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Building resilience in construction site operations: Shifting from protective safety to productive safety

This presentation challenges the traditional way of thinking about construction safety and presents a strong argument for moving beyond compliance. Throughout the world, construction organisations adopt a safety management system that is based on 4E's (Environment: Hazard identification, Engineering: Risk reduction, Education: Awareness and Enforcement: Regulations and policies). This well-tested system has survived for many years without much challenge. However, recent works on adaptive systems, complexity theory and organizational sense-making have provided a fresh theoretical lens through which, we can examine construction safety. Safety management systems focus on protecting people from failure, standardising the ways of doing things to avoid failure. This presentation recognises that site conditions change all the time, so the focus should be on how people adjust their performance under different conditions to ensure doing things right. In other words, aiming to build resilience in construction site operations in order to respond to the continually changing conditions would ultimately lead to good safety outcomes. To enable building resilience, people would need to be empowered to actively notice and select cues in a changing situation and relate them to a broader frame of reference (and not a standard procedure) to create a practical and safe environment for everyone. The presentation sheds some light on how a combination of sense-making and adaptive systems had the potential to mitigate latent risks on construction sites.

Biography

Sherif Mohamed is an accomplished educator with a strong blend of technical and management skills and formal qualifications gained through an international background in industry, government and university environments. He holds a Master's as well as Doctorate degrees from the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom. He is one of leading system safety experts at the forefront of contemporary safety performance improvement endeavours. He is a regular speaker at International Health and Safety Conferences and also serves as an Associate Editor (*Journal of Safety Science*, Elsevier). Through his research and consulting work, he has worked with many major organisations in Europe, the Middle East and Australia. Over the years, he has developed and successfully delivered a large number of short courses to construction safety professionals worldwide.

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