

Breaking Cycles of Mistrust Workshop

Lack of trust and poor communication in the workplace undermine efforts to create a culture in which everyone goes home safely at the end of the day. In this workshop, designed to support just such a cultural transformation, participants 1) learn to identify sources and cycles of mistrust; 2) develop action plans to interrupt the cycles; and 3) acquire tools to promote trust and open communication in the workplace.

An exercise called Exchange of Perceptions, in which union/hourly employees split off into one room and management/salaried employees into another, charges each group with articulating what exasperates them and what they think exasperates their counterparts. Everyone reunites and all issues are shared, typically generating high emotion—but ground rules have been set to privilege the airing and hearing of feelings over debate. Once each group hears and acknowledges the other's frustrations, they jointly target issues to work on. (Commonly those issues revolve around communication, accountability, the priority of productivity over safety, mutual respect, responsiveness to safety concerns and training.)