

NORMALIZATION OF DEVIANCE

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Definitions - Normalization of Deviance

- *Deviation* – a violation of a policy or a variation in practice so that it departs from what a rule or standard requires....
Creates an unreasonable increase in risk... (Banga, 2010)
- “People within an organization become so accustomed to a deviant behavior that they don’t consider it as deviant, despite the fact that they far exceed their own rules for safety”
(Vaughan, 1996) .
- Natural tendency to take shortcuts, deviate from standards.
Nothing bad happens, continue, create new norms.

Why Policies and Procedures?

- *Document* an organization's policy for operation and the procedures necessary to fulfill that policy.
- *Create* an internal control framework.

Policies and Procedures – Four Basic Concepts

- ▣ Compliance
- ▣ Operational Needs
- ▣ Risk Management
- ▣ Improvement

Some Well Known Examples

- Space Shuttle Challenger
- Space Shuttle Columbia
- Costa Concordia
- Common denominator
 - ▣ Long incubation periods
 - ▣ Rule violations
 - ▣ Events that accumulated unnoticed
 - ▣ Cultural beliefs about hazards that prevented interventions

“Gradualism Phenomenon”

(Starbuck & McMilliken, 1988)

- Occurs as a process of steps sometimes over an extended period.
- Behavior doesn't occur all at once, instead multiple decisions made or avoided with no noticeable negative effects.
- Potential for disaster is never seen as an option until it occurs.

Factors - Normalization of Deviance

- ❑ **Institutionalization.** Exposes new staff to deviant behaviors, often performed by authority figures.
- ❑ **Socialization.** Will they or won't they? New staff join the group by adopting the group's deviant behaviors.
- ❑ **Rationalization.** Enables everyone involved to convince themselves that their deviances are not only legitimate, but acceptable and perhaps necessary.

Potential Causes

- ❑ Correct information provided about the policy?
- ❑ Program failed to train or instruct staff adequately.
- ❑ Is the policy routinely ignored by most staff?
- ❑ Were there mitigating circumstances that invited the deviation?

Adventure Programs

- Risk Management
- Programs
- Training
- Enrollment, screening, admissions
- Emergency procedures
- Facilities
- Human Resources
- Transportation
- Food
- Equipment
- Manuals, policies, procedures
- Marketing/PR

Breakout #1

Identify *potential* deviances that might occur in adventure programs.

Potential Factors that Account for the Normalization of Deviance in Adventure Programs

- ❑ The rules are stupid and inefficient
- ❑ Knowledge is imperfect
- ❑ I'm breaking the rule for the good of my student(s)
- ❑ The rules don't apply to me/You can trust me
- ❑ Staff are afraid to speak up
- ❑ Leadership withholding or minimizing findings on program problems

Breakout #2

Brainstorm ways to address the issues associated with normalization of deviance.

Recommendations - Normalization of Deviance

- **Early Intervention.** Become vigilant about deviant behaviors and practices, and be ready to take aggressive steps to stop their occurrence before they reach normalization.
- **Educate.** Deviations are common in most work environments.
- **Emphasize.** Unsafe deviations should not to be tolerated.
- **Eliminate.** Deviations must be identified, examined and stopped whenever safety is jeopardized.

Recommendations - Normalization of Deviance

- Teach staff how to conduct uncomfortable conversations.
- Staff need to feel safe when speaking up.
- Realize that oversight and monitoring for rule compliance are never-ending.



?? QUESTIONS ??