Safe and Sound:
Leadership's Role in the Journey

Safety Fact:
In March, 2018, the World Health Organization released the following statistic: There is a one in a million chance of a person being harmed while traveling by plane. In comparison, there is a one in 300 chance of a patient being harmed in healthcare.

KRS Journey to Zero Harm
Culture is the foundation for vision and strategy. Transparency is the key to change the culture. Safety must be the overarching strategy. Leaders must take ownership for setting the climate and focusing the work. Also, leaders of organizations must demonstrate the behaviors and expectations essential to a safe and transparent culture.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality defines a culture of safety as one "in which healthcare professionals are held accountable for unprofessional conduct, yet not punished for human mistakes; errors are identified and mitigated before harm occurs; and systems are in place to enable staff to learn from errors and near misses and prevent recurrence" (AHRQ PSNet Safety Culture 2014).

Leaders have four main responsibilities when building a culture of safety:
- Guarding the learning system – fully engaging in the work of self-reflections that lead to transparency, improvement, continuous learning, and inspiring that work through the facility.
- Creating psychological safety – making sure that anyone, including patients and families, can comfortably voice concerns, suggestions, and ideas for change.
- Fostering trust – creating an environment of non-negotiable respect, ensuring that people feel their opinions are valued, and any negative behavior is quickly addressed.
- Ensuring value alignment – applying KRS values to every decision made.

Organizations should provide training in the specific leadership behaviors that reflect our core values and are required to build a safety culture. The best organizations codify leadership skills into a formal "tool-box".

The following are items for your tool-box:
- Articulate that safety is integral to our KRS core values. It is the glue that holds our organization together and drives all activities. Safety is a precondition of operations.
  - Example: Share the Patient Experience Report with your team. Review how each component of the report contributes to decreasing harm to the patient
- To help keep safety foremost in people's minds, ensure that the first words out of your mouth indicate your true concern: providing safe, high-quality care as a part of an overall exceptional patient experience
  - Example: Start every meeting with a safety message
- Put safety first in decision making.
  - Example: Have you expressed that the number one priority in the facility/unit is safety? Can your patients articulate your safety priority? How will this decision or action affect patient safety? Will it make the patient more or less likely to experience a good outcome?
- Positive feedback shapes behavior more powerfully, building a relationship of trust and respect between coworkers or between coworkers and supervisors.
  - Example: 5:1 feedback. The ratio of 5 positive interactions for every 1 negative interaction shapes behavior more powerfully, building a relationship of trust and respect between coworkers and coworkers and supervisors
- Daily Check-In for Safety
  - Example: Structured conversation about safety that involves senior leaders and department leaders from across the organization. At the leadership level, the check in serves to build situational and operations awareness on the part of leaders. At the unit level, the check in builds awareness among staff.

SAFETY ALERT **NPORT**