



# Reflective learning – facilitator guidance

## Video *Chronic unease*

### Introduction

This leaflet provides the specifics of the reflective learning engagement session called *Chronic unease*.

For general guidance and tips on running a reflective learning session, please read and use the generic guidance available from the Hearts and Minds website

(<https://heartsandminds.energyinst.org/toolkit/reflective-lfi>).



### About chronic unease

Chronic unease is the alertness to weak signals and to mind traps. It is about resetting our tolerance to risk and understanding that small failures are signs that something needs fixing.

Chronic unease starts with openness, where we welcome bad news and treat incidents as an opportunity to learn. It is about asking the right questions and picking up on signals of potential failure when on site.

Chronic unease is a key behaviour for safety leaders at every level in the organisation which helps reduce the risk of incidents.



### Content video

The video consists of three parts – it stops automatically after each part for an engagement activity.

The first part of the video is called *Chronic unease*. There we see what chronic unease means, using different practical examples in daily life.

The second part of the video is called *We are all human*. There we see how our minds work and how this relates to the actions we take or don't take related to safety.

The last part is called *Mind traps*. It explains the biases that we have and how they can affect our actions related to safety.

### Key lessons

- Being in a constant state of 'chronic unease' can help to identify weak signals.
- The impact of 'mind traps'.
- How our brain works (fast thinking and slow thinking).

### What can you do?

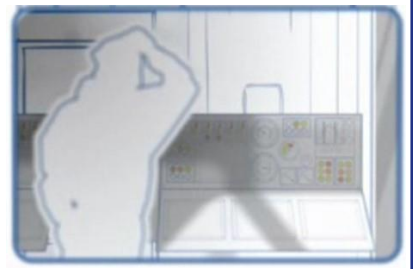


- **Demonstrate your chronic unease out in the field** – don't rely on past successes
- **Engage with those doing the work** – ask 'what could go wrong, how did you assess the risk and what controls are in place to reduce the risk?'
- **Welcome bad news** – 'what do you not want to tell me?' - and react appropriately
- **Watch traffic light reporting** – challenge the greens and support the reds
- **Be on the lookout for weak signals** - where people are concerned with the current situation.

Practice, and develop chronic unease in your organisation!

### We are all human

People make mistakes. Always stay alert and take care of each other!





## What are mind traps? (also known as cognitive bias)

The term ‘mind trap’ refers to a natural tendency in human thinking to be unduly influenced by existing mental models (what someone wants, expects, or thinks is going to happen). So, despite evidence that suggests something else, one may jump to conclusions without giving a decision proper attention, being led by emotion or by a reluctance to apply mental effort.

These mind traps can affect our thinking, from the perception and interpretation of information by our senses, through to judgement and decision making.

A state of chronic unease is achieved when we have created a culture where we are alert to weak signals, and make effective and timely challenges and interventions in risk assessments and decision making.



## Questions in video

### Questions after part 1 of the video

- What are some potential weak signals at your work site?

### Questions after part 2 of the video

Please discuss in small groups:

- What are some critical tasks at your work site where you want to avoid fast thinking?

### Questions after part 3 of the video

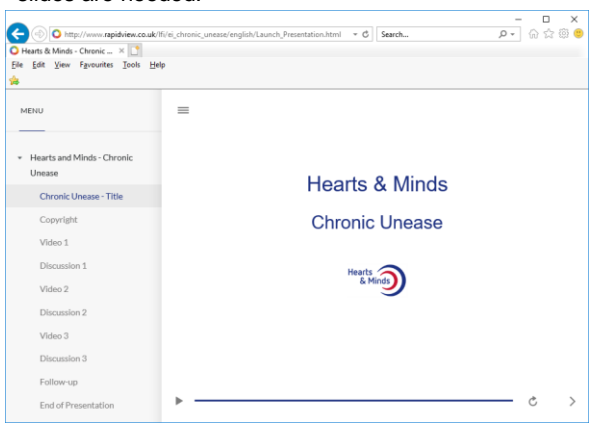
Please discuss in small groups:

- What are some of the mind traps you have experienced?



## Video tool

Use the menu in the video tool at the start of the meeting to explain the structure of the session. No slides are needed.



## Examples of mind traps are:

- Risk normalisation:** The tendency to underestimate a risk that has become familiar, and is associated with tasks that we undertake regularly without incident
- Information bias:** The tendency to interpret information in a way that confirms our preconceptions.
- Confirmation bias:** A willingness to ignore, or find alternative explanations that allow us to rationalise information that does not fit with our mental model of the situation.
- Optimism bias:** The tendency to be over-optimistic, overestimating the likelihood of success, also known as wishful thinking.
- Plan continuation bias:** The tendency to want to continue on a course of action once committed to it, even when circumstances change.
- Outcome bias:** The tendency to perceive risks based on how the problem is ‘framed’. E.g. the statement ‘there is a 90% chance of success’ will be seen more positively, and with less risk compared to the statement ‘There is a 10% chance of failure’.
- Group think:** The tendency to want to agree with the consensus view of a group of peers.

## Thinking fast and thinking slow

Most of the time we use our fast thinking brain. There is nothing wrong with this - it works well in routine and familiar situations. But we have to recognise that when we are thinking like this we are subject to mind traps. We jump to conclusions, then look for facts to support our opinions. When making HSSE critical decisions, we need to avoid mind traps by engaging our slow thinking, rational brain.

- Fast thinking:** intuitive, effortless, emotional, jump to conclusion, automatic, always on.
- Slow thinking:** deliberate, effortful, rational, evidence based, normally off, unless switched on.

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