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A person with narrow vision has a restricted horizon; a person with wide vision has plentiful opportunities

Leading Safety Through Difference: Why Cultural Intelligence Needs a PRISM

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The health and safety profession has typically focussed on systems, rules, and homogenous approaches to leadership. That thinking has at times been effective, but it has also created pain points for the health and safety professional. Many of the challenges we face today are not because we lack technical knowledge, they show up in our level of understanding of how people work together.

Organisational diversity extends beyond the ethnicity of its workers and is seen across culture, experience, and expectations. The pain points experienced by health and safety professionals when faced with this diversity appear in the gaps between how people make decisions, communicate, handle authority, and respond to pressure. We can't address these challenges by creating more procedures or doing a personality test.

This presentation introduces a practical way forward by combining Cultural Intelligence and the emerging PRISM framework. PRISM changes the focus from who people are to how they behave at work. It highlights five observable dimensions: Power, Risk, Identity, Speed, and Messaging. These dimensions shape everyday interactions in ways that either build trust and alignment or create tension and silence.

This session demonstrates how misalignment across these dimensions can directly influence safety outcomes, often in ways that go unnoticed. More importantly, it will provide safety professionals with a clear, practical lens to enable them to:

- Recognise where team dynamics are increasing risk
- Adapt their leadership approach in real time
- Apply CQ with greater precision in diverse environments

This is not about replacing traditional safety practice but strengthening it. If safety is created through people, then leadership must move beyond the traditional one-size-fits-all approaches. The future of safety depends on our ability to read the room, adjust our approach, and lead effectively across difference.