

# “It takes a village”

Strengthening Safeguarding Through  
Organisational Cultural Change

A Narrative Literature Review

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# Culture Definitions

**Given the broad meaning of the word culture, the following are generalised and contextualised definitions for the purpose of clarifying the language used in this review. They are based on the 'collective' concept of 'culture' as defined by Andrew Hopkins. [1]**

## Culture

"For those seeking culture change within organisations, the most useful way to define culture is as the collective practices of the group—the way we do things around here. The simplicity and concreteness of this expression enables us to avoid most of the conceptual turmoil that surrounds the term." [1]

## Institutional Culture

Institutional culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours that characterise the nature of an institution's operations and the way its members interact. Often used in contexts like educational, governmental, or other large established entities, institutional culture tends to be more stable and deeply rooted due to the longevity and purpose of the institution.

## Organisational Culture

Organisational culture encompasses the shared beliefs, values, norms, practices, and behaviours that shape its operations and interactions. It encompasses the feel or environment that is cultivated internally within a particular organisation, often shaped by leadership styles, policies, and group dynamics. Organisational culture is the foundational blueprint for an organisation that dictates its unique identity, guiding behaviour, and decision making.

Edgar Shein, a prominent social psychologist, identified three levels of organisational culture: artifacts (visible organisational structures and process), espoused values (strategies, goals, and philosophies), and basic underlying assumptions (unconscious beliefs).

## Organisational Culture Change

Organisational culture change refers to a transformation in the values, beliefs, norms, and practices that govern how members of an organisation interact with one another and with their stakeholders. This change can be intentional, as in response to strategic initiatives or external pressures, or can emerge organically over time due to shifts in leadership, or other internal or external factors.

## Safeguarding Culture

Safeguarding culture refers to an environment where measures, practices, and policies are in place to actively prevent harm, especially to vulnerable children or adults. It emphasises proactive strategies and structures to keep individuals safe from harm, neglect, or abuse.

## Safe Culture

Safe culture refers to an environment within an organisational context where individuals feel safe emotionally, physically, and psychologically, fostering an overall sense of security and wellbeing.

## Culture of Safety

Culture of safety refers to a culture where safety (both physical and psychological) is prioritised, and every member is committed to preventing harm. It emphasises shared responsibility and vigilance.

## Psychologically Safe Organisational Culture

In the context of preventing sexual abuse and strengthening safeguarding, a psychologically safe organisational culture is one where every individual – regardless of their role or status – feels secure and empowered to speak out against inappropriate behaviour, misconduct, or any form of abuse without fear of retaliation, blame, or other negative consequences.

## Restorative Culture

Restorative culture refers to fostering an environment aimed at repairing harm, encouraging collective accountability and responsibility, inclusive and honest dialogue, and upholding fair, transparent and equitable processes, ensuring the rights of all parties are respected.

## Reparative Culture

Reparative culture refers to an organisational environment that actively recognises and rectifies past abuse, focuses on healing and support for the victims/survivors, implements measures to prevent future abuse, and cultivates a safe, respectful, and transparent atmosphere.

## Internal Culture

Internal culture primarily pertains to the everyday lived experiences, practices, and interactions of the members of an organisation. It is the observable manifestation of the organisation's values and norms. It is what members live, breathe, and experience daily.

## Foundational Culture

Foundational culture refers to the deeply rooted beliefs, values, and principles that form the base of the organisation's culture. It is more stable and enduring, serving as the bedrock upon which the organisation is built. It influences the mission, vision, strategy, and all subsequent layers of the organisation's culture.

## Prevailing Culture

A prevailing culture is the set of dominant values, norms and behaviours at a given time, shaped by both foundational and internal cultures. It reflects the most influential and visible aspects of culture representing the current state of an organisation's internal and foundational beliefs and values.

## Underlying Culture

Underlying culture refers to implicit values, beliefs, and norms within an organisation which are foundational but often unspoken or unrecognised, shaping behaviours and attitudes from beneath the surface of observable organisational practices and policies.

## Dominant Culture

Dominant culture refers to the values, norms, beliefs, customs, practices, and traditions that are accepted and upheld by the majority within an organisation, and which wield the most influence and power, shaping the behaviours, perceptions, and perspectives of its members.

## Cultural Factors

Cultural factors refer to the underlying beliefs, values, norms, and behaviours that are prevalent within an organisation that shape how its members interact, make decisions, and perceive situations, e.g., an organisation might have a culture of silence, a culture of unquestioning loyalty to leadership, or a culture that prioritises institutional reputation.

## Cultural Enablers

Cultural enablers refer to specific elements of an organisational culture that facilitate or allow certain behaviours or practices to occur, e.g., norms of secrecy, power dynamics, lack of accountability, value of reputation.

## Corrective Culture

Within the context of institutional failures, corrective culture refers to the organisational environment and processes that encourage identifying, reporting, and addressing issues or concerns that, if left unaddressed, could lead to failure. It typically involves two key components: "voicing" and "hearing." "Voicing" relates to the ability and willingness of employees to express concerns about potential problems or malpractices within the organisation, while "hearing" involves the responsiveness of management to these

concerns, including acknowledging the issues and taking appropriate action to resolve them. A healthy corrective culture is characterised by open communication and a lack of fear of retaliation or victimisation for raising concerns, allowing organisations to address and rectify problems promptly, thereby reducing the risk of systemic failure.

## Cultural Risks

Cultural risks refer to the ingrained beliefs, norms and practices within an organisation that increase the likelihood or perpetration of sexual abuse. These risks which can be potential 'blind spots' include tolerance of inappropriate behaviour, power imbalances, silence around misconduct, and lack of accountability.

## Cultures of Risk

Cultures of risk in an organisational context refers to the collective attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviour within an organisation that may contribute to an increased likelihood of adverse outcomes or harm. In the context of addressing sexual abuse within organisations, a culture of risk refers to an environment where inappropriate behaviours and actions are overlooked, ignored, or inadequately addressed, thereby increasing the vulnerability of individuals to abuse.

## Cultural Dynamics

Cultural dynamics refer to the interactive forces of beliefs, values, and norms that drive behavioural patterns. These dynamics can shift over times and influence how an organisation responds to sexual abuse issues, either by proactively promoting a culture of safety and respect, or inadvertently allowing harmful behaviours and situations to persist.

## Cultural Shifts

Cultural shifts refer to changes in the collectives, values, beliefs, norms, and practices of an organisation that can result from internal factors, such as leadership changes or policy updates, or external influences, like social trends or regulatory changes. A cultural shift can imply a departure from an established way of thinking or doing and can profoundly impact behaviour, decision making, and interactions within the organisation.

## Culturally Safe Practice

Culturally safe practice refers to service delivery that recognises, respects, and values the unique cultural heritage, beliefs, and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. It involves ongoing critical reflection of knowledge, skills, attitudes, practising behaviours, and power differentials in delivering safe, accessible, and responsive services free of racism. Cultural safety is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families, and communities.

## Sectoral Culture

Sectoral culture refers to the prevailing behaviours, values, norms, and practices that are shared among the organisations and individuals within a specific sector, such as public, government, non-government, healthcare, or education. It is shaped by the unique needs, challenges, goals, and functions characteristic of each sector and can impact the implementation of policies, the adoption of new programs, and approach to problem solving and risk management.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 “If it takes a village to raise a child ... it also takes a village to abuse one.”

This powerful line from the film *Spotlight* [2] metaphorically conveys an important message about collective responsibility and complicity<sup>1</sup>. It suggests that harm or abuse is not solely due to the actions of individual perpetrators or ‘a few bad apples’, but can also arise from the failure, negligence, or complicity of the broader collective or institution. Just as a community can contribute to the positive nurturing of a child, it can also collectively, through action or inaction, contribute to the harm of a child.

The film speaks directly to the deeper story of the Catholic Church’s extensive and systemic cover-up of sexual abuse and the leadership failures that protected abusers, silenced victims, and enabled sexual abuse to continue unchecked for decades. [3] In a paper questioning the church’s cover-up using ‘bad apple theory’ (individual responsibility) versus ‘bad barrel theory’ (institutional complicity through structure and culture), [4] Jodi Death believes that the responsibility for abuse is not solely confined to individual abusers within the Catholic Church, but also the institution itself, which has been increasingly implicated and held to account for its abuses of power and privilege.

Numerous high profile sexual abuse scandals involving abuses of power have occurred globally across various sectors like religion,

education, media, charity, and sport. Patterns of institutional misconduct, characterised by failures to detect, report, and confront abuse, have been documented and observed in prominent cases within organisations like USA Gymnastics [5], Boy Scouts of America (BSA) [6], Penn State, [7] the BBC [8] and several universities. [9] In each of these cases, the underlying culture<sup>2</sup> and structure of the organisations played a role in facilitating the abuse by prioritising the preservation of reputation over the welfare and safety of victims, leading to prolonged suffering and a lack of justice for those impacted. *“The complicity-defining institutional actors casting their die with the institution continuously exacerbates the peril of the person to whom a primary duty of care must be owed.”* [10]

Viewed through the lens of collective responsibility and institutional complicity, this literature review will explore how the underlying culture of an organisation can either inadvertently create environments that enable and overlook abuse, or foster environments that are physically protective and psychologically safe. It will investigate how organisational culture can either support the implementation and efficacy of safeguarding measures, or how it can obstruct them, making safeguarding efforts less effective.

The focus is on examining how organisational culture change can be used as a strategic tool for identifying and addressing an organisation’s underlying culture (values, norms, beliefs, and actions) with the end goal of actively cultivating

1 Organisational/institutional complicity is referred to in the context of ‘passive’ complicity, a scenario where the institution is aware of the misconduct but overlooks and fails to address it; and ‘structural’ complicity, where the prevailing organisational practices or cultural norms implicitly support or enable such misconduct, often because of prioritising their own reputation or interests over wellbeing.

2 Underlying culture refers to implicit values, beliefs, and norms within an organisation which are foundational but often unspoken or unrecognised, shaping behaviours and attitudes from beneath the surface of observable organisational practices and policies.

and sustaining a culture of safety<sup>3</sup> that is supported by a whole-of-organisation<sup>4</sup> approach.

## 1.2 Background and Purpose

### 1.2.1 Research Gap

The current research on sexual abuse prevention supports a public health model based on primary prevention interventions focused on situational prevention. [11]–[15] This approach prioritises identifying and managing situational risks related to specific conditions or scenarios that increase the probability of abuse, such as unsupervised access to vulnerable individuals, insufficient staff awareness of the signs of abuse, or environments conducive to predatory grooming behaviours. This research offers crucial frameworks, policies, and strategies for addressing these directly identifiable situational risks.

Despite research that acknowledges the role organisational culture plays in enabling sexual abuse, [16] and research that establishes the need to change organisational culture, to both redress past institutional failures and create safer organisations, [17]–[20] there is a lack of research specifically addressing the practical application of organisational culture change strategies aimed at preventing sexual abuse. This includes the absence of a systemic framework and clear terminology/language to understand how culture can act as either a deterrent or a protective factor against sexual abuse, nor a focused approach for evaluating and mitigating 'cultural risks'.<sup>5</sup>

The research gap highlights the need for further systemic research into the impact and efficacy of specific organisational cultural change interventions on sexual abuse prevention/safeguarding.

### 1.2.2 Research Questions

Based on the research gap identified, this review seeks to address the following questions:

*How does the underlying culture of an organisation act as a facilitator or deterrent to sexual abuse?*

*How does transforming the underlying culture of an organisation strengthen safeguarding?*

*What culture change strategies can be applied to strengthen safeguarding?*

### 1.2.3 Aims and Objectives

This review aims to explore how organisations can strengthen their protective measures against sexual abuse by focusing the 'spotlight inward' on their existing internal cultures to uncover underlying vulnerabilities, blind spots, and harmful systems.<sup>6</sup>

It aims to investigate how introspective processes combined with culture review techniques, can pinpoint and mitigate the cultural risks that may enable sexual abuse. It also presents positive processes for fostering a restorative culture and cultivating a culture of psychological safety as models of safe culture.<sup>7</sup>

This review covers a broad exploration of literature across disciplines and sectors to understand how organisational culture change could be applied as a multifaceted intervention strategy to support existing prevention efforts.

#### Objectives:

1 – Explore the key underlying cultural power dynamics and structures within organisations that enable sexual abuse and inhibit reporting, with the aim of pinpointing identifiable 'cultural risks' that can be addressed through mitigation strategies.

2 – Identify positive cultural attributes in organisations that enable a psychologically safe culture/response, with the aim of pinpointing identifiable 'cultural strengths' that can be promoted and fostered to enhance holistic wellbeing.

3 – Identify culture change models and self-assessment tools that can be used to inform the development of a bespoke culture change self-assessment instrument designed to mitigate identified cultural risks and leverage cultural strengths for a psychologically safe organisational culture.

3 Culture of safety refers to a culture where safety (both physical and psychological) is prioritised, and every member is committed to preventing harm. It emphasises shared responsibility and vigilance.

4 Whole-of-organisation refers to a holistic approach that ensures all parts of an organisation, at every level and across all functions, are aligned and engaged in a particular initiative, strategy, or objective.

5 Cultural risks refer to the ingrained beliefs, norms, and practices within an organisation that increase the likelihood or perpetration of sexual abuse. These risks include tolerance of inappropriate behaviour, power imbalances, silence around misconduct, and lack of accountability.

6 Harmful systems refer to the embedded structure, norms, and processes that either enable, normalise, or inadequately address sexual abuse.

7 Safe culture refers to an environment within an organisational context where individuals feel safe emotionally, physically, and psychologically, fostering an overall sense of security and wellbeing.

By addressing these objectives, this review seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice regarding organisational culture and safeguarding, providing both a deeper understanding of their interconnectedness and practical possibilities for implementation.

#### 1.2.4 Methodology

##### Literature Search

An extensive search of various scholarly databases, such as Sage, Wiley, PubMed, JSTOR, PsycINFO, Science Direct, Elsevier, and Semantic Scholar was conducted to gather relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, as well as non-academic sources of grey literature, including newspaper articles/reports and websites. Sources were selected based on relevance to the topics of sexual abuse prevention, safeguarding, organisational culture, risks, barriers, and facilitators to reporting sexual abuse, psychological safety, and organisational culture change. This included sources that offered insights into organisational dynamics, power structures, and cultural change models.

Keywords and phrases include “institutional culture,” “sexual abuse prevention,” “safeguarding culture,” “organisational development,” “culture change,” “organisational culture change,” “culture transformation,” and “culture shift.” The literature review prioritises recent sources published within the last ten years, to ensure relevance to contemporary best practices.

##### Non literature multimedia sources

A selection of films on the topic of institutional sexual abuse were viewed to offer additional context and insight into real-world instances of organisational failures and the human impact of such cases to understand the cultural dynamics, patterns, and lessons from high profile sexual abuse scandals. Films including “The Hunting Ground” and “Happy Valley,” (Universities) “The Invisible War,” (Military) “Athlete A,” (Gymnastics) “Spotlight,” (Catholic Church) “Scouts Honour: Inside the Secret Files of Boy Scouts of America,” “She Said,” (#MeToo), provide a broader, more visual perspective and nuanced understanding of the underlying cultures, institutional patterns, and dynamics surrounding abuse. Relevant webinars also provided rich sources of background information regarding best practice in sexual abuse prevention and safeguarding, and interviews with leading practitioners. “Abusing Power: Exploring root causes and issues for safeguarding – power, privilege, gender, and intersectionality | Safeguarding Resource and Support.” “In Conversation: Judith Herman and Joe Tucci on Truth and Repair.” “In Conversation:

Healing and Recovery in Indigenous Communities hosted by the National Centre.”

##### Descriptive Synthesis

Information extracted from the sources were organised and grouped thematically, focusing on positive and negative cultural attributes and models, patterns related to cultural barriers, organisational dynamics, risks, culture diagnostic tools, overview of emerging culture change programs. The review concentrates on providing a detailed narrative of the identified themes and does not aim for exhaustive analysis or synthesis of data.

##### Limitations

This review aims to offer an enriched understanding of the subject, but it is largely descriptive and not exhaustive. It does not seek to provide a rigorous or analytical synthesis of the literature, and its findings may not cover all aspects of the complex interplay of organisational culture and safeguarding.

By employing this methodology, a comprehensive descriptive overview of the subject matter was attained, offering insights into the various organisational dynamics and cultures impacting safeguarding. The narrative and descriptive approach of this review facilitates accessible and informative discussion on strategies to strengthen safeguarding through organisational cultural change.

## 1.3 Culture Change Prevention Framework – Kooyoora

The insights gained from this review will go towards informing a new and innovative quality improvement project called *Developing and Implementing a Framework for Abuse Prevention through Culture Change and Organisational Development*, which has been initiated by Kooyoora Ltd and commissioned by the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse.

The culture change prevention framework, which will include the development of a broad set of psychological safety principles, will offer a roadmap to help (client and other) organisations assess their internal dynamics, identify their unique cultural risks and obstacles, and work towards changing the cultures that may inadvertently lead to abuse and replace these with new patterns and behaviours that facilitate more robust safeguarding. This framework emphasises the implementation of proactive strategies and a systemic longer-term approach to cultural transformation that supports regulatory compliance.

Kooyoora grant: *For some of our client organisations, the path to creating child safe cultures is complex and daunting. Organisations currently have no clear model or approach for identifying their cultural and organisational child safety risks, nor do they have ready access to approaches that will mitigate those risks.*

## 1.4 Victim/Survivor Centred Change

For meaningful organisational cultural change geared towards strengthening safeguarding, the voices of victims and survivors of sexual abuse are vital. The lived experiences of victims and survivors offer a unique and invaluable perspective and firsthand understanding of the systemic failures that allowed their abuse to occur. By inviting their participation and integrating their knowledge into strategy and policy development, organisations can devise more grounded, effective, and comprehensive preventative measures.

The stories of survivors serve as powerful reminders of the human cost of organisational complicity, complacency, and misconduct. For victim and survivors who choose to share their lived experiences, it is essential to recognise the emotional labour, time, and wisdom involved, and crucial to ensure fair compensation and acknowledgement in a manner that honours their contribution. “Co-production must, in order to be authentically co-productive, provide mutual benefits.” [21] [22]

At the forefront of research, the Australian National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) are building a knowledge base of best practices regarding the role of victim and survivor advocates in developing public policy, ensuring that often marginalised voices are heard. [23] Other current research includes *The Dignity by Design Project: Survivor-led system*

*redesign* [24] which aims to create innovative tools and resources to promote dignity-driven, trauma-informed, culturally safe, and inclusive practices and policies for young victims and survivors accessing mental health and substance abuse services. *Listen UP! Learning from victims and survivors about what helps disclosure and responses to child sexual abuse*, will engage victims and survivors, their supporters, and professional practitioners to mobilise lived experience knowledge to co-produce communication tools, education campaigns, and professional development to improve responses to children, young people, and adults who have experienced child sexual abuse.

## 2. Rationale for Organisational Cultural Change

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia exposed extensive and harrowing instances of child sexual abuse within organisations. After a five-year inquiry into the mishandling of sexual abuse by institutions, the Royal Commission highlighted the need for cultural change, given the depth and breadth of **systemic issues and failures it uncovered**. [25] To prevent future abuse organisations were urged to undergo cultural changes to address issues related to power imbalances, lack of accountability, and inadequate reporting mechanisms. Organisational culture has been cited as a key contributing factor in numerous enquiries into institutional child sexual abuse. [26] According to a major Royal Commission research report, organisational culture plays an important role in either perpetuating or preventing abuse. [16]

The notion of 'child safe institutions' became prominent with recommendations advocating for significant cultural changes within organisations to prioritise children's safety and wellbeing. These changes included fostering 'child safe cultures' where children are valued, their rights are respected, their views on safety are sought, and their best interests are paramount. [27] [28]

*"Cultural change in our institutions and society more broadly, is fundamental to ensuring the safety of our children." [3]*

*"We learned that the institutional cultures and practices that allowed abuse to occur and inhibited detection and response continue to exist in contemporary institutions." [25]*

*"Institutional cultural factors include leadership and organisational culture, which shape assumptions, values, beliefs, and norms. Leadership and organisational culture can include risk factors such as the failure to listen to children or prioritising the reputation of an institution over the safety and wellbeing of children." [3]*

*"Many institutions we examined did not have a culture where the best interests of children were the priority. Some leaders did not take responsibility for their institution's failure to protect children. Some leaders felt their primary responsibility was to protect the institution's reputation, and the accused person." [3]*

## 2.1 Organisation Culture and Institutional Failure

Studying the underlying mechanisms by which institutions have consistently failed to protect children and individuals from sexual abuse can provide crucial knowledge that is instrumental in dealing with the organisational cultures that sustain or allow the continuation of such problems. By comprehending why and how failures in protection occur within institutions, insights can be gained that are important for rectifying the cultural aspects of organisations that enable such failures and abuse.

In a comprehensive examination of the correlation between organisational culture and institutional failure, a systematic review studied fifty-eight articles containing seventy-four case studies which addressed fifty-seven unique instances of institutional failures, ranging from nuclear disasters and financial fraud to failures to adapt and institutional abuse. [29]

Findings showed that problems arising within organisational culture predominantly related to **how priorities were ranked** within the organisation. It was found that **failure to prioritise safety and ethics** was the **most recurrent cultural element associated with failure**. Interestingly, institutional change was rarely identified as a contributing factor, signifying that enduring beliefs and behaviours within the organisation might play a more decisive role in leading to failure. [29]

The study highlights the importance of a 'corrective culture', which encompasses the 'voicing' of concerns by employees and the 'hearing' or acknowledgment and action on those concerns by management. A key finding was that the major deterrent for employees in reporting issues was not the lack of a platform but the fear of retaliation, including bullying and termination. [29]

This underlines the importance of **a proactive, secure, and responsive communicative environment in pre-empting and mitigating organisational failures**. These 'corrective culture' issues are unique as they represent overlooked opportunities to address and rectify problems, thereby averting potential failures. The research illustrates the importance of organisational culture, specifically the prioritisation of safety and ethics and the establishment of a robust corrective culture, in preventing institutional failures where problems are swiftly identified and appropriately managed.

# 3. Changing Organisational Culture – ‘Beyond Compliance’

## 3.1 “Culture is what you see, when compliance is not in the room.”

In response to the Royal Commissions findings, the introduction of government enforced regulations, such as the *Child Safe Standards*, [30] *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*, [31], *Betrayal of Trust*, [32] and *Minimum Practice Standards*, [33] have prompted organisations to re-evaluate their cultures in line with these regulatory mandates.

While the policies and standards emphasise embedding safety into the culture of an organisation as a primary goal, [27] the broader discourse often overlooks the pivotal role of examining the inherent culture of an organisation on a deeper level. This underlying culture can significantly influence how safeguarding practices are perceived, implemented, and maintained.

*“Organisational culture is the basis for safeguarding to be practiced well in an organisation: where people are and feel safe to engage, and anyone in, or impacted by, an organisation is empowered to report concerns wherever they may arise.” [34]*

*“Within the charity sector there has been broad agreement and recognition that robust, thorough safeguarding policies are essential. However, to be utilised effectively they must exist in the right culture. If there is an organisational culture of unaccountability, indifference, bullying, or aggression then even the best policies will be at best under-utilised and at worst meaningless.” [35]*

Culture within an organisation is foundational for effective safeguarding practices and impact how individual organisations respond to and approach compliance requirements.

‘Tick box’ culture for instance can occur, if formal regulatory processes are separated from substantive organisational processes. [27] This is where organisations primarily aim to comply with legal obligations without truly embedding or internalising the values and principles the regulations stand for. [36] Additionally, merely adhering to standards can potentially be a superficial exercise if the foundational culture of an organisation isn’t properly aligned with them.

*“The rhetoric of preventing child sexual abuse in organisations focuses mostly on screening: weeding out “bad people”. If this continues to be the main focus, institutions will keep failing children.” [37]*

*“Some institutions have adequate policies and codes of conduct that describe and provide examples of inappropriate behaviour and how to identify and report suspicions. If, however, these policies and procedures are ignored, not implemented, or are regarded as unimportant within the culture of the institution, it will be more difficult to detect and respond appropriately to child sexual abuse. Seeking to change such attitudes requires cultural change within a whole institution, because the attitudes of each individual will have been influenced by the behaviour of colleagues.” [38]*

In her 'pracademic' essay, *Culture is What You See When Compliance Is Not in the Room*, [39] author T. Bruno-van Vijfeijken suggests that the sex abuse scandals involving leading international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), such as Oxfam International, Save the Children, and Amnesty International, can be explained by organisational and sectoral culture. She identifies six factors that contribute to these crises: individual leadership traits, the influence of power on leaders' behaviour, a culture of silence that discourages staff from speaking up about toxic workplace behaviours, hidden power structures within NGOs, the belief that wrongdoings are isolated incidents rather than systemic problems, and a lack of individual and team-level accountability practices. The author argues that addressing these cultural failures requires sustained and disciplined efforts by NGOs themselves, as formal policies and regulations have limited impact on informal belief systems.

*"Safeguarding policies are laudable and needed but do not necessarily get to all the culture failures. This work needs to be complemented with internal culture work of a long-term, sustained, and disciplined nature. This should focus on the encouragement of certain habitual and widely shared, repetitive behaviours and the discouragement of others."* [39]

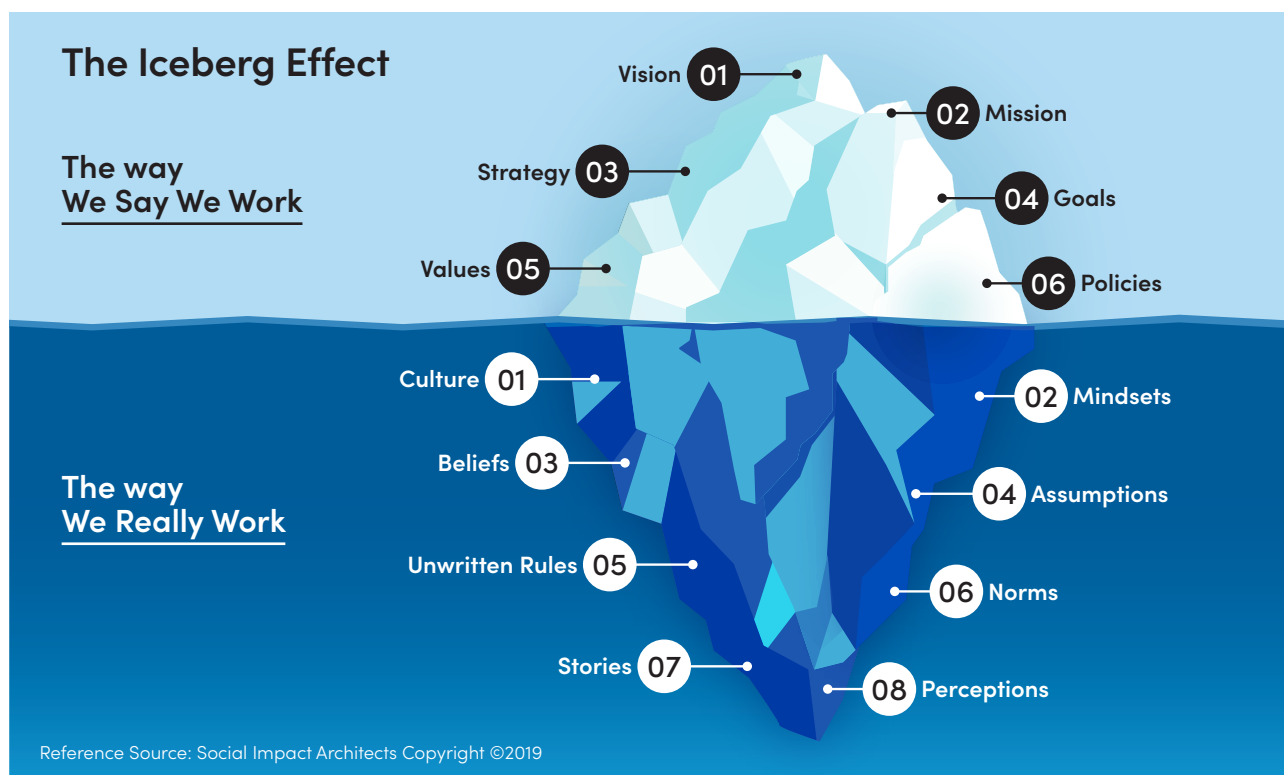
In her essay Bruno-van Vijfeijken differentiates culture "that can be reflected in organisational philosophy statements or official documents", with the more **covert aspects of culture**. [39] She argues that organisational culture is often misunderstood and mixed up with organisational strategy, and while culture can be reflected in official documents, it primarily works at the unconscious level through informal ground rules. This can be understood through Edgar Schein's organisational change model.

### 3.2 Edgar Schein's Model of Organisational Culture

Edgar Schein, a prominent social psychologist, identified three levels of organisational culture: **artifacts** (visible organisational structures and process), **espoused values** (strategies, goals, and philosophies) and **basic underlying assumptions** (unconscious beliefs). [40] The third level is useful, for example, in exploring the basic underlying assumptions of organisations that shape attitudes related to power, gender, and respect.

### 3.3 The Cultural Iceberg Metaphor

The iceberg metaphor illustrates the idea that many aspects of a culture are hidden and not immediately visible. When applied to cultural understanding, **overt** aspects of organisational culture refer to the **visible and tangible** elements



such as physical structure, dress code, symbols, organisational rituals, mission statements, and communication patterns. These elements can be observed and identified more quickly and provide immediate clues about an organisation's culture. [41]

The **covert** aspects are the **less visible**, underlying elements that shape behaviours and perceptions within an organisation. These include deep-seated values and beliefs, unwritten norms, shared assumptions, organisational myths, group dynamics, and the overall emotional climate. While overt elements provide a surface level understanding, the covert ones delve deeper into the organisation's core identity and values.

In her article on *Shifting our Mindset*, [42] author Suzanne Smith discusses the "the iceberg effect." Pointing to the circumstances that brought the downfall of the Titanic, she claims that *"we often don't see (or want to see) what is right in front of us. We spend most of our time reacting only to what is 'above water' and not what is below, which includes the often-invisible factors that drive our organisations and communities."* She believes there needs to be a more focused effort on examining not only *"the way we say we work,"* but also by examining *"the way we really work."*

This relates to the introspective work organisations can do to examine their underlying cultures. By diagnosing and identifying specific patterns, behaviours, and accepted norms, organisations can discern which aspects promote safety and which may inadvertently lead to harm. Addressing the foundational culture not only adds an additional layer of 'scaffolding' to an organisation's prevention efforts, but is a fundamental pillar of ensuring lasting protection that is continuously improved.

### 3.4 Success and Failure Factors in Organisational Culture Change

In a comprehensive literature review, [43] research identified several key factors contributing to the success and failure of cultural change initiatives. Key success factors include leadership support, full staff involvement, clear vision, strategy, motivation, and support for active participation in the change process. Effective communication and training play a crucial role in facilitating organisational change, with regular evaluations and adjustments based on employee feedback necessary. The research provides an important perspective on organisational culture change and emphasises the complex relationship between success factors and potential pitfalls.

Incentive and reward mechanisms can enhance employee engagement and contribution during cultural change. Recommendations include establishing fair, transparent, and sustainable incentive mechanisms. **Integrating organisational culture change into long-term strategic planning** is another critical success factor. [43]

Resistance in the process of organisational culture change can arise from employees, teams, or departments. Studies found that improving communication and coordination, providing necessary training and support, and establishing effective incentive mechanisms can address resistance. However, the authors suggest more research is needed to understand the underlying causes of resistance and to develop targeted strategies to overcome it. [43]

Lack of adequate resource input can hinder the success of cultural change initiatives. Studies emphasise the importance of formulating corresponding resource input plans and management strategies, monitoring and evaluating resource input, and adjusting resource allocation. The authors suggest **further research is needed to develop a comprehensive framework for risk assessment and management during culture change initiatives.** [43]

# 4. Conceptualising a Cultural Risk Framework

*"The [Royal Commission] report comments on the failure to act on disclosure and the school institutional culture as a risk factor that encouraged males to exert power over others, especially in schools where there are 'strong cultures of obedience to authority,' poor governance structures and children were disempowered and discouraged from complaining."* [18]

Extensive research exists on the situational risks and factors that enable abuse. [13]–[17] This review was not able to discover any established process specifically addressing 'cultural risks' in safeguarding practices.

Given the lack of apparent research in this area, the aim of conceptualising a Cultural Risk Framework is to 'coin new terms' that address both the systemic influences (macro/institutional) and the (micro/individual) influences of organisational culture.

In conceptualising a Cultural Risk Framework, two important concepts merge, derived from the Royal Commission's research; firstly, from studies exploring the role of organisational culture [16] – identified as 'cultural factors'; and secondly, from studies that evaluate the varying dimensions and degrees of risk, [44] – one of which is identified as 'institutional risk'. These amalgamated concepts allow us to define 'cultural risk factors' as follows:

- 1. Cultural Factors** – referring to the role that beliefs, values, norms, and practices have in facilitating or preventing abuse e.g. a culture of silence, tolerance of inappropriate behaviours.
- 2. Institutional Risk** – referring to the inherent vulnerabilities in an institution's structure and characteristics of the institution that may make

abuse more likely to occur and less likely to be identified and responded to effectively e.g. weak policies and procedures, lack of transparency and accountability.

- 3. Cultural Risk Factors** – when the ingrained beliefs and behaviours of an institution (its cultural factors), intersect with and exacerbate the institution's inherent vulnerabilities (institutional risks), resulting in an environment where negative outcomes are more likely to occur and less likely to be addressed.

Framing undesirable cultural factors as 'cultural risks' (akin to managing 'situational' risks) [11] allows for a structured approach to identify, assess, and address these elements within an organisational change framework – a process of change that starts with assessing the health of an organisation's culture with the ongoing goal of improving its safety culture and strengthening the probability that safeguarding practices will be embedded.

Significance of conceptualising a Cultural Risk Framework: based on the research gap identified by Kooyoora in their grant submission:

*"For some of our client organisations, the path to creating child safe cultures is complex and daunting. Organisations currently have **no clear model or approach for identifying their cultural and organisational child safety risks**, nor do they have ready access to approaches that will mitigate those risks."*

A Cultural Risk Framework in this context refers to the tools, strategies, and methodologies used to identify and manage the potential risks associated with organisational culture.

# 5. Organisational Cultures of Risk

'Cultures of risk' in an organisational context refers to the collective attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviour within an organisation that may contribute to an increased likelihood of adverse outcomes or harm. In the context of addressing sexual abuse within organisations, a culture of risk refers to an environment where inappropriate behaviours and actions are overlooked, ignored, or inadequately addressed, thereby increasing the vulnerability of individuals to abuse.

Cultural enablers of sexual abuse refer to the organisational structures and systems that facilitate or allow certain behaviours or practices to occur. Marie Keenan, a researcher and therapist, in linking the personal and institutional, identifies child sexual abuse not only as an individual pathology (of the perpetrator) but also as a systemic issue. Within the Catholic Church she argues, the institution of priesthood itself, how it perceives sexuality, clerical culture, power relations, and governance structures are contributing factors to boundary violations and child sexual abuse. [45]

## 5.1 Power Structures – Turning the Microscope on Power Dynamics

*"Sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment are rooted in systemic fractures in organisational culture. They rest in power and gender differentials driven by one or several factors that place an individual at a power advantage, allowing for the misuse of that advantage to manifest itself in various forms of abuse of power."*

Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [46]

Power is described as 'the ability to force others to comply with one's requests, often overriding other imperatives like rational assessments and normative proclivities.' [16] Formal power, derived from an organisation's chain of command, operates through the norm of obedience to authority, which is the felt obligation of 'subordinates to obey superiors.' [16]

A systematic review of forty-three qualitative studies examining the organisational factors contributing to violence towards athletes in sport, developed a framework of organisational factors related to psychological, physical, and sexual abuse. The authors found that **power imbalance** was one of the organisational factors that enabled psychological and sexual abuse. [47]

In an article on sexual harassment in academic science, a group of scientists 'turn the microscope' on power dynamics in the laboratory setting. [48] They argue that acknowledging and compensating for power imbalances is crucial for promoting inclusivity in science. The review recommends practicing awareness of power dynamics related to factors such as seniority, race, gender, class, ability, age, and sexual orientation.

## 5.2 Powerful Perpetrators Hidden in Plain Sight

A study of "powerful perpetrators hidden in plain sight" [49] examines the presence of highly influential individuals within organisations where powerful offenders have used their authority and status to circumvent safeguarding policies and perpetrate child sexual abuse. The study provides statistics on the large volume of individuals in positions of power within various organisations, such as school principals, paediatricians, and

Catholic clerics. *"The number of people who might be considered sufficiently powerful to circumvent existing organisational rules by virtue of their position within YSOs is significant."* [49] These individuals can include leaders, board members, high-status professionals, major donors, and celebrities. The authors state that becoming a powerful perpetrator is not solely determined by job title, but rather by attaining power through a position, celebrity status, or self-created/charismatic authority. They can be articulate, well networked, 'caring professionals' usually part of the leadership of the institution. *"Ascribed, hierarchical or positional authority – in this case, 'power' is organisationally bestowed on the individual as a function of their position."*

*"While [these] powerful individuals may be some of an organisation's greatest assets, they may also present one of its most significant risks. Cases of child sexual abuse by powerful offenders have accounted for large numbers of victims and long-standing adverse impacts on the organisations in which the abuse occurred."* [49]

This study chose to include **high profile cases** of sexual abuse committed by powerful perpetrators because these cases involve **prolific offenders** whose actions have had a significant impact on victims and survivors. *"While it may be argued that these offenders are the exception rather than the rule", the patterns of offending* are considered instructive and have implications for the development of prevention strategies and the strengthening of existing prevention efforts. [49]

The propensity to obey authority figures without question has been ingrained in many social structures. Research on the role of culture in perpetuating sexual abuse found that the "stronger the norm of obedience", the more "motivation and opportunities staff will have to sexually abuse children in their charge." [16]

In sports organisations for example, athletes are often taught to respect and follow the guidance of those in charge, be they coaches, doctors, or administrators. In a study on sexual abuse in sport, scholars identified links between sexual abuse and governance, or the "exercise of power and authority in sport organisations." They cite numerous studies that show the power imbalance between athletes and coaches or administrators can help facilitate sexual abuse. Where coaches assume "guardian-like supervisory responsibilities over young athletes", they not only hold significant

authority, but also "form close relationships with dependency". Some abusers use this influence to 'groom' athletes, which entails gaining trust, developing isolation, initiating sexual abuse, and ensuring secrecy. [50] Another study on harassment and abuse in sport, claims that the risks of sexual abuse are greater when there is a lack of institutional protection (such as safe sport policies, procedures, or codes of practice), high perpetrator motivation, and high athlete vulnerability. [51]

### 5.3 Bad Apple, Bad Barrel

Using the bad apple, bad barrel metaphor the following explores four different case 'risk' studies involving sexual abuse scandals. The paper intentionally incorporates high profile prolific case studies as educational references to comprehend the patterns of failure and complicity within institutions. The inclusion of case studies serves to identify the cultural risks and understand how institutions may indirectly facilitate or directly participate in wrongdoing.

#### 1. The Individual/s perpetrator/s (Bad Apples)

– those responsible within the organisation (micro).

#### 2. Organisational/Institutional complicity (Bad Barrel)

– instances where the institution is

\*implicated due to its prevailing culture (macro).

\*The notion of organisational/institutional complicity is referred to in the context of 'passive' complicity, a scenario where the institution is aware of the misconduct but overlooks and fails to address it; and 'structural' complicity, where the prevailing organisational practices or cultural norms implicitly support or enable such misconduct, often because of prioritising their own reputation or interests over wellbeing. [52]

*"Sex abuse, particularly of children, is a crime which any rational person would wish to prevent. However, when an individual's loyalties and responsibilities to an institution put them at odds with preventing sex abuse, it is far too often the institution which takes precedence. This is the grim phenomenon of institutional complicity. It is a plague which, sadly, permeates institutions of all types, be it a school, hospital, sports team, church, military, or government agency."* [52]

The following studies serve to illustrate that the motivation of the perpetrator (bad apple),

combined with the lack of institutional protection and power imbalances (institutional risks or bad barrel) represent significant cultural risks.

### 5.3.1 Risk Study 1: Obedience to Authority – The USA Gymnastics Scandal

**Theoretical Framework:** Social Psychologist Stanley Milgram's *Obedience Study* in the 1960's provided insight into how ordinary individuals could perform acts contrary to their personal moral beliefs under the directive of authority figures. The results have been interpreted as evidence of the powerful influence of authority. This can be linked to understanding how individuals might accept or participate in abusive behaviours by authority figures. [53]

**Perpetrator Profile:** Dr. Larry Nassar, a medical professional for USA Gymnastics and Michigan State University, was viewed as an authority figure, holding the trust and respect of athletes and the broader gymnastics community. He was profiled in the documentary *Athlete A: A Documentary that Launched a Global Crisis in Gymnastics* [54] as a 'self-created/charismatic authority'. It was evident that he attained his power 'through his position' as 'the trusted doctor'. He was a well-respected and much liked figure at the time. According to sexually abused athlete accounts in the film, he was the 'friendly face' and 'comfort' athletes needed amidst the gruelling physical and emotional intensity of competition. He was indeed a 'powerful perpetrator hidden in plain sight'.

**Incident details:** Dr. Larry Nassar abused his position of power and trust to sexually assault over 250 young women and girls under the guise of medical treatment. [55] Many athletes felt uncomfortable or knew something was amiss during their treatments, yet obedience to authority as the trusted doctor played a role in silencing their doubts and reservations. According to sexually abused athlete accounts in the film *Athlete A*, by the time gymnasts came to see Nassar, they were so severely physically and emotionally beaten down that they lacked the power or agency to report his sexual misconduct, and those who tried were immediately dissuaded from questioning his authority. "We were so beaten down by that and made so obedient, that when we knew there was a sexual assault, we would never say anything". [54]

**Institutional Complicity:** While Nassar was the primary perpetrator (bad apple), the broader institution (the barrel of apples) perpetuated a culture where questioning authority figures was discouraged (amongst other failures). Complaints were either ignored or not taken seriously, reinforcing the dangerous precedent of 'blind

obedience'. Even though this scandal prompted significant leadership changes at Gymnastics USA and ignited a broader conversation about athlete safety and institutional neglect, at the end of *Athlete A* we are told that (at the time of filming), Gymnastics USA's unwritten/written policy, norm, and expectation, was still to dissuade gymnasts from questioning the authority of their coaches. Even after Nassar's jail sentence and media spotlight, this aspect of their prevailing culture that led to the abuse of hundreds of girls, remained unchanged at that time. [54] The case reveals how Nassar's enablers, including coaches, administrators, and the institution, **failed to protect the girls** and allowed him to continue his predatory behaviour unchecked.

**Change driven by victim/survivor voices:** The abuse surfaced publicly in 2016 in a series of investigative reports by *The Indianapolis Star* and written about in the book *The Girls: An All-American Town, a Predatory Doctor, and the Untold Story of the Gymnasts Who Brought Him Down*. [56]. The courageous testimonies of the victim/survivors played a monumental role in unveiling the extent of Nassar's abuse. The book describes how women fought back to expose his crimes and bring him to justice and features the stories of the first known survivor, Rachael Denhollander (also in her own book), [57] and many others who shared their experiences exclusively with the author. Their stories, recounting not just the abuse but the internal conflicts they felt in questioning an authority figure, became a rallying cry for reform and a testament to the courage, resilience, and solidarity of the survivors, who became advocates for change in the sport and society at large.

**Brief Reflections on Mitigating Risk:** Obedience to authority figures like Nassar, coupled with an institutional culture that actively discouraged open communication or any form of questioning as the norm, allowed the abuse to persist for decades. The 'lesson' for other authority figures with positions of power, such as doctors, coaches, supervisors, teachers, managers etc., could be to introspect on the trust bestowed on them and the responsibility that comes with that trust to ensure that their authority isn't misused. For institutions/organisations willing to introspect and learn from it, the profound failures of this case could serve as a lesson in cultivating a **culture of openness**, to foster environments where questioning authority figures and voicing concerns becomes **the new overarching norm**, one that is embedded in the organisation's governance and constantly 'lived and breathed'.

### 5.3.2 Risk Study 2: Centralised Authority and Control – The Catholic Church Scandal

Historically, religious institutions like the Catholic Church have held strong centralised authority, with clergy such as priests, bishops, and members of religious orders maintaining significant control and influence over their congregations. The centralised structure, combined with deep reverence for religious figures, made it difficult for many victims to come forward, and for justice to be served.

**Theoretical Framework:** Max Weber's *Theory of Bureaucratic Authority* explains how centralised organisational structures can inadvertently hide wrongdoing. "Bureaucracy has a maddening capacity to hide responsibility behind a veil that is one-part secrecy, one-part moral callousness, and one-part crass collusion and self-protection." [58] Further, Max Weber's idea of 'charismatic authority' promotes compliance by persuading group members that the individual in a leadership position has unique attributes and should be followed. This highlights how blind faith and reverence can often prioritise the institution over individual rights and protection. The charismatic leader inspires "absolutely personal devotion" in that he is understood to have an "extraordinary and personal gift of grace". [59]

**Perpetrator Profile:** Brother Kostka Chute, a member of the Marist Brothers religious order who served in Catholic educational institutions for several decades, was appointed to at least twelve Catholic schools in Australia between 1952 and 1993. His hierarchical authority as a teacher and principal, allowed him unfettered access and little direct oversight and supervision, facilitating his sexually abusive behaviour. He also used his position to create fear among victims, such as beating a child for lying. [49]

**Incident details:** Brother Chute abused six students between 1985 and 1989 at various schools in Queensland, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Multiple allegations against him were made detailing a pattern of grooming and manipulation. Even though he was repeatedly accused of sexually abusing children he used his position to admit the abuse and promise not to repeat it, leading to minor verbal warnings and avoiding authorities. "Brother Phillips presumed that Brother Chute went to see Father Cox and 'confessed his condition, and that he was going to fix things up.'" [60] A former Lismore pupil filed a civil action against the Marist Brothers in 2009, claiming compensation for life damage caused by Kostka Chute's abuse in 1967. The Marists, through their lawyers, fought against the claim, causing significant harm to his life. [61] In 2008, Chute was

charged with nineteen counts of child abuse in the Australian Capital Territory and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. Despite not being charged by New South Wales or Queensland police, Chute continued to be a member of the Marist community and continued to be known as "Brother Kostka Chuteaim." [61]

**Institutional Complicity:** Clerical culture, characterised by a patriarchal hierarchy, encouraged child sexual abuse through obedience, denial, and secrecy and discouraged reporting of abuse, both within the church and to the police. If reported, efforts were usually focused on minimising the abuse experience. This patriarchal structure hindered the reporting of abuse and perpetuated a cycle of abuse within the church. [62] Royal Commissioners discovered that Marist Brothers were aware of allegations of child sexual abuse by Brother Chute but continued to transfer him to schools. [60] In 1993, a boy reported Chute's indecent assault at a school in Canberra. In 1994, he was withdrawn from the school and transferred to the Marists' training centre in Dundas, Sydney, and the Marist Farmhouse in Mittagong, NSW. They found that one Provincial's failure to act resulted in a missed opportunity to remove Brother Chute from teaching or contact with children, putting more children at risk. "Brother Phillips stated that he let AAI's father know that he had spoken to Brother Chute and that 'things would be righted'. He did not speak to Brother Chute again about it because he was 'satisfied enough to know that I had broached the subject, he had been reconciled and things would change and be attended to'" The Marist authorities managed to prevent these complaints from reaching the police. [52] Offending priests and their superiors didn't view the abuse of young boys as a crime but a "moral lapse," minimising the abuse's motivation, to protect the church's reputation. [53]

#### Change driven by victim/survivor voices:

Many victim/survivors courageously shared their harrowing experiences, bringing attention to the depth and breadth of the abuse, which has consequently led to large scale reforms of the Catholic Church.

**Brief Reflections on Mitigating Risk:** The case of Kostka Chute illustrates the dangers of unchecked centralised authority and the implications of institutional reverence.

### 5.3.3 Risk Study 3: Normalisation of Deviance – BBC Jimmy Savile Scandal

**Theoretical Framework:** Sociologist Diane Vaughan's *Normalisation of Deviance* theory suggests that individuals within an organisation

become so accustomed to deviant behaviour that they start to perceive it as normal, often leading to severe oversights and ethical breaches, due to the gradual acceptance of unacceptable behaviour and practices that become embedded in the culture. [63]

**Perpetrator Profile:** Jimmy Savile, a prominent BBC TV presenter and entertainer, was posthumously revealed to have exploited his celebrity and charity work status and the trust placed in him, to sexually abuse hundreds of individuals over decades. [64] Even though his predatory actions were prolific, a culture of silence allowed him to evade accountability. Despite numerous victims and the pervasiveness of his actions, these abuses went unreported and unaddressed. Savile exploited his access to hospitals where he volunteered, and to the BBC studios where abuse occurred in dressing rooms during and outside broadcasts. His misconduct was known by many but became a part of the 'norm' due to his celebrity status. There were whispers and unofficial knowledge, but a lack of formal complaints and investigations enabled him to continue.

**Incident details:** Savile's crimes included 126 indecent acts and thirty-four rape/penetration offences. The "Giving Victims a Voice" report by the NSPCC and Metropolitan Police in 2013 revealed that Savile used his celebrity status and fundraising activity to gain uncontrolled access to vulnerable people. [65] Initial allegations against Savile emanate from former residents of Duncroft School who he sexually abused on school premises and while on visits to television studios. [64]

**Institutional Complicity:** Despite being aware of rumours and allegations, his behaviour was often brushed aside or normalised. The BBC and other institutions were accused of turning a blind eye. After Savile's death in 2011, an ITV documentary aired in 2012 where several individuals came forward with allegations. Subsequent investigations revealed that many within the BBC had been aware of rumours and allegations but did not take appropriate action. "First and most important there was, during the period covered by the Savile investigation, a culture within the BBC which made it difficult to complain or to say anything to management which might 'rock the boat'. There were several facets to this culture." [66] The scandal was a significant blow to the BBC's reputation, leading to inquiries, resignations, and a deep introspection about institutional culture.

**Change driven by victim/survivor voices:** Survivors coming forward and sharing their experiences were instrumental in exposing the magnitude and duration of Savile's abuse

that helped to unveil the pattern of predatory behaviour and acted as a catalyst for deeper inquiries and reforms within the BBC. Victim/survivors experienced prolonged suffering due to lack of acknowledgement and action, with the delayed exposure of his crimes preventing them from receiving timely support and justice.

**Brief Reflections on Mitigating Risk:** The Savile scandal demonstrated the severe consequences when early signs of abuse are overlooked or ignored. The revelations raise questions about the integrity, values, and priorities of the organisations involved. It underscores the importance of addressing issues related to power dynamics and demonstrates the need for organisations to be vigilant, responsive, and proactive in identifying and addressing signs of abuse and misconduct. It demonstrates the devastating human and institutional costs of neglecting these responsibilities.

### 5.3.4 Risk Study 4: Image Repair Restoration Theory: Jerry Sandusky and Penn State Scandal

**Theoretical Framework:** William Benoit's *Image Repair Restoration Theory* posits that when an individual's or organisation's image is damaged, particularly by a wrongdoing, they deploy various strategies aimed at repairing their reputation. [67] [68] The five stages include:

- 1. Denial:** Asserting that no wrongdoing occurred.
- 2. Evasion of Responsibility:** Claiming lack of control or attributing the wrongdoing to unforeseeable factors.
- 3. Reducing Offensiveness:** Minimising the perceived harm or highlighting positive attributes to offset the negative impact.
- 4. Corrective Action:** Implementing changes to rectify the problem and prevent its recurrence.
- 5. Mortification:** Accepting responsibility and seeking forgiveness.

**Perpetrator Profile:** Jerry Sandusky, a former revered assistant football coach at Penn State University, with a charismatic 'halo' like reputation, exploited his position at Penn State and his role in the charity he founded, The Second Mile (for underprivileged and at-risk youth), to groom and abuse young boys over a period of at least fifteen years. The systemic abuse by Sandusky occurred over several decades within Penn State facilities. Modus Operandi: Sandusky gained the trust of his victims, by offering them gifts, and often taking children on expensive trips under the guise of his foundation's programming. [49]

**Incident details:** Sandusky was convicted of abusing ten boys, but the real number of victims is

suspected to be much higher. The scandal came to light in 2011 when Sandusky was arrested and charged with multiple counts of child sexual abuse. [69] In 2012, he was convicted on forty-five charges against him and was subsequently sentenced to a minimum of thirty years in prison. [70]

**Institutional Complicity:** Despite Sandusky's actions being reported to university top officials including Joe Paterno, Penn State's head coach, and campus police, the university failed to take adequate action, allowing Sandusky to continue his abuse unchecked for years. "The university completely abdicated its role as an educational institution committed to the public good in order to protect its corporate brand, image, and market value." [71]. Penn State University went through multiple stages of Benoit's theory in its response to the scandal.

1. **Evasion of Responsibility:** Initially, Penn State denied knowing about it and shifted the blame. "In order to avoid the consequences of bad publicity, the most powerful leaders at Penn State University, including Mr. Spanier, Mr. Schultz, Mr. Paterno, and Mr. Curley, repeatedly concealed critical facts relating to Sandusky's child abuse from the authorities, the Board of Trustees, the Penn State community, and the public at large." "Well, Sandusky was a paedophile, and that didn't have anything to do with us." "We had a couple of leaders who were bad leaders but who didn't have anything to do with us." [71]
2. **Reducing Offensiveness:** The university emphasised its positive contributions to counterbalance the negative impact of the scandal and reduce its offensiveness. "We need to keep reminding ourselves as Penn Staters of all the good things we've done in light of all the things that have come out, but if we had things wrong, we need to look at how to fix those things." [71]
3. **Corrective Action:** As the scandal unfolded and pressure mounted, Penn State took corrective action, including the firing of high-profile personnel and implementing more robust child protection measures and reporting mechanisms.
4. **Mortification:** Penn State held a moment of silence for victims at their first game back after the scandal was made public. [72]

**Change empowered by victim/survivor voices:**

The survivors of Sandusky's abuse, by sharing their harrowing experiences, played a pivotal role in unveiling the magnitude of the abuse and Penn State's complicity. Their voices spurred legal repercussions, substantial organisational

reforms, and increased societal awareness regarding institutional abuse, fostering change and highlighting the importance of supporting survivors.

**Brief Reflections on Mitigating Risk:** Sandusky's and Penn State's image repair tactics brought to light the depth of institutional complicity and the moral and ethical implications of prioritising image over accountability, and the profound impact such choices had on victims and the wider community. This case highlights the serious consequences of institutional inaction, and that despite having safeguarding mechanisms in place at the time, [49] the culture of protection, denial, and inaction thwarted those efforts, and it took a scandal, extensive legal and financial penalties, and reputational damage before action was taken. The lessons from this case reinforce the need for transparency, integrity, and accountability. "The outrage over this case is certainly justified, and we should encourage greater degrees of transparency and accountability in our institutions." [71] "It's a lesson for all institutions, we should really do some soul searching." (Quote from 'Happy Valley' documentary)

## 5.4 Barriers and Facilitators in Reporting Sexual Abuse

The Royal Commission findings highlight the importance of an appropriate response to disclosures of child sexual abuse. [38] Findings suggest that the reaction of the person receiving the disclosure can impact future disclosures and the severity of psychological symptoms experienced by victims. **Negative and unsupportive reactions** to disclosure include disbelief, blaming the victim, and not offering help or support. **Appropriate responses** include listening and believing, not blaming the victim, providing emotional support, and seeking specialised assistance if needed. It also highlights the need for cultural sensitivity and respecting the wishes of the victim. Positive responses also include receiving access to appropriate resources, advocacy, support, and reporting.

According to the Royal Commission findings, [38] the disclosure of child sexual abuse is influenced by various factors, which can interact and impact the process in different ways. Research has identified some patterns in disclosure, but the results are often mixed, indicating the complex nature of disclosure. It is important to understand how individual and contextual factors can either inhibit or promote disclosure. The barriers to disclosing child sexual abuse include shame or embarrassment, fear of not being believed, negative reactions or consequences,

and confusion around sexuality and gender. The development of sexual identities can be disrupted or confused by the abuse, and societal attitudes towards sexuality and gender can impact victims' decisions to disclose. Additionally, some survivors may not recognise the abusive behaviours or lack the language to communicate their experiences, especially if they were abused at a young age.

Evidence from the Royal Commission indicates that disclosure latency for child sexual abuse (CSA) varies considerably, with a significant proportion of children reporting CSA right away and only 19.5% reporting as adults. Approximately half of all offences are reported within three months, while the majority are reported within a year. Nonetheless, 20% of sexual assaults are reported more than ten years, and 11.4% more than twenty years, after the assault. Various factors, including the nature and quality of the child's relationship with the perpetrator, the fear of stigmatisation, the potential consequences of disclosure, altruism, a hostile abuse and post-abuse environment, embarrassment, guilt, confusion, and shame can contribute to delayed disclosure. [62]

According to a systemic review by Alaggia et al., [73] the longer disclosures are delayed, the longer people may suffer from major negative impacts and mental health issues like depression, anxiety, trauma disorders, and addictions without receiving critical treatment. This increases the chances of more victims falling victim to undetected perpetrators. Learning more about CSA disclosure reasons and processes may help professionals encourage early disclosures by expanding the knowledge base. Using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis standards, five themes emerged from the research: (1) Disclosure is an iterative, interactive process rather than a discrete event best done in a relational context; (2) contemporary **disclosure models reflect a social-ecological**, person-in-environment orientation for understanding the complex interplay of individual, familial, contextual, and cultural factors involved in CSA disclosure; (3) age and gender significantly influence disclosure; (4) a life-course perspective is lacking; and (5) barriers to disclosure continue to outweigh facilitators.

#### 5.4.1 Fear of Retaliation

Fear of retaliation is where victims may fear that the abuser or others will harm or threaten them if they report the abuse. According to a 2014 study by the RAND National Defence Research Institute, 30% of female military sexual assault victims reported experiencing social or professional retaliation, adverse administrative actions, or punishments for related violations. This study found that among female sexual assault victims,

perceived professional retaliation was linked to workplace hazing assaults. These assaults typically occurred without alcohol and were committed by multiple, familiar, and/or powerful offenders. The risk of perceived professional retaliation was higher when the perpetrator had authority over the victim through the chain of command. The rates of perceived social and professional retaliation are highest among service women who disclose their assault to a mandatory reporter or file an unrestricted report. This could be because unrestricted reporting leads to an investigation and disclosure to a commander, which may result in the dissemination of information about the assault to a wider network. [74]

#### 5.4.2 Traumatic Isolation and Stigma

*Traumatic Isolation: Institutional Stigma* examines the stigma faced by survivors of child sexual abuse within institutional settings, particularly its intensifying effect on their trauma. Data from the Australian Royal Commission showcased the profound social isolation and emotional turmoil survivors experienced post-disclosure. The paper argues that specific organisational practices within these institutions contribute to this stigmatisation. The Australian Catholic Church's "Towards Healing" redress protocol is explored as a case study to understand these practices. Interestingly, the Royal Commission itself, as an institution, played a role in helping survivors reclaim their identities, suggesting that institutions can address their internal issues while promoting social unity. [75]

The author posits that survivor stigma results from social relations intertwined with bureaucratic authority and delves into how institutions deliberately use social marginalisation to shield their power and assets, prioritising protection of their reputation over all else. This protection involves both passive compliance from members and active manipulation by leaders. Labelling victims with stigma effectively diverts unwanted scrutiny away from institutional wrongdoings.

In contrast, the Royal Commission exemplifies an institution that **genuinely acknowledged and addressed the stigmatised survivors**. It facilitated a healing dialogue among survivors, their families, and the nation, highlighting that institutions can confront shame, discuss it, and recognise the humanity of those they've harmed. Comprehending the inner workings and relations of such institutions can be the solution to breaking patterns of institutionalised social isolation and violence. *"This indicates that there are types of adaptive organisational responses which can tolerate shame, and discussed and recognised the humanity of those affected. Understanding*

*these kinds of institutions, and their internal and relational dynamics, holds the key to interrupting, and even transforming, the cycles of violence inherent in institutional, social isolation". [75]*

### 5.4.3 Institutional Betrayal

Institutional betrayal occurs when, following sexual victimisation, institutions create hostile environments that normalise sexual violence, make it difficult to report the incident, mishandle the complaint, attempt to conceal the incident, or retaliate against survivors. These responses are not uncommon and have been linked to adverse survivor outcomes such as dissociation, anxiety, sexual dysfunction, poorer physical health, and depression. [76] This concept has primarily been studied in the context of survivors' direct relationships with institutions they are part of (e.g., universities, churches, military) and how the institutions either failed to protect them or were unsupportive following their disclosure. Negative mental and physical health outcomes can be exacerbated by institutional betrayal, highlighting the need to hold institutions accountable for the damage they cause. [77]

*Dangerous Safe Havens* examined the impact of institutional betrayal on post-traumatic symptomatology in college women who had experienced unwanted sexual experiences. The researchers found that almost half of the women reported at least one coercive sexual experience, and another 21% reported no coercion but at least one unwanted sexual experience. Institutional betrayal, such as creating an environment where these experiences were more likely and making it difficult to report them, was reported by both groups. Women who reported institutional betrayal surrounding their unwanted sexual experience had increased levels of anxiety, trauma-specific sexual symptoms, dissociation, and problematic sexual functioning. These findings suggest that institutions can cause additional harm to assault survivors. [78]

### 5.4.4 Compelled Disclosure

An article on 'compelled disclosure' in USA universities discusses the issue of compelled disclosure policies in response to sexual assault on college campuses. These policies require certain employees to report any student disclosure of sexual assault to university officials, regardless of the survivor's consent. The article examines the legal framework surrounding compelled disclosure and analyses a sample of university policies. It finds that most policies require employees to report student disclosures. However, there is limited evidence to support the assumption that these policies are effective and beneficial. In fact, some findings suggest negative consequences for

survivors, employees, and institutions. The article concludes by highlighting the need for survivor-centred and informed reforms in institutional policies and practices regarding sexual assault. [79]

### 5.4.5 Cultural Silencing

*The Culture of Silencing Child Victims of Sexual Abuse* discusses the issue of cultural silencing of child victims of sexual abuse. It highlights how children who experience sexual violence are often forced to remain silent about their victimisation. Even when they do disclose their abuse, they may face further silencing within the criminal justice and court systems. This silencing can have severe long-term consequences for the children involved. The article proposes using humanistic psychology and building a coordinated community response to address this problem. It also emphasises the importance of providing a supportive response to child victims when they do break their silence, as this can help mitigate the effects of the abuse. Overall, the article argues that breaking the culture of silencing is crucial for the well-being of child victims. [80]

*"Every time someone comes forward, it makes it easier for the next survivor to be heard"* examines the cultures of silence surrounding child sexual abuse (CSA). The study analysed 47 posts from a sport news site where readers shared their experiences of CSA. The analysis revealed three main mechanisms through which CSA victims are silenced: patriarchal master narrative, trauma-related shame, and systemic power. The findings highlight the cultural and social factors that contribute to the silencing of CSA victims and suggest the need for increased support and discourse on this issue. [81]

### 5.4.6 Shame and Guilt

According to Dianna T. Kenny PhD, victims of abuse, due to the lengthy grooming rituals, often feel complicit in the abuse, leading to shame and deterrence in disclosure. [62] According to the Royal Commission findings, child sexual abuse in institutions is often perpetrated by someone in a position of power and authority over the child. Perpetrators can use grooming and other tactics to enable and conceal the abuse. The power and status of perpetrators within the institution can inhibit identification and disclosure. Perpetrators often isolate the child and may blame the victim or cultivate a shared sense of responsibility. Many survivors do not disclose because they feel responsible or believe it is their fault.

### 5.4.7 Fear of Not Being Believed

According to the Royal Commission findings, [38] the power and authority of perpetrators within

institutions can make it difficult for child sexual abuse to be identified and disclosed. Perpetrators use their position and authority to establish a special relationship with the child, making them feel vulnerable and less likely to disclose. Research shows that the more status and power the perpetrators have, the harder it is for victims and observers to have their disclosures heard and believed. Children are often taught not to challenge adults and may feel guilty or confused if they engage in sexual activity with them. Perpetrators exploit their power and authority to avoid detection and pressure children into not disclosing by making them fear not being believed, suffering consequences in school or status, facing difficulties from the perpetrator, or jeopardising their future opportunities.

#### 5.4.8 Institutional Reputation and Loyalty

According to the Royal Commission research findings, the prioritisation of reputation over the care and safety of children in certain institutions creates barriers for victims to disclose abuse and for bystanders to report concerns. [38] Some victims feel inhibited from disclosing abuse due to the prestigious nature of the institution or its emphasis on reputation. This focus on protecting reputation also hinders adults in the institution from identifying and responding to abuse. Some educational institutions, particularly elite private schools, view threats to their public image as issues to be managed. Survivors may fear the consequences of identifying and disclosing abuse, believing that the institution will prioritise its own interests over their welfare. Loyalty to the institution can prevent victims from speaking out, as they may feel they are betraying the school. The pervasive culture of these institutions can lead members to protect their institutional identity in the face of threats. Institutions often contribute to this barrier by fostering dismissive cultures towards allegations of abuse. Some victims are reluctant to disclose their experiences of abuse in prestigious institutions due to the sacrifices their parents made to send them there.

#### 5.4.9 Lack of Cultural Safety/Mistrust

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and survivors face additional barriers in institutions where their cultures are not recognised, respected, or acknowledged. There are several systemic issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children regarding communication about sex and making disclosures. These issues include a lack of support from institutions for non-English language communication, a lack of cultural safety in mainstream service systems, and the absence of Aboriginal-specific sexual assault services. [82]

Additionally, for children in out-of-home care, the lack of cultural safety and connection in their placement, as well as the absence of a trusted adult from their cultural group, can make it challenging for them to disclose sexual abuse. Perpetrators may reinforce feelings of shame and fear of community reactions, as well as exploit mistrust of service providers to silence children and avoid prosecution. The experiences of injustice and lack of confidence in service providers are significant barriers to disclosure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. [82]

These barriers are connected to past child removal practices that targeted these communities due to discriminatory policies and racist assumptions. These practices have resulted in a deep distrust of the child welfare and protection systems, as well as the police and justice system. The traumatic impact of colonisation, dispossession, marginalisation, and the stolen generation has contributed to this mistrust and reluctance to engage with services. The fear of child removal from the community is also a barrier to reporting child sexual abuse, especially considering the disproportionately high rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. [82]

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors of child sexual abuse may experience heightened feelings of shame due to the cultural abuse they endured under 'protectionist' and assimilation policies. This shame is interconnected with the shame they were encouraged to associate with their Indigenous identity. The use of sexual exploitation as a tool of collective humiliation during colonisation adds further complexity to the shame experienced by these survivors when trying to disclose or seek help. *"There is no documented evidence to indicate child sexual abuse was a problem in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities before colonisation. It is important to understand that any heightened risk that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children face today is not part of Aboriginal tradition or culture".* [82]

#### 5.4.10 Characteristics of Effective Institutional Responses

According to a review by Blunden et.al., [83] on victims/survivors' perceptions of helpful responses, four key characteristics of effective institutional responses were identified: **systemic response, ongoing communication, humane and trauma-informed approach, and reparative actions.** Ongoing communication included providing timely information, active listening, and integrating the victim/survivor's experiences and requests

for changes. A humane and trauma-informed approach acknowledged the trauma suffered and contrasted with an adversarial and legalistic approach. Reparative actions included providing compensation, long-term support, a meaningful apology, and a commitment to preventing future abuse.

– **Acknowledgment of responsibility** and accepting that abuse occurred, recognising the detrimental effects on the victim/survivor, and admitting institutional failings or culpability. Many victims/survivors reported not being believed when disclosing their abuse, making acknowledgment crucial in reinforcing the reality of the abuse and supporting the truth of their accounts, emphasising that acknowledgment should start with accepting the truth and not challenging or re-traumatising the victim/survivor. The refusal to acknowledge incidents of abuse by institutions often stems from a desire to minimise financial loss and reputational damage. Public acknowledgment is seen as meaningful, with one participant describing a school's quick response to abuse incidents and the public nature of their acknowledgment. Publicly supporting the victim/survivor's account is also important in acknowledgment – even simple words like “yes” and “we did” can indicate institutional agreement with the victim/survivor's account and acceptance of responsibility.

– Institutional **policies and practices that protect and support victims/survivors**, as well as **transparency** in discussions of sexual abuse were important factors. Improvements in policies and procedures to enhance the effectiveness of responses to institutional abuse are often the result of advocacy and action by victim/survivors and independent agencies.

– Organisational policies and practices play a significant role in shaping the **impression institutions give about their stance** on institutional abuse.

– Effective institutional responses to abuse involve **openly confronting the issue**, involving victims, repairing harm, and reducing the likelihood of future harm.

– **Apologising to victims** is cited as an effective response, with key elements of an effective apology including acknowledging the offense, explaining the offense, expressing remorse, and offering reparation. Apologies can have profound healing effects, but they are not always effective, especially when the victim's anger is too great for forgiveness. Apologies must be accompanied by actions to reduce the risk of future harm to be meaningful. While an apology is seldom

sufficient, it is a necessary precondition for possible reparation and recognises the moral worth of victims/survivors.

– **A whole-of-institution response** is vital for effectively reacting to incidents of abuse, and meaningful action must accompany apologies.

# 6. Fostering a Positive, Respectful and Safe Organisational Culture

## 6.1 Cultivating a Culture of Psychological Safety

A 'culture of psychological safety' refers to an environment where every individual – regardless of their role or status – feels secure and empowered to speak out against inappropriate behaviour, misconduct, or any form of abuse without fear of retaliation, blame, or other negative consequences. Theoretically speaking it has implications for the effectiveness of certain safeguarding strategies such as bystander interventions, where onlookers may feel safer and therefore more empowered in 'blowing the whistle' on misconduct and abuse, rather than remaining silent.

*"Organisations need to create a culture and climate that is conducive to staff, youth, and their parents reporting safety concerns as soon as they are noted. At the same time, it is equally important that the organisational structure is conducive to ensuring a fair assessment of facts and an effective response to all allegations of abuse, no matter if concerns are raised about members of the staff or leadership." [49]*

Amy Edmondson, a Harvard professor who conducted research in 1999 on psychological safety and organisational behaviour, [84] defines psychological safety as "a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking".

### 6.1.1 Elements of Psychological Safety

Creating psychological safety involves establishing clear norms, encouraging open communication, setting clear expectations, inviting input, showing appreciation, admitting fallibility, encouraging diverse perspectives and ideas, ensuring that everyone feels heard and valued, and responding productively. Common misconceptions about psychological safety include thinking it is about being nice and feeling comfortable all the time. Psychological safety is more about 'candour', acknowledging mistakes and limits, and taking risks in a safe environment. [85]

#### 6.1.2 Building an Ethos of Psychological Safety

Implementing psychological safety principles helps cultivate a culture where employees feel safe to speak up, take risks, and be themselves, which is important learning and overall wellbeing. Most psychological safety interventions seek to generate an organisation-wide shift in attitudes, values, and trust. This generic approach is referred to by Hunt et al. [86] as fostering an ethos of psychological safety. Promoting a psychologically secure culture should place special emphasis on being a person-centred, listening, and learning organisation, which will make sure that they hear staff voices to discuss ideas for enhancements, mistakes, and errors, and contribute to failure-based learning.

#### 6.1.3 Conceptual Model of Psychological Safety

Timothy R. Clark's conceptual model describes four stages that teams can move through [87]:

**Inclusion Safety** – members feel safe to belong to the team. They are comfortable being present, do not feel excluded, and feel like they are wanted and appreciated.

**Learner Safety** – members can learn through asking questions, experiment, make (and admit) small mistakes, and ask for help.

**Contributor Safety** – members feel safe to contribute their own ideas, without fear of embarrassment or ridicule, a more challenging state, volunteering ideas can increase the psychosocial vulnerability of team members.

**Challenger Safety** – members can question others' (including those in authority) ideas or suggest significant changes to ideas, plans, or ways of working.

#### 6.1.4 Facilitating Psychological Safety

Research in organisational behaviour has identified that psychological safety is influenced by various factors at different levels: individual, team, and organisation. At the individual level, factors such as proactive personality, emotional stability, and learning orientation contribute to psychological safety. At the team level, inclusive leadership, work design characteristics (role clarity, interdependence, and autonomy), peer support, and trust and mutual respect are important for fostering psychological safety. At the organisational level, a supportive work context, commitment-based HR practices and high-quality relationships are important. [88] *"Since psychological safety is a very complex, subjective perception, we must remember that we cannot automatically 'turn on' psychological safety or decree that certain environments are 'safe spaces'."* [88]

In Donovan's systemic review of enabling psychological safety factors, [89] the role of support in creating psychological safety was explored in seventeen studies. Organisational support, such as an open and respectful culture, positive reception of concerns, and support from administration and policies, promotes speaking up and assertive communication. It was found that support from leaders, including transformational and commitment-based leaders, positive role models, and leaders who listen and provide feedback, facilitates psychological safety. It was also found that support from peers, such as shared norms and values about speaking up, positive relationships, effective role models, and higher teamwork climates, also encourage assertive communication and speaking up for safety. Strong workgroup identification reduced silence teams when the perception of organisational authorities making fair decisions is high.

#### 6.1.5 Measuring Psychological Safety

Hunt [86] recognises that the concept of psychological safety is complex and challenging to measure and suggests that the most common

measure is a team-level survey that covers indicators of psychological safety. A systematic review of factors that enable psychological safety in healthcare teams identified thirteen enablers from across organisational teams. These enablers were grouped according to five broader themes: priority for patient safety, improvement or learning orientation, support, familiarity with colleagues, status, hierarchy and inclusiveness and individual differences. [89] Hunt [86] acknowledges that implementing cultural change and increasing psychological safety can be take time and is best evaluated through long-term evaluation of practices.

#### 6.1.6 Fearless Organisation Scan – Team Survey

Edmondson has developed a seven item questionnaire to assess the perception of psychological safety – the Fearless Organisation Scan team survey. [90] The questionnaire measures how people feel about making mistakes, bringing up problems, accepting differences, taking risks, asking for help, and being valued for their skills. Edmondson suggests using the data from the survey to reflect on the team's experience and make changes to improve psychological safety.

#### 6.1.7 Psychological Safety Project Culture Change – Everyone Grows

*Everyone matters; everyone contributes; everyone grows* is a pilot project cultivating psychological safety to promote growth-oriented service culture. "The project was predicated on psychological safety as an enabler of a flourishing workplace." [91] After the Oakden Report identified dysfunctional culture in the South Australian state-wide older persons' mental health service, an **agenda for change through a co-designed culture framework** was established. An innovative **culture change project** was undertaken at Northgate House, a specialist service commissioned following the Oakden Report. The project, based on a partnership with Uncharted Leadership, built on the culture framework with **emphasis on developing psychological safety** and employed principles from the **deliberately developmental organisation model**. The project resulted in positive outcomes for patients and staff and valuable organisational learning. Insights from the project may inform culture change journeys in a range of healthcare settings.

### 6.2. Fostering a Restorative and Reparative Culture

A 'reparative culture' refers to an organisational environment that actively recognises, addresses, and rectifies past abuse, focuses on healing and

support for the victims/survivors, implements measures to prevent future abuse, and cultivates a safe, respectful, and transparent atmosphere.

A 'restorative culture' refers to fostering an environment aimed at repairing harm, encouraging collective accountability and responsibility, inclusive and honest dialogue and upholding fair, transparent and equitable processes, ensuring the rights of all parties are respected.

*"Restorative justice has emerged as a promising option for survivors to repair harm and experience accountability. As researchers, we have the power to use science to propel society toward the creation of more efficacious healing spaces for survivors of sexual violence, and optimising safe restorative justice processes plays a key role in bringing this to fruition."* [92]

### 6.2.1 Justice from the Victim's Perspective

Judith Herman is a pioneer of trauma studies, researcher of twenty years, and professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. In her latest book, *Truth, and Repair: How Trauma Survivors Envision Justice*, [93] Herman explores the concept of restorative justice, which is based on the idea that crime is a violation of people and relationships, not just laws, and that justice should involve the participation of victims, offenders, and the community in a process of dialogue, healing, and accountability. Herman argues that restorative justice can offer trauma survivors a more satisfying and empowering way of seeking justice than the adversarial and impersonal court system, which often re-traumatises them and fails to meet their needs. [93]

In her work Herman commits the radical act of 'listening to survivors'. She believes that the first step towards a better form of justice is simply to ask survivors what would make things as right as possible for them. [94] Recounting their stories, she offers an alternative vision of justice as healing for survivors and argues that healing is more than a "private, individual matter." She highlights the importance of **creating a safe and empowering environment** for survivors of trauma to heal and thrive. Herman maintains that repairing the harms requires bystanders and the larger community to recognise their own moral responsibility and to act in solidarity with those who have been harmed. [93]

*"Acknowledgement of the survivor's truth, acknowledgement of the harm she has suffered, and full apology, with remorse and without excuses—for many survivors, these are the requisite actions by which perpetrators and bystanders can begin the process of healing, moving from truth to repair."* [95]

### 6.2.2 Transformatory Co-Production

Drawing on Herman's work and using an auto-ethnographical approach, the authors of *Advocating Co-Productive Engagement with Marginalised People: A specific perspective on and by survivors of childhood sexual abuse*, suggest that **social action through co-production** can be seen as a key element that enables survivors to regain the power they lost through the initial abuse violation, and its entrenchment through subsequent cultural and social forces. The paper emphasises that co-production can legitimise the expertise of those with lived experience and reinstate their rights of participation as citizens. The benefits of co-production for practitioners are also discussed, including the potential for valuing expertise by experience and fostering social solidarity.

Bob Balfour, one of the paper's authors is a UK-based activist, who worked for twenty years developing innovative projects for victim/survivors of sexual assault (CSA). His personal experiences of childhood sexual trauma in the 1960s and 1970s shaped his passion for better societal responses. Balfour's interest in co-production stems from feeling 'co-opted' by public agencies, which has sometimes felt like perpetuation of 'abuse'. Some interventions he experienced failed to address the needs of victim/survivors and instead "exploited the emotional need for personal validation of individuals who have been consulted at a tokenistic level." [22]

With reference to The People Powered Health Co-production Catalogue (PPCC) the authors outline six key principles for transformative co-production. These principles include seeing people as assets, developing their capacity, encouraging mutuality, blurring traditional boundaries, and developing networks for knowledge transfer. Public-service agencies are called upon to act as catalysts, facilitating the process. These principles are key to trauma-informed working and forging spaces for those experiencing mental distress to participate actively as citizens. Openness should be a seventh principle, as it can be difficult to achieve and may challenge professional beliefs. This approach is

considered **lived co-production in action**, allowing for the reshaping of paradigms, and empowering the powerless.

### 6.2.3 Benefits of Adopting a Restorative Culture

A paper by Belinda Hopkins explores the development and application of restorative justice principles and practices in public sector services, institutions, organisations, and workplaces. The paper focuses on the benefits of adopting a restorative culture in workplaces and emphasises the role of senior managers and leaders in modelling this new way of thinking and behaving. [96]

*"In essence a restorative approach to offending behaviour is one in which the repair of relationships and of the harm caused takes precedence over assigning blame and applying a sanction. This mind-set shift from what is often a deep-seated attachment to punishment as a response to wrongdoing, to a desire for healing and closure, following genuine connection and communication between all those involved, is at once simple and yet profound."* [96]

The core principles of restorative justice include openness, self-determination, collaboration, flexibility, equality, non-discrimination, non-violence, fairness, respect, empowerment, trust, honesty, voluntarism, healing, personal accountability, inclusiveness, empathy, and accountability. These principles promote a "restorative mindset" that acknowledges the unique perspectives of individuals and the importance of giving them a chance to be heard. Trust, listening, and reflection are crucial for making decisions that reflect respect and empathy. The values, principles, skills, and practices of restorative justice have inspired practitioners in various fields.

*"People want to know what it will look like, sound like, and feel like to work in a restorative environment or culture. What will they do or say? How will that influence the way they think, their beliefs, and attitudes? Indeed – what, if anything, do they need to change?"* [96]

Hopkins provides a model for implementing a restorative approach within an institution/organisation. She presents a 5:5:5 framework that provides a clear, consistent, replicable, and teachable framework for restorative practices. It consists of five core beliefs, five areas of language, and five steps or stages in a range of restorative processes. These beliefs help people feel secure in their daily work and can be integrated into a wide range of restorative interventions and practices.

#### Five Core Beliefs/Language

**Core belief 1** is that everyone has their unique perspective on a situation or event and needs an opportunity to express it. There are opportunities for individual expression of views, ideas, and experiences, as well as opportunities for listening to others. Staffrooms and workplaces can develop non-judgmental active listening and create mechanisms where everyone feels listened to.

**Core belief 2** is that what people think at any given moment influences how they feel at that moment, and these feelings inform how they behave. To engage authentically with others, it is important to 'lower the waterline' thoughts and feelings 'beneath the surface' while respecting their right to privacy. Regular meetings in circles, work teams, and with colleagues can create trust and safety for authentic sharing.

**Core belief 3** is that empathy and consideration for others are crucial for our health and wellbeing. Our actions and words have an impact on others' wellbeing, and our own health depends on the health and wellbeing of those around us. To maintain relationships, we must be willing to listen to how our actions have affected others and seek to rectify any issues.

**Core belief 4** is that unmet needs drive our behaviour. If our physical and emotional needs are met, we can function at our best, and if they are not, we may be under-resourced and less able to cope. To address unmet needs, we should develop a vocabulary for universal human needs like respect, appreciation, recognition, belonging, and understanding.

**Core belief 5** is that engaging in empathic collaborative problem-solving affirms and empowers people. People respond best when they are involved in making decisions that affect them and make constructive decisions when they are in touch with their own and others' thoughts, feelings, and needs. A restorative working environment is not only a nice place to work, but also a place where the job gets done to the best of everyone's ability and everyone strives for high-quality performance for the benefit of those whom the staff serves.

### Five-step model of restorative interaction

The five steps of a restorative interaction model, which are based on the 5 Core Beliefs.

1. The first step involves introducing and explaining the situation, allowing people to share their experiences of what has happened.
2. In the second step, everyone shares their thoughts and how these thoughts influenced their emotional responses.
3. The third step involves reflecting on the impact of the incident, considering who has been affected and how.
4. In the fourth step, individuals reflect on any unmet or ignored needs during the incident and identify what they need to move forward.
5. The final step involves using these needs as a basis for discussion

### 6.2.4 Procedural Justice and Fairness

In a paper on *Procedural Justice for Victims of Institutional Child Abuse: Towards a Hybrid Model of Justice*, the authors argue that the concept of procedural justice is important in addressing the needs of victims of institutional child abuse. This involves fair procedures and decisions that impact how participants feel they have been treated. [97] Procedural justice for these victims includes elements such as participation, voice, validation, vindication, and offender accountability. It not only helps victims pursue their interests within legal processes but also reduces secondary victimisation and affirms their voices and dignity.

In a study on the components of a fair process, the authors discuss the importance of procedural justice in resolving disputes and how people value the fairness of the process. [98] It highlights the lack of clarity in understanding what constitutes procedural fairness and the inconsistencies in previous research. Two studies tested the four-component model of procedural justice, predicting that people evaluate the fairness of group procedures using four types of judgments. The model hypothesises that people are influenced by decision-making aspects of group procedures and treatment quality from authorities. The results support the model, finding all four judgments contribute to overall evaluations.

The model consists of two dimensions: procedural function and source of justice. **Procedural function** refers to how people evaluate the fairness of procedures based on the way decisions are made and the treatment they receive. **Source of justice** refers to the influence of group rules, policies, norms, and representatives on procedural fairness. These two dimensions intersect to determine overall perceptions of procedural

justice. The model also introduces two previously unrecognised categories of procedural concerns: formal quality of treatment and informal quality of decision making. This model helps resolve theoretical controversies and provides a framework for understanding and promoting fairness. [98]

The article *Procedural fairness in workplace investigations: Potential flaws and proposals for change* examines the potential issues with procedural fairness in workplace investigations of misconduct allegations, specifically how the process can be flawed by a lack of fairness, neutrality, and timeliness. [99] It analyses case law and survey findings from five experienced investigators and makes suggestions for ensuring natural justice.

The authors cite best practice in workplace investigations should be fair, proper, and carefully and systematically focused on determining the facts of what occurred and providing an opportunity for the alleged perpetrator to respond. The decision-maker should approach the issues with an open mind and follow complaint-handling or disciplinary policies and procedures. Courts have made suggestions for better investigations, such as employers having an open mind, framing allegations with sufficient specificity and detail, allowing sufficient time to respond, not misleading alleged perpetrators or using inflammatory language, making inquiries of all relevant witnesses, keeping proper records, ensuring the evidentiary onus of proof, and allowing the person under investigation a support person. Investigators should use the term “factfinder” to reinforce their neutrality and be involved in formulating terms of reference (TOR) to ensure their independence and proper planning. The type of evidence to be gathered should be broad, considering the functional aspects of the allegations, the history and culture of the workplace, and the potential for unconscious reactions or sympathies. Recognising personal biases and ensuring the investigator’s independence is also crucial. [99]

The authors conclude that workplace investigations pose significant risks to employers, particularly when improperly conducted, violating procedural fairness norms. These risks are more pronounced when the investigator is not independent or employed by the employer, and there are no policies in place. Organisations should develop fair procedures for handling misconduct allegations, including criminal offenses, and ensure regular review and updating of these policies. As workplace investigations become a distinct part of employment law, there will likely be increased need for regulation in this area. [99]

# 7. Culture Change Models and Diagnostic Tools

Diagnostic culture change tools are instruments and methodologies used to assess and understand the existing organisational culture, aiming to inform and facilitate effective culture change initiatives. These tools are useful in helping organisations identify and understand their current operational and cultural states, spotlighting areas that need improvement. They assist in highlighting gaps between current and desired states and guide the development of targeted interventions to bridge these gaps. These tools and models promote self-reflection, responsibility, and continuous learning within organisations, enabling them to align their cultures and operations with their strategic goals more effectively. Regular application allows for progress tracking and strategy adjustments, fostering dialogue and engagement among stakeholders and facilitating the creation of ethical, inclusive, and responsible organisational environments.

These models can often be used in conjunction, tailoring aspects from each to form a comprehensive approach to cultural change around safeguarding. Choosing a suitable model or a combination depends on the specific context, needs, and objectives of the organisation aiming to enhance its safety culture. They can be used to develop bespoke self-assessment tools designed to shift culture towards safety principles.

## 7.1 The Swiss Cheese Model

The Swiss Cheese Model is a risk management model developed by James Reason, used to analyse the causes of accidents and incidents in various fields, particularly in healthcare and aviation. It conceptualises systems as a series of barriers (slices of Swiss cheese), each representing a layer of defence against failures or accidents.

[100], [101] The model's components:

**Slices of Cheese:** Each slice represents a defensive layer in an organisation. It could be a policy, a procedure, training, or any other preventive measure.

**Holes in the Cheese:** The holes in each slice represent weaknesses or failures in the defensive layer, like human error, procedural inadequacies, or unforeseen situations.

**How It Works:** When the holes in different layers align, it creates a trajectory allowing for the occurrence of a failure or accident, demonstrating how multiple small failures can cumulatively lead to a catastrophic event. The emphasis is on building more and better defensive layers to prevent any alignment of holes, hence reducing the risk of failures.

**Application in Safeguarding Culture:** By addressing the holes (vulnerabilities) in each layer and adding more layers of defence, organisations can potentially reduce the risk of safeguarding failures and ensure a safer environment. When applied to strengthening safeguarding and preventing sexual abuse within an organisation, each slice of Swiss cheese could represent a different component of the safeguarding strategy:

- 1. Policies and Procedures:** Implementation of clear and robust policies and procedures regarding appropriate conduct and safeguarding measures.
- 2. Training and Education:** Regular training sessions to educate employees about safeguarding policies, reporting mechanisms, and appropriate behaviours.
- 3. Reporting Mechanisms:** Effective and confidential mechanisms for reporting any concerns or incidents of abuse.

**4. Monitoring and Enforcement:** Regular reviews and monitoring of compliance with safeguarding policies, and consistent enforcement of consequences for breaches.

**5. Supportive Culture:** Cultivation of a culture where safeguarding is valued, and everyone feels responsible for maintaining a safe environment.

## 7.2 The Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), proposed by Icek Ajzen, [102], [103] is a psychological model that aims to predict and explain human behaviour in specific contexts. It proposes that an individual's intention to engage in a behaviour is the most immediate determinant of that behaviour. The TPB identifies three key components that influence intention:

**1. Attitude toward the Behaviour:** This refers to the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behaviour, based on the belief that the behaviour will lead to certain outcomes and the value the individual places on those outcomes.

**2. Subjective Norms:** This reflects the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour, influenced by the beliefs about whether significant others think one should engage in the behaviour and the motivation to comply with those beliefs.

**3. Perceived Behavioural Control:** This involves the individual's perceptions of their ability to perform the behaviour, influenced by the belief about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede the performance of the behaviour.

**4. Behavioural Intention:** When individuals have a favourable attitude, perceive positive subjective norms, and perceive control over the behaviour, they are more likely to have a stronger intention to perform the behaviour.

**5. Actual Behaviour:** The actual behavioural enactment is influenced by intention and perceived behavioural control, where a stronger intention and a higher perception of control are assumed to lead to a higher likelihood of the behaviour being performed.

**Application to Organisational Change:** In the context of organisational change, the TPB can be a useful framework. For instance:

**1. Attitude:** Foster positive attitudes towards safeguarding through awareness, education, and training.

**2. Subjective Norms:** Cultivate an environment where the expectation is that everyone adheres

to safeguarding practices and reports any discrepancies.

**3. Perceived Behavioural Control:** Empower employees with the necessary knowledge, tools, and support to adhere to safeguarding policies and procedures.

**4. Behavioural Intention and Action:** Encouraging positive attitudes, supportive norms, and perceived control can lead to strong intentions and actual behaviour conducive to safeguarding against sexual abuse within an organisation.

## 7.3 Cultural Web Model

Johnson's Cultural Web is a model that helps to analyse and understand the culture of an organisation. It was developed by Gerry Johnson and Kevan Scholes in 1992. [104], [105]

The model consists of six elements that shape the culture of an organisation: stories, rituals and routines, symbols, organisational structures, control systems, and power structures. These elements reflect the core beliefs, values, and assumptions of the organisation and influence how employees interact and work together. These elements are interconnected and form a web around the core of the culture, which is the paradigm or the set of assumptions and beliefs that guide the behaviour and actions of the organisation. [106]

The Cultural Web model can be used to map the current culture of an organisation (the as-is state) and the desired culture of the organisation (the to-be state). By comparing the two maps, one can identify the gaps and inconsistencies between the current and desired culture, and plan for changes that can align the culture with the strategy and vision of the organisation. 'What does the culture need to look like to make this change happen?' [107].

The effectiveness of the Cultural Web model depends on how well it is applied and how accurately it captures the reality of the organisation's culture.

Some of the benefits of using the Cultural Web model are: It helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current culture and how they affect the organisation's performance and goals. It provides a framework for developing a vision for the desired culture and creating a strategy to achieve that vision. It facilitates communication and dialogue among stakeholders about the cultural issues and challenges. It supports change management and organisational development by highlighting the areas that need to be aligned or modified. [104]

Some of the limitations of the Cultural Web model are: It may oversimplify or generalise the complexity and diversity of the organisation's culture. It may not account for the external factors and influences that shape the organisation's culture. It may not reflect the dynamic and evolving nature of the organisation's culture. It may be biased or subjective depending on who is using it and how they interpret it.

The Cultural Web model is a useful tool for analysing and developing organisational culture, but it should be used critically and updated regularly to reflect the changes and feedback from the organisation's stakeholders. [108]

Here is a summary of each element of the Cultural Web model:

**Stories** are the narratives that are told within and outside the organisation about its history, achievements, failures, heroes, villains, etc. They reflect the values, norms, and beliefs of the organisation, and influence how people perceive and interpret events and situations.

**Rituals and routines** are the daily practices and behaviours that are repeated by members of the organisation. They signify what is important and acceptable in the organisation, and how things are done. They also reinforce the norms and values of the organisation and create a sense of identity and belonging.

**Symbols are the visual representations** of the organisation, such as logos, colours, uniforms, slogans, awards, etc. They convey the image and identity of the organisation to its stakeholders and communicate its values and priorities. They also create a sense of pride and loyalty among members of the organisation.

**Organisational structures** are the formal arrangements of roles, responsibilities, authority, and communication within the organisation. They indicate how work is organised and coordinated, how decisions are made, how resources are allocated, etc. They also reflect the power distribution and hierarchy within the organisation.

**Control systems** are the mechanisms that monitor and measure the performance and activities of the organisation. They include policies, procedures, rules, standards, budgets, audits, reports, etc. They show how the organisation controls its operations and outcomes, what it rewards and punishes, what it considers as success or failure.

**Power structures** are the sources and centres of power within the organisation. They include influential individuals or groups that have access to resources, information, or decision-making.

They also include informal networks or coalitions that can affect or challenge the official authority. They reveal who has power and influence in the organisation, how power is exercised and shared, how conflicts are resolved or escalated.

## 7.4 The Deliberately Developmental Organisation

The Deliberately Developmental Organisation (DDO) model is a conceptual framework proposed by Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey in their book, "An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organisation". [109] This model posits that organisations can create a culture of continuous learning and development, where employees feel encouraged and supported to identify and overcome their limitations and improve their capabilities. [110]

*"What if a company did everything in its power to create a culture in which everyone could overcome their own internal barriers to change and use errors and vulnerabilities as prime opportunities for personal and company growth?"*

The model is built around three foundational principles:

- 1. Everyone is a Work in Progress:** In a DDO, every employee is recognised as being in continuous development. It is acknowledged that everyone has areas that need growth and improvement, and it is an organisational priority to support this development.
- 2. Everything is Practice:** Everyday work challenges are viewed as opportunities for learning and development. Regular tasks and responsibilities are seen as a chance to develop new skills and improve existing ones.
- 3. Everyone's Voice Matters:** Every individual in the organisation, regardless of their role or position, is encouraged to voice their thoughts, opinions, and concerns. This promotes a culture of mutual respect and continuous learning.

### Core Characteristics:

- 1. Developmental Infrastructure:** DDOs create specific structures and practices aimed at fostering continuous development, such as regular feedback sessions, developmental coaching, and reflective practices.
- 2. Developmental Community:** A sense of community and mutual support is essential in DDOs. Employees are encouraged to support each other's development by providing

feedback, sharing insights, and collaborating on problem-solving.

- 3. Transparent Culture:** Transparency is a key element of DDOs, where honest conversations about mistakes, learning opportunities, and developmental needs are encouraged and valued.

## 7.5 Kotter's 8-Step Model

John Kotter's 8-step Model for Change is a well-recognised framework for managing and implementing organisational change. The model outlines a series of phases to help organisations navigate change effectively. [111], [112] 8 Steps with possible safeguarding application.

- 1. Create Urgency:** See and feel the need for change. Highlight the critical importance of safeguarding to protect individuals from sexual abuse, illustrate the risk and the consequences of failing to act.
- 2. Build a Guiding Coalition:** Form a diverse team consisting of individuals from different departments, including HR, legal, management, and front-line staff, to lead the safeguarding initiative and drive change.
- 3. Form a Strategic Vision and Initiatives:** Develop a clear vision focusing on a zero-tolerance approach to sexual abuse. Initiate comprehensive safeguarding policies, training programs, and reporting mechanisms.
- 4. Enlist a Volunteer Army:** Communicate the vision and initiatives broadly to gain buy-in and mobilise a large group of people to act as champions of safeguarding within their respective roles and departments.
- 5. Enable Action by Removing Barriers:** Implement clear and confidential reporting mechanisms, eliminate obstacles to reporting abuse, and assure protection to whistle-blowers. Educate employees on recognising and reporting abuse.
- 6. Generate Short-term Wins:** Celebrate early adoption of the new policies and procedures, and publicly recognise departments or individuals who exemplify the new safeguarding standards.
- 7. Sustain Acceleration:** Regularly review and revise policies to ensure they are effective. Continue training and awareness programs and reinforce the importance of safeguarding through ongoing communication and leadership endorsement.
- 8. Institute Change:** Ensure that the new safeguarding measures become integral to the organisational culture. Recognise and

reward adherence to safeguarding practices, and ensure all new recruits are aligned with the organisation's commitment to preventing sexual abuse.

## 7.6 Lewin's Change Management Model

Lewin's Change Management Model is a widely used framework introduced by psychologist Kurt Lewin in the 1940s. [113], [114] This model views change as a three-stage process:

- 1. Unfreezing:** This is the initial phase where the organisation recognises the need for change. It involves disrupting the existing equilibrium or status quo, overcoming resistance to change, and preparing the organisation for the new ways of operating. Methods can include communication, education, and participation to create an understanding of and a desire for the change.
- 2. Changing (or Transition):** In this stage, the actual implementation of the change occurs. People begin to learn the new behaviours, processes, and ways of thinking. This stage is marked by uncertainty and fear, and support and guidance are crucial as individuals navigate through the transition. It often requires time, training, and patience to help individuals adapt and learn the new ways of doing things.
- 3. Refreezing:** The final stage involves stabilising the change at the new equilibrium or status quo. The new behaviours and processes are established and reinforced, and the organisation returns to a sense of stability. The changes are integrated into the routine, supported by the organisational culture, norms, and values, and are perceived as 'the way things are done around here.'

**Application:** Lewin's model provides a conceptual foundation for understanding organisational change, emphasising the importance of considering and managing the human aspect of change. It is particularly useful in settings where a clearly defined change needs to be implemented, offering a structured approach to transitioning from one state to another while managing the disruptions and resistances encountered along the way.

## 7.7 Prosci's ADKAR Model

The Prosci's ADKAR Model, developed by Jeff Hiatt, is a goal-oriented change management model that allows change management teams to focus their activities on specific business results. The model identifies five sequential building blocks

or goals that individuals need to achieve for the change to be successful. [115]

The five components of the ADKAR Model are:

**1. Awareness:** Individuals must understand the nature of the change, why it is needed, and the risk of not changing. This involves effective communication and education about the change initiative.

**2. Desire:** This is about the individual's willingness to support and engage in the change. It is influenced by the nature of the change, individual circumstances, and how the change is managed.

**3. Knowledge:** Individuals need to know how to change, which includes the knowledge, skills, and behaviours necessary to implement the change. This often involves training and learning sessions.

**4. Ability:** This is the demonstrated capability to implement the change at the required performance level. It is about translating the knowledge gained into practice and addressing barriers to implementation.

**5. Reinforcement:** This involves the internal and external factors that sustain the change, such as recognition, rewards, and positive feedback, ensuring that individuals do not revert to old behaviours.

**Application:** The ADKAR Model is applied by addressing each of the five components in sequence, ensuring that each stage is solidified before moving to the next one. It is a versatile and practical tool used in planning change management activities, diagnosing resistance, developing corrective actions, and supporting the implementation of change at an individual level within an organisation.

By focusing on how individuals experience and respond to change, the ADKAR Model helps to facilitate successful change and ensure that new behaviours are sustained over time.

## 7.8 The Organisational Culture Inventory (OCI ®)

The Organisational Culture Inventory (OCI ®) is a tool for measuring the culture of an organisation in terms of the behaviours that are expected or required of its members. It can help organisations to **assess their current culture, identify their ideal culture, and plan for cultural change**. The OCI ® is based on more than twenty years of research and is widely used around the world. [116]–[118]

The OCI ® uses twelve cultural styles that are grouped into three general types: constructive, passive-defensive, and aggressive-defensive.

Constructive cultures are characterised by behaviours that promote satisfaction, quality, and effectiveness. Passive-defensive cultures are characterised by behaviours that protect self-interest and maintain security. Aggressive-defensive cultures are characterised by behaviours that achieve status and control over others. The OCI ® provides a profile of the organisation's culture based on the relative strength of each cultural style.

The OCI categorises organisational culture into twelve behavioural norms grouped under three general types of cultures:

**1. Constructive Cultures:** Achievement: Encourages setting and accomplishing challenging goals. Self-Actualising: Promotes personal growth, creativity, and self-fulfilment. Humanistic Encouraging: Supports individuals and encourages constructive feedback. Affiliative: Emphasises collaboration and the building of supportive relationships.

**2. Passive/Defensive Cultures:** Approval: Seeks the acceptance of others and conforms to their wishes. Conventional: Prefers conformity and adherence to rules and established procedures. Dependent: Awaits instructions and direction from superiors before acting. Avoidance: Avoids responsibility and risk by doing the minimal required or shifting tasks to others.

**3. Aggressive/Defensive Cultures:** Oppositional: Resists and challenges the suggestions and actions of others. Power: Uses authority and organisational power to gain compliance from subordinates. Competitive: Encourages winning at the expense of colleagues. Perfectionistic: Pressures others with unrealistic standards and expresses dissatisfaction with anything less than perfection.

The OCI ® is administered and facilitated by accredited consultants or practitioners who have been trained in its application and interpretation. The OCI ® surveys are available online and on various digital devices, as well as in hard copy. The data collected is processed electronically and a report is generated to meet the organisation's specific needs. A consultant or practitioner then guides the organisation through the findings and the steps required for successful change management.

The OCI ® can be used for various organisational change initiatives, such as measuring and assessing the current culture, building a vision of the ideal culture, gauging the organisation's readiness for change, identifying and addressing the enablers and barriers to change, facilitating mergers, acquisitions, and strategic alliances, and evaluating the impacts of change.

## 7.9 Denison Organisational Culture Survey

The Denison Organisational Culture Survey is a diagnostic tool developed by Dr. Daniel Denison, used to assess and understand the culture of an organisation. [119] It focuses on identifying the relationship between organisational culture and effectiveness, providing insights into the beliefs, behaviours, and values that shape the organisation's environment.

This survey is part of the Denison Model, which posits that specific cultural traits and management practices are linked to enhanced organisational performance.

### Components of the Denison Model:

The model is based on four core traits, each consisting of three indices, making a total of twelve dimensions. The four traits are:

- 1. Mission:** Strategic Direction & Intent: Clear understanding of where the organisation is headed. – Goals & Objectives: Clarity and attainability of organisational goals. Vision: Inspiring and consistent vision for the future.
- 2. Adaptability:** Creating Change: Capability to innovate and adapt to changes. Customer Focus: Orientation toward serving customer needs and preferences. Organisational Learning: Learning, improvement, and knowledge sharing.
- 3. Involvement:** Empowerment: Employee empowerment and decision-making at all levels. Team Orientation: Collaborative work and team effectiveness. Capability Development: Investment in human capital and employee development.
- 4. Consistency:** Core Values: Clear and strong set of values. Agreement: Cohesion and consensus among employees. Coordination & Integration: Cross-functional alignment and synergy.

### Organisations utilise the Denison Organisational Culture Survey to:

- Assess the current state of organisational culture.
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement within the organisation's culture.
- Develop and implement interventions aimed at enhancing organisational effectiveness and performance.
- Align organisational culture with strategic goals and objectives.

The benefits include enhanced understanding of organisational culture, increased employee engagement, improved alignment between culture and strategy, and identification of leverage points for change and development, ultimately leading to improved organisational performance.

# 8. Culture Change Practices and Initiatives

## 8.1 Bond Safeguarding Leadership Tool

Bond is the UK network for organisations working in international development. To leverage the position of power that leaders hold within their organisations and promote their responsibility in establishing and maintaining positive organisational culture that is conducive to safe and respectful workplaces and safeguarding best practices, Bond and a taskforce of NGO members have developed a digital tool to support leaders in understanding what positive safeguarding culture looks like. [120]

The Bond Leadership Tool is a discussion-based safeguarding tool for developing and modelling a positive safeguarding culture. It focuses on preventing all types of harm, including sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. The tool is not a safeguarding training tool but rather a discussion-based tool to facilitate conversations and generate honest discussions at all levels to enhance the collective understanding of a positive safeguarding culture.

The tool identifies behaviours that indicate non-compliance with good safeguarding practices and provides guidance for organisations to develop a positive culture that values and implements best safeguarding practices. It consists of six sections, each addressing different aspects of a positive safeguarding culture, such as accountability, policies and processes, safer programming, survivor-centred approach, awareness-raising, safer recruitment, and HR processes.

Each section includes suggested questions for discussion and actions to consider. [120] The tool is used in conjunction with a guide on understanding

effective safeguarding culture including the indicators and behaviours associated with safeguarding culture. [121]

## 8.2 The Culture Framework Tool

The Culture Framework Tool has been developed by the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub UK Aid (SRSH), [122] an organisation that helps humanitarian and development organisations improve their safeguarding policies and practices against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH). As part of supporting organisational culture change the tool is used by SRSH in their mentorship project which aims to help organisations and their leaders understand their organisational culture, the role of values in shaping that culture, the leadership behaviours exhibited, and the organisational behaviours that may impact the development of a safe culture and emphasises the importance of this understanding as a first step in identifying areas that need to be changed to promote a culture conducive to good safeguarding practices. [123]

The Culture Framework Tool [124] which is based on the Gender at Work Analytical Framework views organisational change as multifaceted and holistic, linking organisational change, institutional change ("rules of the game"), and creating a safe environment for staff and stakeholders. The framework tool analyses the role of social institutions in promoting safeguarding cultures. The framework is divided into four quadrants: top right (resources), top left (individual consciousness and capability), bottom right (formal rules), and bottom left (informal norms and practices). The review emphasises the importance of change in all four domains, particularly in the lower left quadrant. A tool for measuring changes

in organisational culture was developed to monitor progress and assess achievements and help organisations understand what needs to be measured, what they want to achieve, and how to assess whether those achievements are being met. [125]

### 8.3 IASC Promising Practices on Organisational Culture Change

A document produced by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Filippo Grandi's 2020 IASC Championship on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment [46]

This collection of initiatives highlights the link between an organisation's culture and power abuse leading to sexual misconduct. Humanitarian organisations have made significant strides in addressing this issue by examining their own attitudes, values, and behaviours. The collection offers insight into the efforts being made to create safe and respectful workplace environments for both those being served and the colleagues working within these organisations.

An overview of each initiative within the document is provided. The original document has full descriptions with contact details for each initiative.

#### 8.3.1 UNICEF Voice Series

The Voice Initiative was launched by UNICEF in 2018 to address low levels of personal empowerment and a culture of silence among staff. It aims to create a 'speak up' culture and eliminate fear, intimidation, and misconduct in the organisation. The initiative was developed in response to specific elements of vulnerability identified through the 2017 Global Staff Survey. It provides a platform for addressing unacceptable behaviour, regaining trust, and aligning behaviour with the organisation's values.

The workshop is a voluntary initiative by UNICEF that can be adapted for different organisations and is divided into three modules: Speak Up, Managing Upwards, and Difficult Conversations.

**The Speak Up** module addresses various forms of misconduct in the workplace and encourages participants to identify and reflect on behaviours and options for recourse.

**The Managing Upwards** module focuses on building positive team dynamics and communication, emphasising trust and open communication.

**The Difficult Conversations** module provides tools for navigating challenging conversations and giving feedback. Overall, the workshop aims to empower staff to speak up and create a culture of respect and accountability.

#### 8.3.2 UNHCR Reflective Leadership Dialogues

The Reflective Leadership Dialogues is an interactive initiative launched by UNHCR in 2020. It aims to address toxic and abusive work environments that contribute to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. Originally a face-to-face initiative, it was adapted for online use for greater accessibility.

The initiative promotes a safe and respectful environment through self-reflection and self-awareness. UNHCR partnered with Sonke Gender Justice to address the underlying influences that contribute to an abusive workplace culture, particularly sexual misconduct. The initiative targets managers at all levels and grades to empower them in preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse. CARE USA has further adapted the initiative to focus on the role of masculinities in power differentials.

The dialogue includes three components: self-study and reflection on working methods and organisational policies; participatory sessions to explore individual gender norms and attitudes, power dynamics, sexual harassment, unconscious bias; and a personal commitment to creating a more respectful and inclusive environment.

Participants are expected to reflect on fostering trust, respect, and accountability in the workplace through experiential learning exercises. Thought-provoking videos, articles, workplace scenarios, and visual materials are provided to trigger self-reflection and understanding of diversity.

#### 8.3.3 CARE USA – Safeguarding Toolkit: Gender Transformation and Workplace Culture

CARE USA has been working on building an organisational culture that empowers women and addresses gender dynamics in the workplace. They have developed a training manual focused on creating a safe space for dialogue on gender issues and challenging rigid gender roles. Male solidarity groups have been formed to engage men in discussions on gender, power dynamics, and masculinity. CARE has also developed a toolkit for workshop and training development, which focuses on the links between sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, and negative gender norms. The toolkit acknowledges the need to address and reconstruct hegemonic masculinity,

which promotes aggression, dominance, and hypersexuality. The training emphasises the identification and adjustment of stereotypes related to the “Man Box” for a healthier and safer organisation.

#### **8.3.4 IOM Adjusting Unconscious Bias**

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has been implementing initiatives to address unconscious bias and abuse of power. They initially focused on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse but expanded their efforts to include protection from sexual harassment and training to increase trust in reporting mechanisms. IOM has also been working on meeting gender parity targets and addressing bias in hiring practices.

They have developed a video in collaboration with OHCHR to raise awareness and increase vigilance among interview panel members regarding their own potential unconscious bias. The goal is to ensure hiring practices are based on integrity and respect.

#### **8.3.5 WFP – The Respect Campaign**

The World Food Programme (WFP) has implemented the RESPECT Campaign to promote a positive organisational culture that values respect and dignity. The campaign focuses on awareness, inclusion, fairness, and humanity as key components of the organisation’s culture. It uses fun games, strategic exercises, and meaningful conversations to enhance dialogue, collaboration, and communication.

To facilitate the campaign, WFP has created a global community of Respectful Workforce Advisors who are responsible for training RESPECT facilitators in each office. The campaign is designed to be egalitarian, involving all staff at all levels and avoiding hierarchical structures. While participation is not mandatory, every team is encouraged to engage in the campaign to promote culture change within the organisation.

#### **8.3.6 UNICEF Pulse Check**

UNICEF has developed a tool called the Pulse Check to measure the impact of organisational culture change efforts. It complements existing surveys by providing real-time data on workplace culture. The tool tracks progress and shifts in workplace culture and serves as a management tool to address concerns. The Pulse Check is part of an accountability tool called *Office Scorecards*, which provide transparent indications of an office’s performance on culture. Themes: Trust and leadership, inclusion and belonging, appreciation and recognition, standards of conduct, empowerment, psychological safety.

The Pulse Check is an anonymous survey that UNICEF employees can take on a quarterly basis. It consists of five to seven questions on workplace culture, with answer options on a five-point scale. The survey aims to assess employee engagement and track progress over time. The tool can be adjusted to capture staff perceptions on urgent organisational priorities. The data collected will be used to analyse trends and identify issues that need to be addressed. A guide with advice and strategies for analysing data and responding to trends is being developed.

#### **8.3.7 UNHCR – Leading by Example from the Grassroots to Senior Leadership**

The UNHCR has implemented various activities and initiatives to address sexual misconduct, at both the leadership and grassroots levels. The organisation’s senior leaders have established platforms for open dialogue on issues such as organisational culture, values, sexual exploitation and abuse, and staff empowerment. They have also promoted a Speak-Up culture through the establishment of a helpline and dedicated staff to handle reporting on abuses.

Staff-led initiatives, such as the ‘Women and Change’ and Men4Change networks, have been established to promote dialogue on gender equality, workplace respect, and sexual harassment.

The Stronger Together movement was also initiated to address issues of race and racism. These staff-led networks work independently but are supported by the organisation’s leaders, contributing to a culture of dialogue and accountability. The engagement of both leadership and staff has encouraged internal reflection and discussion, strengthening the organisation’s efforts for open dialogue and collective accountability.

#### **8.3.8 UNFPA – Civility in the Workplace**

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has implemented a multipronged approach to address sexual misconduct in their organisation. They have focused on changing individual attitudes and behaviour by tackling underlying factors such as discrimination and power inequalities. This approach includes initiatives to strengthen institutional frameworks, increase resources, and address specific thematic areas such as leadership, compliance, awareness raising, outreach, communication, and victim support.

Transparency, openness, and inclusion have been emphasised to demonstrate a zero-tolerance approach. UNFPA also conducted a survey that highlighted the importance of addressing

incivility and exclusion as contributors to sexual harassment. As part of their holistic culture change approach, they developed sessions on Civility in the Workplace to engage staff in dialogue and address the root causes of abusive work environments.

Managers are empowered to lead these discussions and provide guidance on fostering a respectful and inclusive environment. The sessions also provide guidance on addressing and responding to inappropriate behaviour and seeking assistance.

### 8.3.9 IASC – Engaging Leadership

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, held a facilitated session with Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals in January 2021 to address issues of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. The objective of this session was to reinforce the importance of engaged leadership on issues relating to organisational culture at the very top and to provide a space for humanitarian leaders to delve into an honest reflection and dialogue on personal perceptions, unconscious biases, and behaviours that are key to fostering an organisational culture that eradicates the root causes and underlying factors of sexual misconduct.

The session aimed to promote reflection and dialogue among humanitarian leaders on personal perceptions, unconscious biases, and behaviours that contribute to sexual misconduct. The session was part of a larger effort to provide opportunities for leaders to learn and reflect on issues such as unconscious bias, values, behaviour, attitudes, power imbalances, and their connection to abuse of power and sexual misconduct. UNHCR has developed facilitators guide for others to use within their own agencies.

### 8.3.10 DFAT's Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy

In April 2019, the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) released the DFAT Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy. This is an overview describing the six principles that underpin the DFAT policy aimed at addressing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) in Australia.

The policy emphasises the importance of acting on every allegation, promoting respectful behaviour and diversity, involving victims/survivors in decision-making, and protecting their rights and privacy. It also recognises the intersectionality

of gender with other forms of inequality and the high risk of SEAH for children. The policy aims to improve awareness, reporting, and accountability to effectively address SEAH. [126]

#### **Principle 1: Zero tolerance of inaction.**

DFAT recognises that achieving a significant reduction in SEAH is a long-term endeavour. Zero tolerance is not the same as zero incidents. Increasing reports may indicate growing awareness of SEAH and changing attitudes.

#### **Principle 2: Strong leadership accelerates culture change.**

Strong leadership is essential for accelerating the pace of change. Leaders set organisational culture. Leaders should model respectful behaviour and set clear expectations.

#### **Principle 3: Victim/survivor needs are prioritised.**

Prioritising victim/survivor needs, ensuring procedural fairness and treating them with dignity and respect.

#### **Principle 4: Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment is a shared responsibility.**

Shared responsibility, requiring the commitment and investment of all sectors, including government, business, non-government organisations, institutions, communities, and individuals.

#### **Principle 5: Gender inequality and other power imbalances are addressed.**

Addresses gender inequality and other power imbalances, focusing on respect for diversity, promoting gender equality and social inclusion, and a strong "do no harm" focus.

#### **Principle 6: Stronger reporting will enhance accountability and transparency.**

Stronger reporting to better monitor SEAH, understand risks, improve assurance, and work with organisations to improve systems and safeguards.

#### **Risk Assessment:**

The Policy takes a risk-based, proportional approach to PSEAH (Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment). DFAT staff and partners must assess the level of risk for SEAH occurring and apply the PSEAH Minimum Standards accordingly.

#### **Minimum Standards:**

The Policy takes a risk-based, proportional approach to PSEAH. DFAT staff and partners must assess the level of risk for SEAH occurring and apply minimum standards accordingly. Guidance is provided to assist DFAT partners in determining

the level of risk. The PSEAH Minimum Standards are applied based on the identified level of risk.

#### **Compliance and Assurance:**

DFAT will monitor compliance through various approaches, including performance assessments, reviews, NGO accreditation processes, and due diligence checks. Partner organisations are expected to implement risk-based measures to ensure compliance with the Policy, both for themselves and their suppliers.

#### **Understanding the Risk of SEAH:**

SEAH occurs across all sectors, regions, and workplaces. The risk of SEAH is increased in situations with unequal power dynamics, gender inequality, and transactional pressures. Data shows that SEAH is experienced disproportionately by females, with most perpetrators being male. Various factors, such as gender, age, disability, language, displacement, health, and poverty, increase the likelihood of SEAH.

## **8.4. Survivor-Led Culture Change Initiatives**

Survivor-led initiatives included here use social and media platforms to raise awareness, speak up and change the narrative around sexual abuse by challenging norms, removing stigma, and emphasising empowerment, healing, and prevention.

### **8.4.1 Silenced, Not Silent**

*Are you ready to listen patiently?*

*Silenced Not Silent* [127] is a very moving and powerful three-part written series focusing on the silencing mechanisms that prevent victims/survivors of childhood sexual abuse from sharing their stories, as told by the author, using the pseudonym 'Gaye'. The online story featured on the Blue Knot website takes readers on a journey through the layers of cover-up and blocks that prevented her from acknowledging her own abuse until later in life.

Her story emphasises the need for society to understand and address these silencing mechanisms, both within families and broader systems. It highlights the importance of respecting and believing the lived experiences of victim/survivors and acknowledges the complex and often non-linear paths they take in sharing their stories.

### **8.4.2 Survivors Know**

Survivors Know [128] is a platform for *Survivor and Worker Led Structural Change* where survivors of power-based sexual violence organise, challenge the status quo, and create alternatives to systems that fail them. They are survivor-led and use the term power-based sexual violence rather than gender-based violence to encompass the totality of survivor experiences (i.e. rape, domestic and sexual violence, workplace harassment, intimidation, stalking, coercion, and discrimination).

They combine trauma-informed labour organising with survivor justice to interrupt and expose power dynamics that enable sexual harassment and gender-based violence. They challenge institutional inaction, violence, and complicity through organising Solidarity Circles with survivors to bring their vision for a better workplace, community, and world to fruition. These circles serve as spaces for survivors to build a community of action, support, and mutual aid. The community acknowledges the need to dismantle and reimagine systems based on patriarchy and oppression. They meet survivors wherever they are in their healing process and focus on developing organising skills and navigating toxic environments.

They hold 'Teach-Ins' on topics related to social justice and organising, such as teaching and holding space for tough conversations, telling personal stories, public speaking, power mapping in the workplace, survivor-led restorative practices, holding elected leaders accountable, developing healing practices and somatic skills, understanding intersectionality and racism, organising through a trauma lens, and addressing workplace harassment in virtual settings.

### **8.4.3 Something to Say**

Jeremy Indika is a public speaker who addresses the topic of child sexual abuse in schools, businesses, and organisations. As a person with lived experience of child sexual abuse, he uses storytelling to engage the audience and create a safe space for sharing personal experiences. His mission is to raise awareness about child sexual abuse and encourage open conversations about prevention, to break down stigmas and engage people through creative mediums such as film, photography, and illustration as a way of making the topic interesting and captivating and transforming it from an uncomfortable subject to one that people are eager to learn more about. He provides a platform for victim/survivors to share real-life stories, with the aim of inspiring, informing, and empowering others,

with the ultimate goal of changing the narrative surrounding child sexual abuse.

In a YouTube titled Attention all Teachers. [129]

“So many teachers say thank you to me after I visit their school. They say I brought something unique to the table that they’ve never really thought of before because the safeguarding courses that they do, which are brilliant by the way, are still only just one piece of the puzzle. Now I have another piece to add to that puzzle. I talk through my real experiences, my story takes the audience on a rollercoaster of emotions, but I leave everybody in that room feeling more equipped and confident to protect the students that they look after every day. So honestly, if you’re serious about upskilling your staff for child abuse prevention, consider bringing me in because I’m getting a phenomenal response with every school I go to with this.”

# 9. Conclusion

This review has provided insight into how the underlying culture of an organisation plays an important role as either a facilitator or a deterrent to sexual abuse within organisations. An organisational culture that values respect, equality, inclusion, open communication, and psychological safety is more likely to foster a safe environment. Conversely an organisational culture that overlooks inappropriate behaviour, fails to address abuse or concerns, values self-preservation, lacks accountability, transparency, where power imbalances prevail, where victims are silenced, fear retaliation, or face barriers to reporting abuse is more likely to foster an environment where sexual abuse can occur unchecked.

Given the role organisational culture plays, the structure of this review has been deliberate in highlighting the positive and negative aspects, attributes, systems, and factors that strengthen or weaken safeguarding. Each section of the review has been set up to help shape the products that will form part of the Kooyoora Culture Change and Organisational Development Prevention Project. The review is a tool to facilitate further development of principles, self-assessment, and training resources.

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