

Corporate Leadership and the Covid-19 Pandemic on Hazardous Sites

EC JRC MAHB TWG2

Webinar

Seveso Enforcement and Site Risk Management during the Covid-19 Pandemic

9th February 2021

Dr Charles Cowley

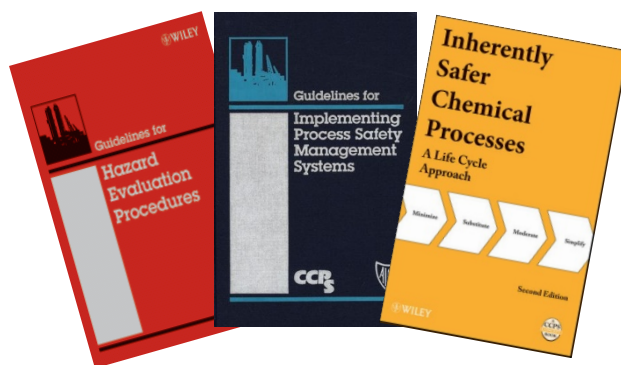
CCPS Staff Consultant (based in London, UK)

Researcher at Cranfield University School of Management, UK

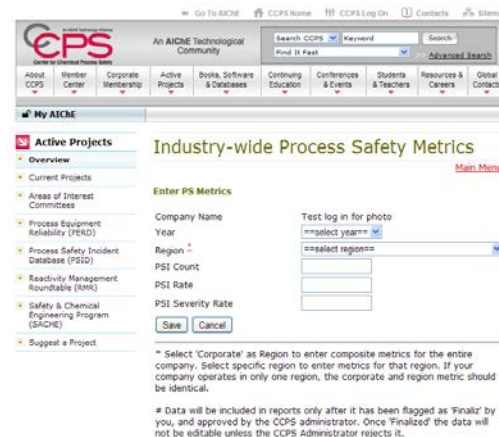
Sharing Best Practices



Books and Publications



Industry-wide Tools, Programs and Guidelines



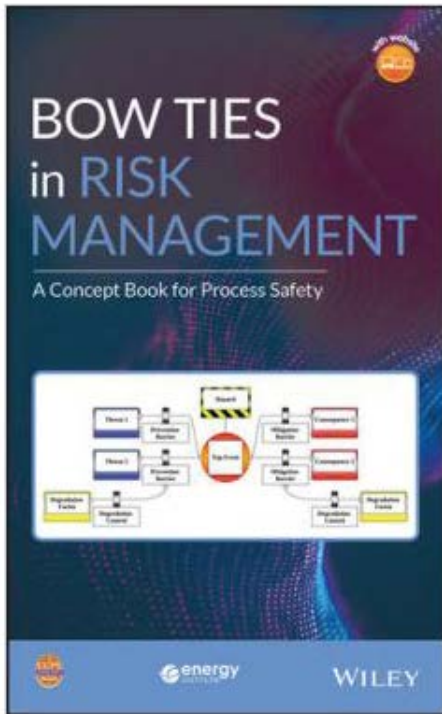
Process Safety Beacon

2021 -
 20 YEAR Anniversary

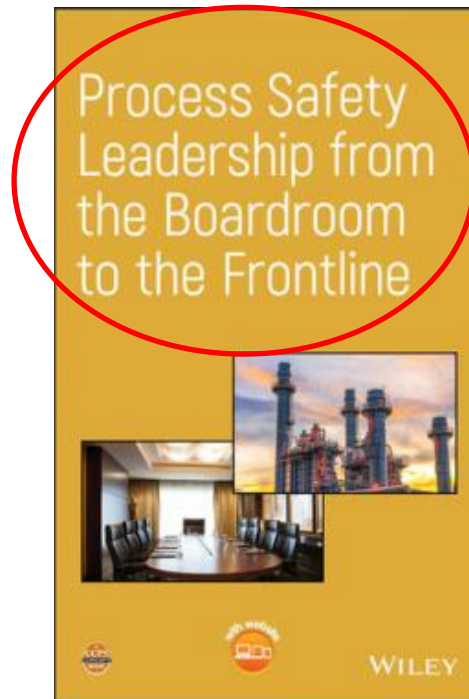


Conferences and Training

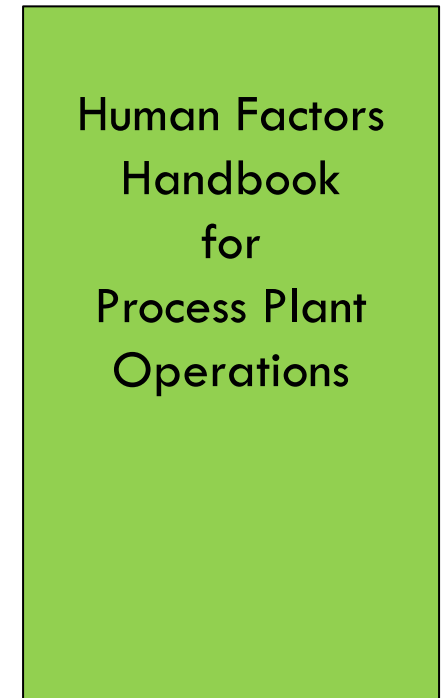
Some new books



Published 2018

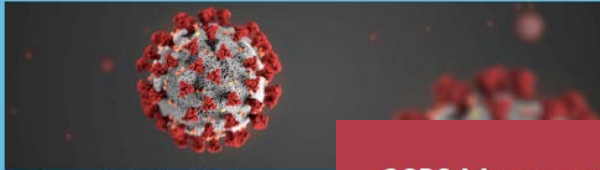


Published 2019



*To be published in
2021*

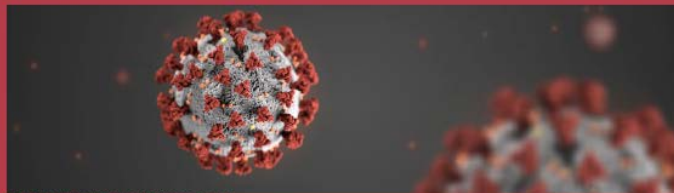
CCPS Monograph: RISK BASED PROCESS SAFETY DURING DISRUPTIVE TIMES



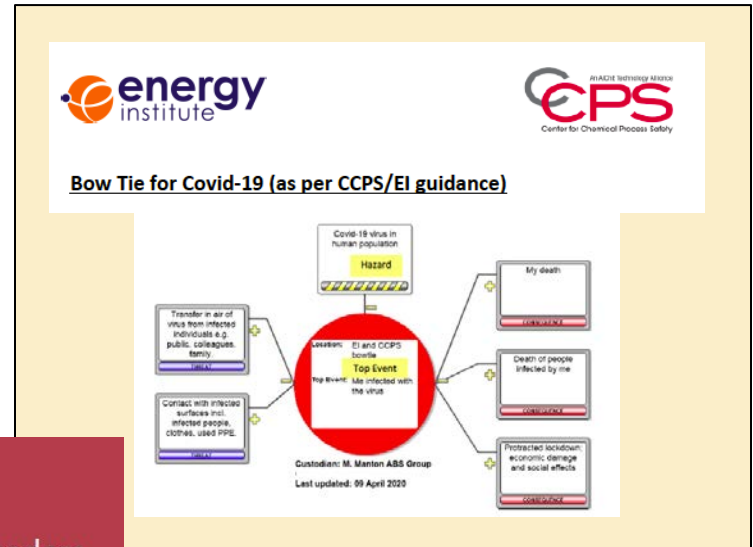
Graphic courtesy: Center for Disease Control

CCPS Monograph:
 Reflections from Global Process Safety Leaders
 During and Following Pandemics

Best practices for managing process safety
 Presented by a select panel of leaders
 worldwide



Graphic courtesy: Center for Disease Control



These are available on the
 CCPS website [here](#)

Covid effects on the working environment, examples:

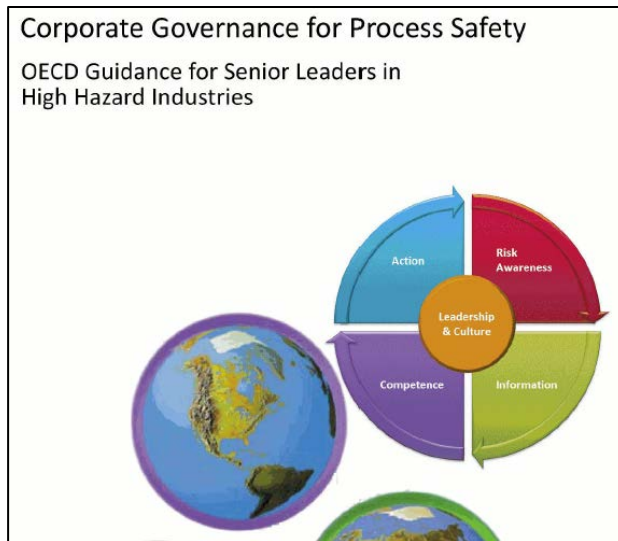
- Reduced staff availability... Management of Organizational Change (MOOC)
- Distractions: social distancing & hygiene at work; issues outside of work
- More frequent plant shutdowns and start-ups – extra risk
- Remote homeworking technical support – communication challenges

Corporate Leadership support in mitigating these:

- Lead the crisis response: implement Business Continuity Plans, **flexibly** as needed
- Communicate often and simply: what is changing / not changing, build **shared situation awareness**
- Compensate for impacts on human performance: manage workload with **flexible** working practices
- Build trust: create **psychological safety** with respect, fairness and honesty
- Maintain a **sense of vulnerability** amid the crisis: compensate for potential degradation of barriers

The dominant traditional view:

- Operational Discipline: procedures, compliance, 'command and control'



Published 2012



The dominant traditional view:

- Operational Discipline: procedures, compliance, 'command and control'
- Corporate leaders:

- **promote a safety culture**
- **understand the risks**
- **ensure data drives process safety**
- **assure their organization's competence**
- **drive active monitoring**



Number of Accidents per Seveso Tier Status



The dominant traditional view:

- Operational Discipline: procedures, compliance, ‘command and control’

All this is not wrong, but it is not enough...

the *many repeat incidents* indicate **widespread ineffective organizational learning**

An alternative view:

- Need for more **adaptive** practices: reliant on flexible organizing and leadership
 - High Reliability Organizing (Weick & Sutcliffe)
 - System Safety (Leveson)
 - Safety II (Hollnagel)



4 year Empirical Research Project



Fieldwork:

- Interviews with 70+ people at the operational sharp end
- Collection of 100+ Incident Documents
- Conducted at 3 different sites:
 - Large petrochemicals complex in the Middle East
 - Onshore oil & gas production in Asia-Pacific
 - Offshore oil & gas production in Europe



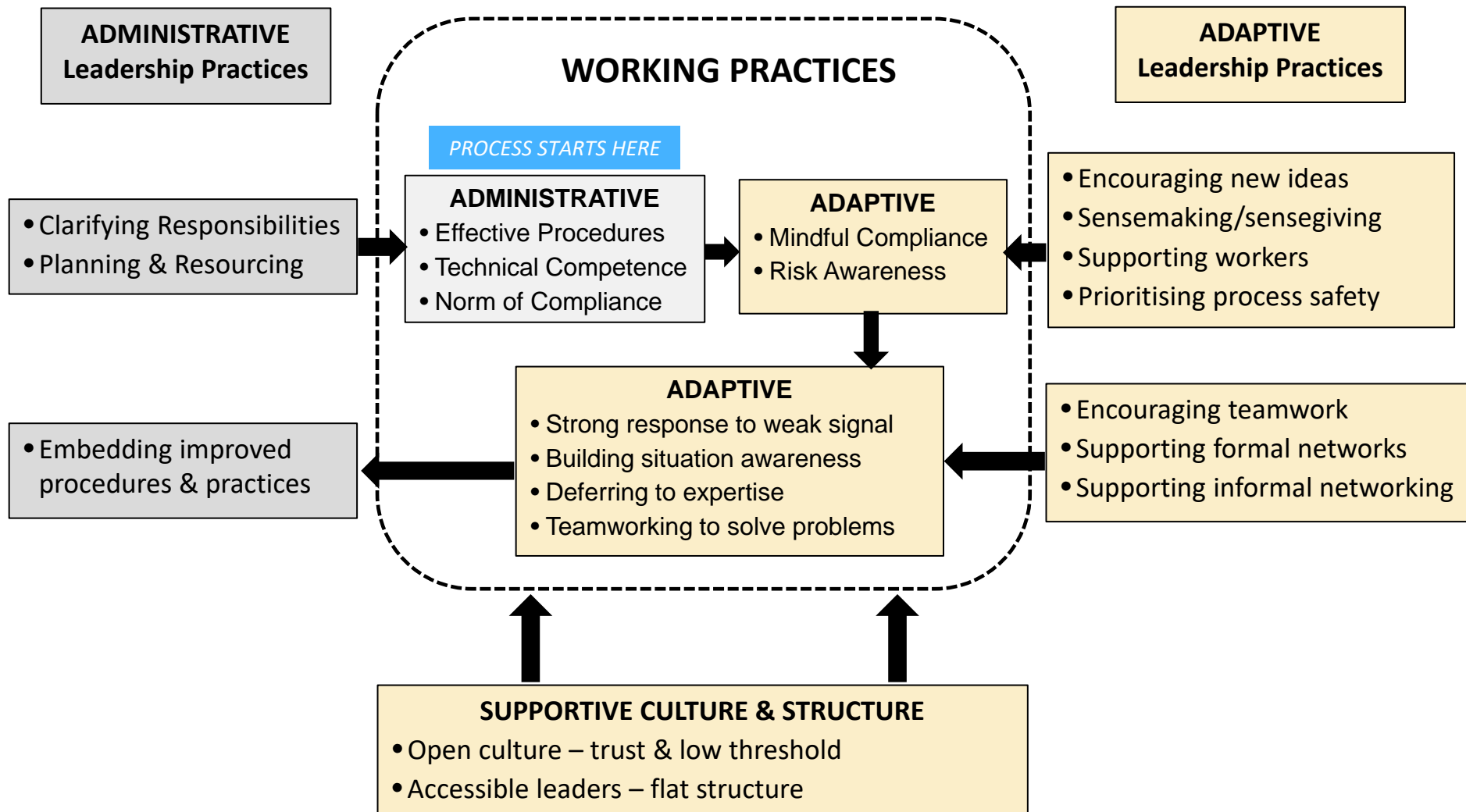
ENHANCED Leadership for Process Safety



Key Findings and Conclusions

- **Organizational Learning is being inhibited** by institutionalised norms of high reliance on procedures and compliance by command and control. These norms can lead to over-directive leadership practices - creating a culture of blame and an over-emphasis of work pressure
- **Effective Organizational Learning does take place** ...in a climate of psychological safety, created by a mutually trusting open culture with a low threshold for speaking up, and supported by a combination of **administrative** and **adaptive** leadership practices
- Both **ADMINISTRATIVE** and **ADAPTIVE** practices are important for process safety
- and can be mutually reinforcing...

Collaborative Competent Improvisation / Adaptation





ENHANCED Leadership for Process Safety



KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- The dominant traditional view of process safety leadership: Operational Discipline: procedures, compliance, 'command and control' *is not enough...* the many repeat incidents indicate **widespread ineffective organizational learning**
- **Organizational Learning is inhibited** by over-reliance on procedures, compliance and leadership of command and control. **Effective Organizational Learning needs** a climate of psychological safety, supported by a combination of **administrative** and **adaptive** leadership practices
- Both ADMINISTRATIVE and ADAPTIVE practices are important for process safety and can be mutually reinforcing - by **collaborative competent improvisation**
- ***This matters even more in abnormal conditions such as a pandemic***

Thank you!

Questions?

If you know a company operating a Seveso site that is not yet a member of CCPS,
please ask them to contact me and I will be glad to explain the benefits

...THANK YOU

charlescowley@gmail.com