

# Building an Organizational Culture That Values Pre-Arrest Diversion

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# TASC's Center for Health and Justice

**COSSAP TTA Provider for  
First Responder Led Diversion Initiatives**



Website: <http://www.centerforhealthandjustice.org/>

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First, the nerdy stuff:

# What Is Organizational Culture?

This can be complex, but think of culture as a set of shared meanings that people in organizations have with respect to how to adapt to environments and procedures to cope with change (Scandura, 2016)

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# Three Levels of Culture

1. **Artifacts and Creations**—uniforms, patches, badges, car paint schemes, traditions, etc.
2. **Values**—underlying reasons for behavior
3. **Assumptions**—often unconscious and lie beneath but based on values. These are motivators that generate behavior (e.g., respect for all versus respect for those who deserve or earn it)

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# MIT Professor E. H. Schein

- To really understand an organization's culture, a person must go beyond what he or she sees (artifacts) and delve into a deeper awareness of values first, and then assumptions
- A strong culture is based on a high level of agreement among employees about their values and a high intensity toward those values
- Police agencies generally exhibit very strong cultures

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# Change, the New Norm

- Strong, authentic leadership facilitates successful organizational culture change
- Transforming culture is hard work!
  - You have to be in it for the long haul
  - You have to be committed
  - You have to believe in the change

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# Harvard Professor John Kotter

- Eight-Step Model for Transformational Change
  1. Create urgency (light a fire)
  2. Form a powerful coalition (find your influencers)
  3. Create a vision for change (tell a story/paint a picture)
  4. Communicate the vision (talk about it far and wide)
  5. Empower action (remove obstacles and give authority)
  6. Create quick wins (celebrate all wins)
  7. Build on the change (use the momentum)
  8. Make it stick (employ policy and accountability)

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# Step 1: Create Urgency

- This is about the “why”
- Fatal accidental overdoses
  - More than 200 per year and rising
    - More than homicides and fatal traffic collisions combined in Pima County
    - Nobody noticed (Nobody cared?)
- Part 1 crime increases due to substance use-driven property crime
- Disproportionate crime rate due to property crime
- This affects community perspective and opinion of community and city government
- What we are currently doing is having no effect whatsoever (doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result = crazy town)



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## Step 2: Form a Powerful Coalition

- Engage both your formal and your informal leaders
- Include influencers at the line level; these may be your most powerful allies!
- They need to be powerful in either influence, reputation, skills, or position
- Build the group as you progress, but keep it manageable

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## Step 3: Create a Vision for Change

- Do your homework
  - What problem(s) are you trying to solve?
  - What outcomes are you trying to achieve?
- Determine a starting point
- Create the story, vision, or message to compel interest and passion both internally and externally

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## Step 4: Communicate the Vision

- Political and cultural awareness will guide how you do this in your agency
  - Unequivocal, top-down support must be seen!
  - What is the tolerance for change?
  - Incremental implementation or all in?
  - Spend time analyzing the risk; this is important
  - Use your influencers here!

Be authentic! Cops know BS when they see and hear it!

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## Step 5: Empower Action

- Delegate; get your team involved—it increases their buy-in!
- Evaluate what is feasible and what is not. Take a realistic look at the available resources
- Continue to monitor the cultural temperature
- Two extremely important points
  - What you build must be easier for the cops than arrest and booking
  - Emphasize the autonomy of discretion for officers. It is still their choice! (Otherwise, it will be seen as a loss of power)

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## Step 6: Create Quick Wins

- Message the value of the program at every step
- Celebrate small victories (first successful deflection, first OD reversal, time saved deflecting versus arrest, etc.)
- Testimonials by clients, cops, and service providers are gold (hand-written thank-you notes by clients at intake)

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## Step 7: Build on the Change

- Do not take your eye off the ball!
  - Stay engaged to maintain momentum
  - Effective cultural change can take years
  - Process evaluation: Encourage feedback from the officers to critique and improve the process
  - Incentivize program use through rewards, recognition, training opportunities, etc.

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## Step 8: Make It Stick

- Institutionalize the program
- Once the program becomes “the way we do things around here,” you know it has stuck
- Even at this point, continued monitoring for cultural acceptance is necessary
- Continued top-down support and awareness tells the troops that you are paying attention, and that means it is important

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# Challenges and Barriers

- Resistance to change overall (change represents loss)
  - The message can be that they are gaining an additional tool and losing nothing (remember officer discretion)
- Change fatigue—if you are a progressive, adaptive agency, then your staff may simply be tired of a constant sense of changing
- Apathy, cynicism, and disengagement



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# So What Did Tucson Do?

- Identified a problem
  - Fatal accidental overdoses
  - More than 200 per year and rising
    - More than homicides and fatal traffic collisions combined in Pima County
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- Part 1 crime increases due to substance use-driven property crime
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# What Did Tucson Do?

- Conducted research
- Site visits across the United States
  - Seattle—2016
  - Washington, DC—2017
  - Boston—2017
  - Consultations—Albany, Santa Fe, Rhode Island
- Review of individual programs
  - LEAD
  - Angel Initiative
  - QRT
- Noticeable lack of robust evaluation or empirical research

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## What Did Tucson Do?

- Intentional first step—Naloxone
- Second Arizona city to carry (January 2017)
- Largest Arizona city to date to carry
- More than 400 patrol officers trained and carrying
- More than 50 reversals to date (we were not supposed to have any)
- Made the entire department aware of the scope and depth of the opioid problem

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## What Did Tucson Do?

- Built collaborations and commitments from multiple service providers
- With knowledge of the resources available, we built a hybrid model centered on our 24/7 MAT clinic
- Built on an existing robust mental health diversion model
  - Mental health support team (MHST) has 2 sergeants, 2 detectives, 8 officers, 2 mental health clinicians, 4 peer support
- Engaged the University of Arizona for process and impact evaluations and cost-benefit analysis

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# What Did Tucson Do?

## It Is All About Collaboration

- Held detailed and lengthy discussions among partners about expectations
- Worked with the County Attorney's Office to alleviate initial trepidation
- Messaging provided to the media was carefully crafted; media representatives were invited to training sessions and clinics and provided interviews. Do not skip this step!
- Came to realize that communication was valued above all else as the model was designed and implemented

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# What Did Tucson Do?

- Developed training
  - Base-level understanding ACEs, MAT, neurobiology of addiction, etc.
  - Emphasized a tolerance for relapse
  - Executive staff members attended each training session to answer questions and stress the importance of the program
- Developed policy
  - This is critical: Cops want structure. They need to know what the rules are

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## What Did Tucson Do?

- Implemented program as a pilot
- Aggressively solicited feedback from first users for process evaluation and made immediate changes based on officer feedback
- Provided departmentwide highlights of early use, success stories, notes of thanks, etc.
- Top two patrol officers sent to out-of-state training as a reward in the first year

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# What Worked for Me

1. Be patient, tolerant of early mistakes
2. Change represents loss: Allow time to digest, contemplate
3. Emphasize the power of individual officer discretion
4. I suggest that you do not make deflection mandatory
5. Incentivize deflection (we use training, commendations, etc.)
6. De-emphasize arrest as a measure of productivity
7. Ask for ongoing process improvement suggestions
8. Executive leadership team must show united support for program
9. Members of executive leadership should be present for as many trainings as possible to lend importance and credibility to program
10. Isolate and influence informal leaders (sergeants, FTOs, tenured officers)
11. Highlight success stories, no matter how small



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# Conclusion

- Determine the culture of your organization and tailor a strategy that will work for you
- This is not a “one-size-fits-all” model; it is simply a strategic approach that is working in Tucson based on a classic change model (Kotter eight steps)
- Questions?

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# References

(Because I am definitely not smart enough to come up with this on my own!)

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- Schein, E. H. (1984). Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture. *Sloan Management Review*, 25(2), 3–16.

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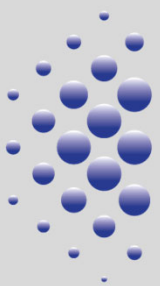
Email: [kevin.hall@tucsonaz.gov](mailto:kevin.hall@tucsonaz.gov)

# <https://cossapresources.org/Program/TTA>

The screenshot shows the website for BJA's Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program. The header includes a search bar and navigation links for COSSAP GRANT PROGRAM, LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, AREAS OF FOCUS, PUBLICATIONS & DIGITAL MEDIA, and PDMP TTAC. The main heading is "TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE". A yellow banner contains the text: "The COSSAP training and technical assistance program offers a variety of learning opportunities and assistance to support BJA COSSAP grantees and other local, tribal, and state stakeholders to build and sustain multidisciplinary criminal justice responses to illicit substance use and misuse." Below this is a "REQUEST TTA" button. A second paragraph states: "Training and technical assistance is provided in a variety of formats, including virtual and in-person training events, workshop and meeting presentations, and online resources." A dark blue box lists the program's support for communities:

The COSSAP TTA Program supports communities by:

- Facilitating peer-to-peer learning opportunities in which communities can learn from experienced programs through virtual consultations and on-site visits.
- Providing speakers for conferences and workshops or skilled subject-matter experts for training events to educate stakeholders and build capacity.
- Facilitating strategic and cross-system planning to identify community resources, establish priorities, and develop a road map to achieving goals.
- Identifying materials such as policies and procedures, guidelines, and data sharing agreements that support program activities.
- Supporting PDMPs by increasing PDMP efficiencies and facilitating coordination between PDMPs and state and national stakeholders.

A logo consisting of a cluster of blue spheres of varying sizes, arranged in a roughly circular pattern.

BJA's

**Comprehensive**  
Opioid, Stimulant,  
and Substance Abuse

Program