

# Traffic Safety Culture:

## We are all in this – together!



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**Safe System Solutions**  
CULTURE CHANGE FOR SAFER SYSTEMS



# Safe System Approach

- The Safe System Approach is based on a set of principles.
- These principles need to become part of our **culture**.
- “Responsibility is Shared” has implications for two key groups:
  1. **Road Users** are expected to behave safely & comply with system rules.
  2. **Stakeholders** are expected to work together to create and manage a safe system



Source: FHWA

# 1. Why change road user culture?

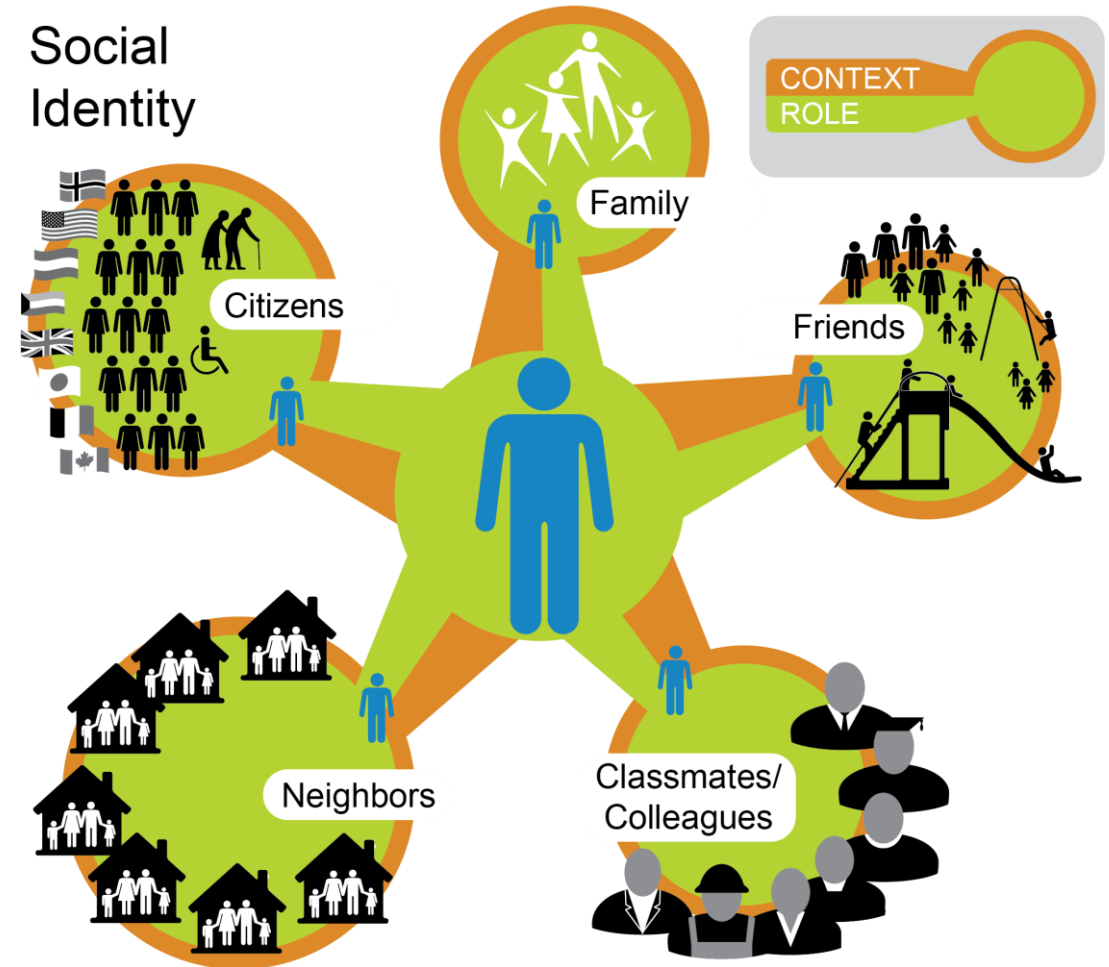
- Most crashes are “caused” by road user behavior.
- Many of these behaviors are deliberate:
  - Willful
  - Intentional
- Behaviors are influenced by our social environment (culture).
- We need a social environment that motivates and sustains safe behavior.



# What is Traffic Safety Culture (TSC)?

## Definition

- Beliefs about the **social environment** shared by a **bonded** group of people that influence their **deliberate** behaviors, which impact **traffic safety**.



# An example of culture-bases strategy from Public Health (Anti-smoking)

As social beings, humans need to feel they belong to social groups.

This campaign uses our natural desire to belong to groups that are important to us.

It shows that smoking is not socially tolerated, so engaging in this behavior can result in us being socially excluded.

It concludes with hope, by saying how they can stop this behavior with the help others who care about them.



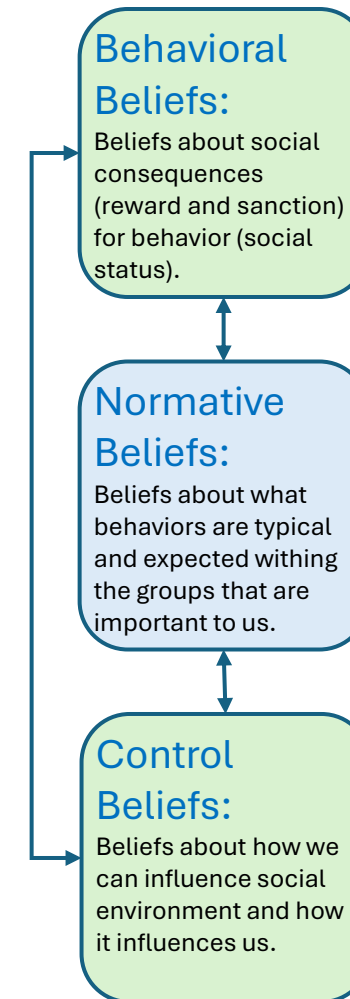
<https://youtu.be/8YOJ6ztzE-s?list=RD8YOJ6ztzE-s>



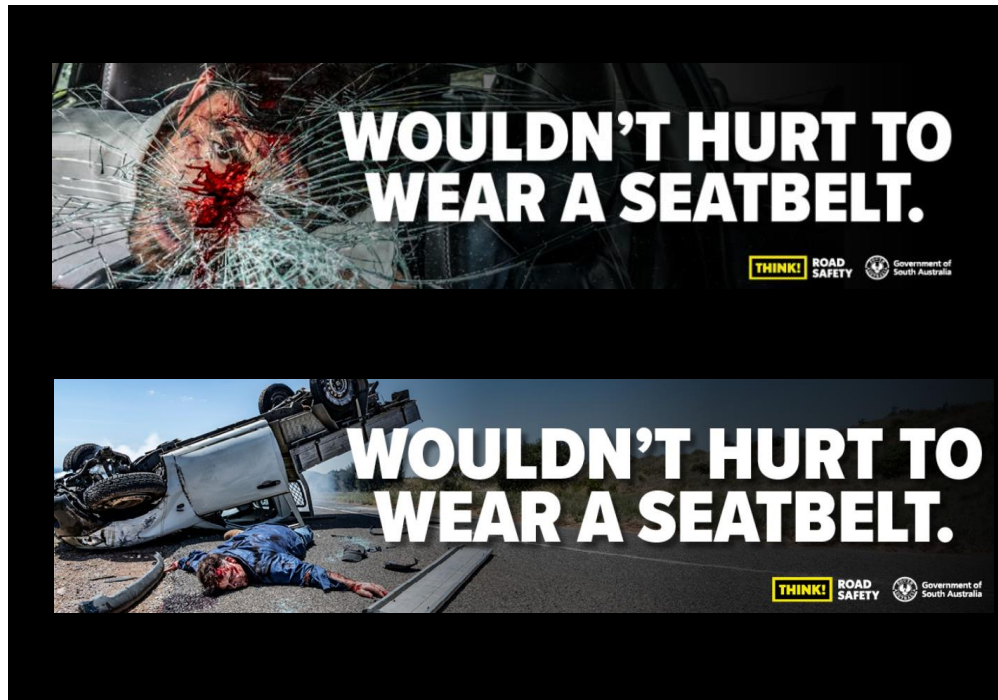


# The defining features of a TSC Strategy

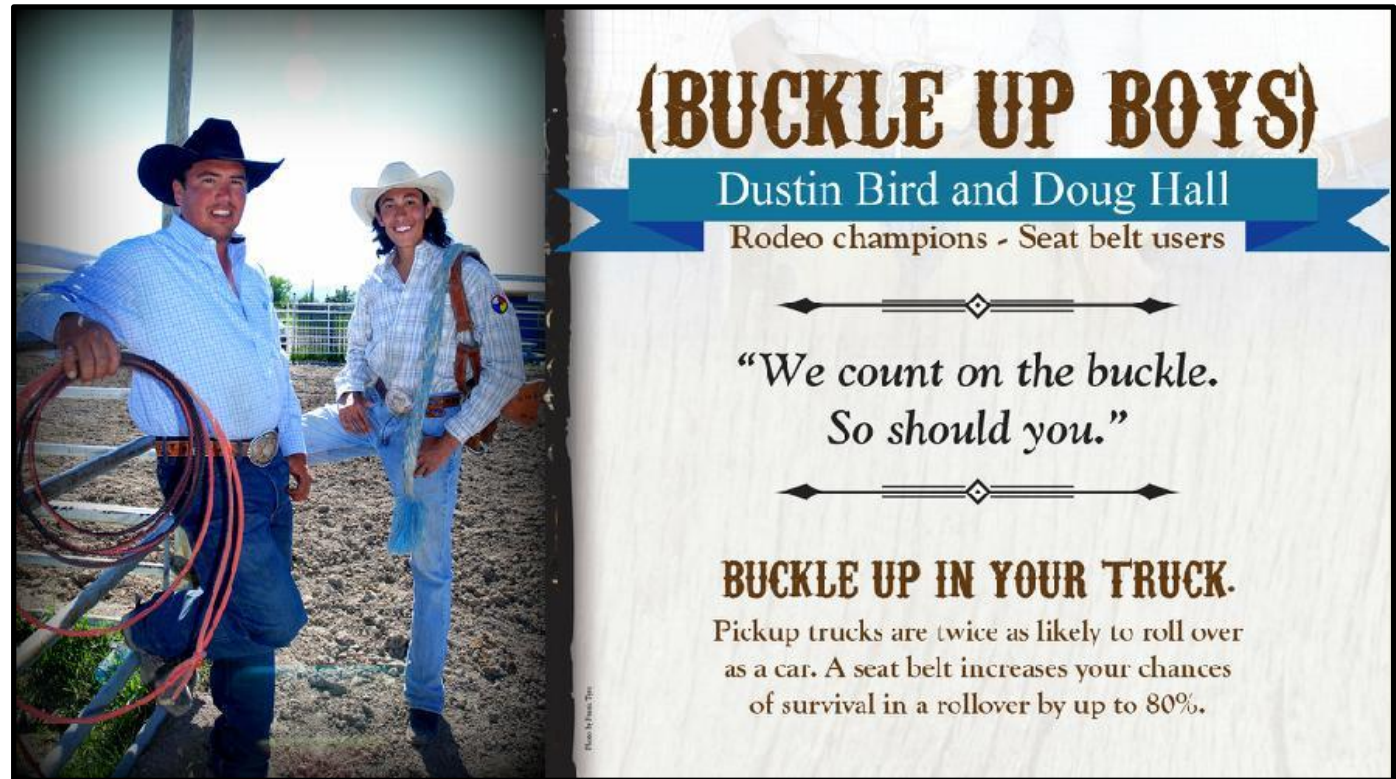
Criteria	Definition
Deliberate Behavior	The target of the strategy is a willful or intentional (deliberate) behavior.
Belief System	The intended mechanism is to change relevant beliefs that influence the target behavior.
Data-driven	Because all groups can have different cultures, the strategy is based on measured (not assumed) beliefs.
Social Environment	The strategy emphasizes beliefs about the <b>social environment</b> (e.g., structures, relationships, processes)
Social Identity	The strategy relates to a person's <b>social identity</b> within bonded groups (e.g., contexts, roles, status).



# Example: A comparison between a “traditional” vs TSC Campaign for seatbelts.



Traditional fear-based campaign focusing on the harm of engaging in risky behavior.



Shows the desired behavior as being socially desirable within the social environment by associating seatbelts with rodeo champions who are high status in tribal communities.

# ***Strategy Innovation is Needed!***

Social media campaigns are an efficient way to reach people, but We need more than social media campaigns to change culture. Culture change comes from creating experiences that provoke the collective evaluation and revision of shared beliefs within the group.

This social demonstration creates a shared experience in a common social setting (movie theatre), to trigger conversations about distracted driving within groups of friends and family that are attending a movie together.



<https://youtu.be/O7Nh7IAIOVA>





# Prosocial Traffic Safety Culture (P-TSC)

Whose  
behavior  
should we  
change?



Traditionally, traffic safety strategies focus on changing the behavior of road users who are acting dangerously (the bad apples). But most road users behave safely. We can also encourage these safe road users to take action that encourages others in their groups to become safer too. This means “non-traditional stakeholders” like families, friends, and workplaces taking **prosocial** actions to help the people they care about behave safely. A culture that encourages people to help others to be safe is called a **“Prosocial Traffic Safety Culture” (P-TSC)**.

# P-TSC Strategy Example - Family

This example uses the shared value of protecting family members from harm And showing our role in families to encourage each other to use seatbelts.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-8PBx7isoM> [youtube.com]



# P-TSC Strategy Example - Friends

This example helps encourage friends not to drink and drive by dispelling fears that asking someone not to drive will be unwelcome and socially embarrassing.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtWirGxV7Q8> [youtube.com]



# P-TSC Strategy Example - Community

This example shows the role of community in helping its members be safer, including the cultural importance of elders within those communities



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZAwdeCV0lY> [youtube.com]





# What we know ...

- There is precedent for prosocial behavior ("helping" and “protecting”).
- Most people have a favorable view of helping.
- The **perception** that most people do help is the most significant predictor of helping behavior.
- A person’s sense of comfort (permission) and confidence (skill) in helping also matters.
- Those who help are more likely to do so with individuals who are socially closer to them.
- How can we extend helping toward strangers?



# Thank you!

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WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN  
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