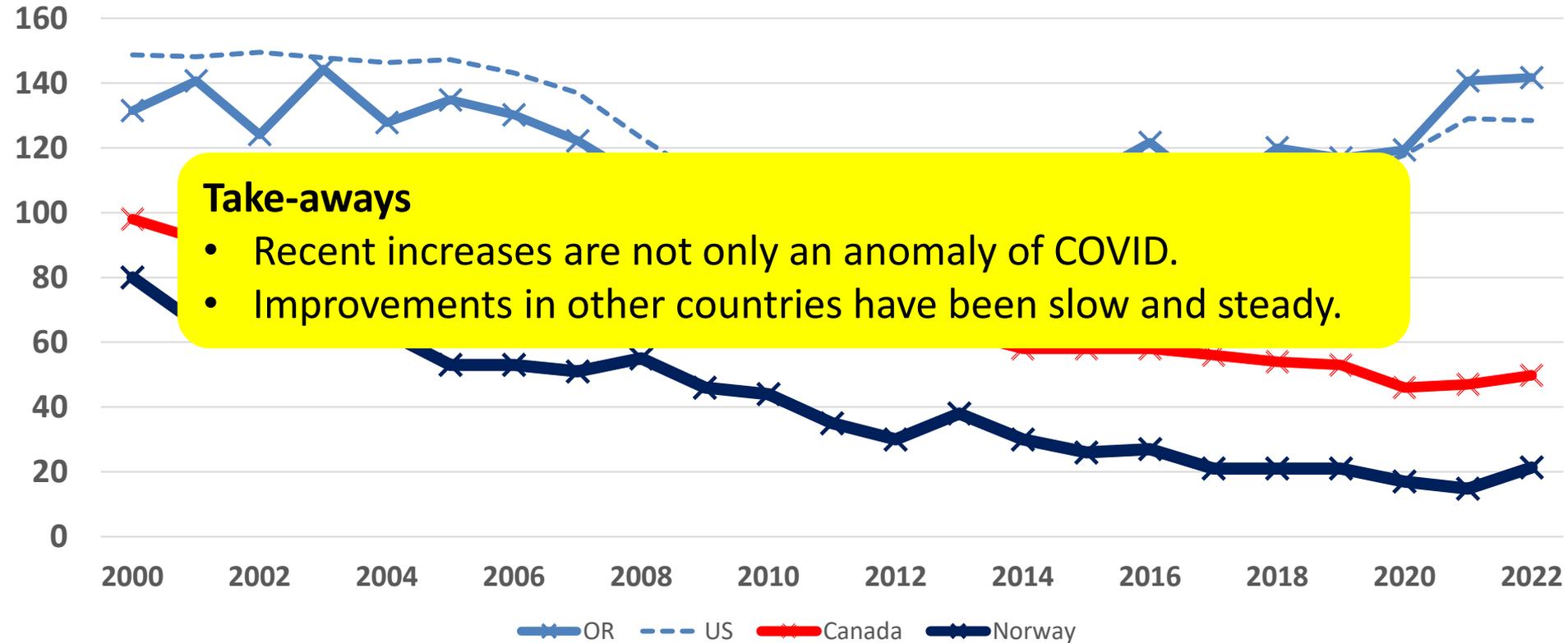
Take-away: Traffic safety involves more than
Law Enforcement and DOTs.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, WISQARS

Concern: Roadway Fatality Rates (per 1M population)



Concern: Roadway Fatality Rates (per 1M population)



BELIEFS

BEHAVIORS

CONSEQUENCES

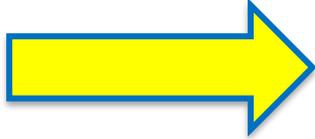
What are the **BELIEFS** that support these BEHAVIORS?

What are the **BEHAVIORS** that lead to these CONSEQUENCES?

What are the **CONSEQUENCES** we are trying to reduce or eliminate?

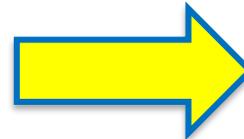


Beliefs



“It won’t happen to me”
“I am above average driver”
“I can multitask”
“I won’t get caught”
“My vehicle will protect me”
“I don’t know how”
“Public will not support”
“It doesn’t matter; people do what they want”
“It’s up to road users to make safe choices”

Behaviors



Aggressive driving
Speeding
Lack of seat belt use
Impaired driving
Distracted driving
Fatigued driving
Unsafe designs
Lack of parent training
Lack of workplace training
Lack of enforcement
Lack of policy/law adoption

Consequences

Fatalities
Serious injuries
Emotional distress/trauma
Healthcare costs
Workplace costs
Mobility costs
Congestion/delays



Opening Question

What behavior (or action) **within your organization**, if improved, would have the greatest positive impact on traffic safety in Oregon?

If you don't know, enter "I don't know."



Beliefs → Behaviors → Consequences

Core Idea

Focus on **growing beliefs** to
shift behaviors to
change consequences.



Traffic Safety Culture
shared values and beliefs
of a **group of people**
that influence behaviors
that impact traffic safety





Where do
these **beliefs**
come from?



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Oregon's Traffic Safety Culture

Social
Ecology



Growing Traffic Safety Culture

Focus on **growing** shared values and beliefs
that influence behaviors
that will change consequences

Leverage diverse stakeholders!



Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges

Technical Challenges

- The problem and solution are clear
- Focus may be on doing it better
- Involves positional leaders (authority)

Adaptive Challenges

- Problem and solution are NOT clear
- Involves many stakeholders
- Requires learning & adapting

Heifetz, R. A., Linsky, M., & Grashow, A. (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Harvard Business Press.

Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges

Technical

- Following a recipe
- Building a rocket

Adaptive

- Raising a child
- Growing TSC
- Getting to Zero

“The most common cause of **failure** in leadership is produced by treating **adaptive challenges** as if they were **technical problems.**”

Heifetz, R. A., Linsky, M., & Grashow, A. (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Harvard Business Press. pp 19-20.

Addressing Challenges

Technical

- Define the problem
- Identify the solution
- Identify and address barriers
- Implement the solution
 - Strong management

Adaptive

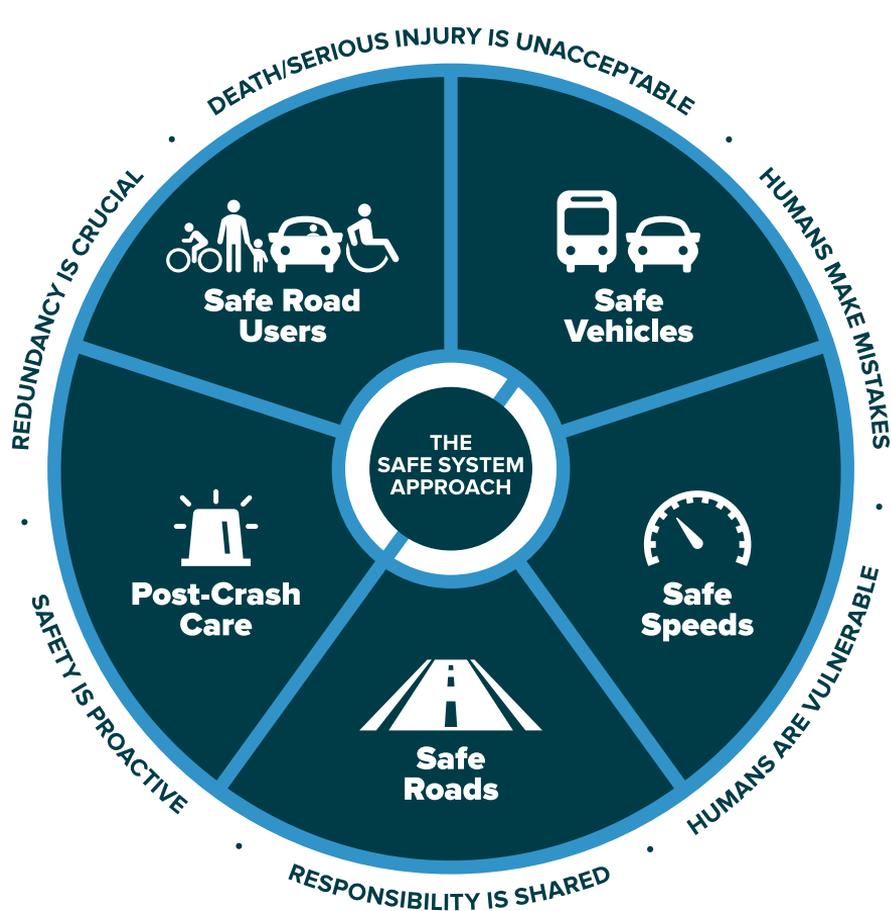
- Identify the challenge and **craft key questions**
- Lean into conflict (it may be an opportunity)
- Allow new roles to emerge
- **Challenge assumptions**

Heifetz, R. A., Linsky, M., & Grashow, A. (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Harvard Business Press.

Tips to **Grow** Traffic Safety Culture

1. Recognize getting to zero fatalities and serious injuries as an adaptive challenge
 - Ask and “hold” questions
 - Learn & Adapt, Learn & Adapt

Safe System Approach



Adaptive Challenge: Ask Questions

- **Safer Roads:** What low-cost, short-term improvements would yield the greatest improvement in TS?
- **Safer People:** What existing countermeasures, if improved, would yield the greatest improvement TS?
- **Safer Speeds:** What are the most important next steps to reduce speeds?
- **Safer Vehicles:** What are short-term opportunities to explore new vehicle technologies?
- **Post-Crash Care:** What improvements to post-crash care would yield the greatest impacts?

Tips to **Grow** Traffic Safety Culture

2. Raise CONCERN and HOPE

- Concern – raising awareness of TS as a public health issue
- Hope – a will and a way forward

Tips to **Grow** Traffic Safety Culture

3. Think across the social ecology

What beliefs and behaviors do we need to grow
across the social ecology of Oregon communities
to improve traffic safety?

Tips to **Grow** Traffic Safety Culture

4. Improve the quality of implementation of existing countermeasures/strategies

- Identify what **BELIEFS** the countermeasure is growing
- Identify ways to assess and **GROW** these **BELIEFS**

Countermeasure is an intentional experience designed to change beliefs.

Review

- Traffic safety is a PUBLIC HEALTH issue
- Traffic Safety Culture – the shared values and beliefs of a group of people that influence behaviors that impact traffic safety
- Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges
- **Grow** Traffic Safety Culture by
 - Ask and “hold” questions
 - Raise concern and hope
 - Think across the social ecology
 - Improve the quality of existing countermeasures/strategies

Next Steps

Early Next Week

- Review your notes or review the agenda
- Look for new ideas, new actions
- Take some action over the next 2 weeks

Act with Courage.

Jay Otto
Linked 