

Traffic Safety Culture and Shared Responsibility

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Montana State University



About the Center for Health and Safety Culture

We are an interdisciplinary center serving communities and organizations through research, training, and guidance to cultivate healthy and safe cultures.

Core Issues



Traffic Safety

Substance Misuse



Domestic Violence



Child Wellbeing



“Are we busy
or
are we effective?”

Stephen Covey

“Begin with the END in mind.”

- What are the **CONSEQUENCES** we are trying to reduce or eliminate?
- What are the **BEHAVIORS** that lead to these consequences?
- What are the **BELIEFS** that support these BEHAVIORS?

Beliefs



- “It won’t happen to me.”
- “I am an above-average driver.”
- “I can multi-task.”
- “I won’t get caught.”
- “My vehicle will protect me.”
- “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

Consequences

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

Beliefs → **Behaviors** → **Consequences**

Core Idea

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



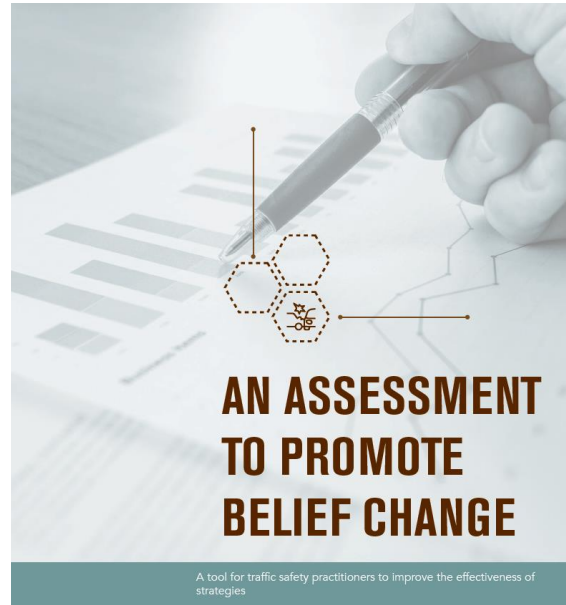
Where do
these **beliefs**
come from?

culture

Traffic Safety Culture

*The shared values and beliefs
of a group of people
that influences behaviors
that impact traffic safety*

An Assessment to Promote Belief Change



An Assessment to Promote Belief Change -

https://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/research/docs/research_proj/tsc/CHANGING_BELIEFS/ASSESSMENT-TOOL.pdf

Growing Traffic Safety Culture

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

Growing traffic safety culture is...

a shared responsibility

A Key Principle of a Safe System Approach is Shared Responsibility

“All stakeholders—including government at all levels, industry, non-profit/advocacy, researchers, and the general public—are vital to preventing fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways.”

U.S. Department of Transportation (2024). What is a safe system approach. Retrieved from <https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS/SafeSystem>



Ways to Foster Shared Responsibility to Grow Traffic Safety Culture in MT

1. Engage across the social ecology.

Social Ecology



Social Ecology



Transforming Our Approach

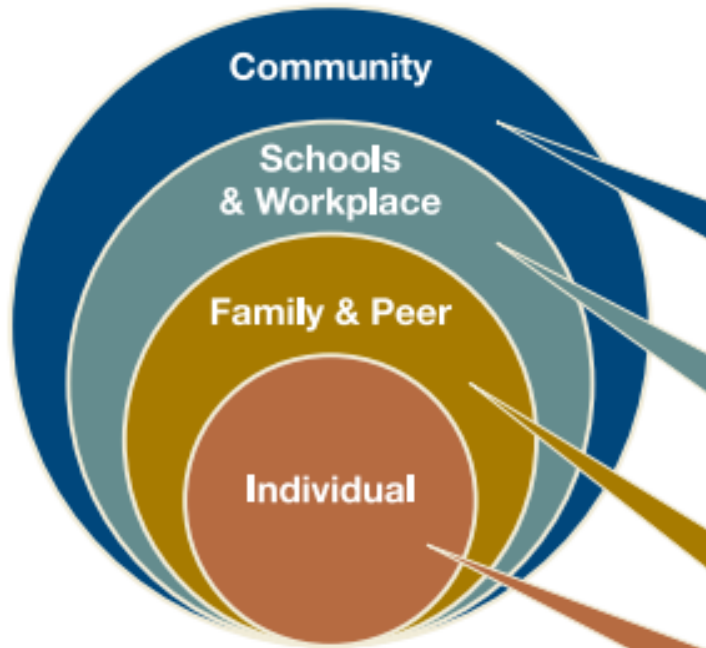
Before

“How do I get pedestrians to be safer?”

Now

“What opportunities exist to promote pedestrian safety at each level of the **social ecology**?”

Actions Across the Social Ecology for Pedestrian Safety



- Promote shifting community narratives from pedestrians being responsible for their safety to a shared responsibility amongst everyone.
 - Cultivate language that supports pedestrians and the safety of all road users and reduce “victim blaming” about pedestrian injuries and fatalities.
 - Incorporate sidewalks and other pedestrian safety infrastructure into community planning and design efforts.
 - Support changes in roadway designs that support pedestrian safety and the safety of all road users.
- Encourage workplaces to establish policies about safe driving practices including not speeding in a work vehicle.
 - Develop a volunteer crossing guard program to promote pedestrian safety.
- Encourage family conversations about pedestrian safety.
 - Develop family rules about driving safely and not speeding.
- Encourage pedestrians to use crosswalks.
 - Encourage drivers to use slower speeds.

Ways to Foster Shared Responsibility to Grow Traffic Safety Culture in MT

1. Engage across the social ecology.
2. Collaborate with multiple partners.



**An Example of
Growing Shared
Responsibility and
Traffic Safety
Culture of
Pedestrian Safety**



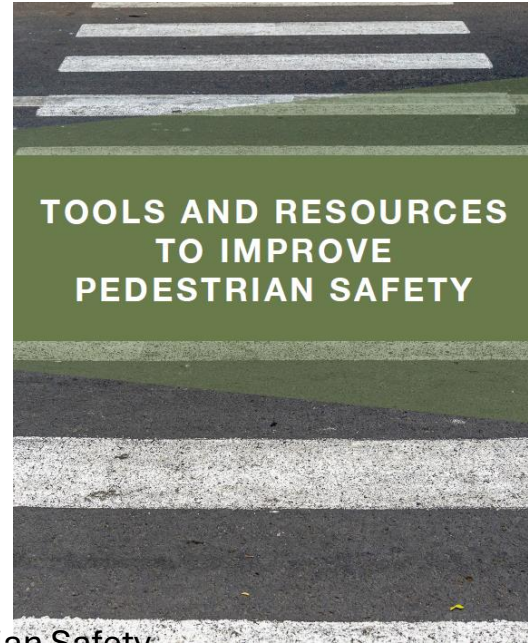
Public Health

Public health can bring a unique perspective to pedestrian safety – considering it in the context of injury prevention as well as health promotion through active transportation. Sometimes, people outside of the immediate efforts to plan, design, and build the transportation system can shed new insights on issues and bring together new stakeholders.

Advocacy Organizations

Improving pedestrian safety may be a component of the mission of an **advocacy organization**. An advocacy organization could convene stakeholders at the local, regional, or state level to identify opportunities to improve pedestrian safety.

Tools and Resources to Improve Pedestrian Safety



Tools and Resource to Improve Pedestrian Safety -

https://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/research/docs/research_proj/tsc/pedestrian_safety/Toolkit.pdf

Ways to Foster Shared Responsibility to Grow Traffic Safety Culture in MT

1. Engage across the social ecology.
2. Collaborate with multiple partners.
3. Leverage the positive culture that already exists.



**The solutions
are in the
community**

**TOGETHER
FOR LIFE**
Utah



www.togetherforlifeutah.org



Perkins, MPH, Ron. (2015). Utah observational surveys on seat belt use.



Utah Together for Life Campaign

<https://togetherforlifeutah.org/>

<https://youtu.be/KgKpmL3vR7A>



Washington Traffic Safety Commission – Together We Get There Campaign

<https://www.togetherwegetthere.com/>

<https://vimeo.com/492128820>

Leverage the positive aspects of the existing culture that exists in Montana.

Turn to your neighbors... (gather in small groups of 2 or 3)

What does growing traffic safety culture in Montana look like from your lens/perspective?

- Who is within your circle of influence?
- What actions can you take to foster shared responsibility in your work? In your community?

Conclusion

- Improving traffic safety across Montana is a complex challenge requiring new ways of thinking and acting.
- We have a shared responsibility.
- We can
 - Engage across the social ecology
 - Collaborate with multiple partners
 - Leverage the positive culture that already exists



Thank you!

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