> **"Find how the system socializes people to make fewer assumptions, notice more, and ignore less."** *–Weick & Sutcliffe* [1]

Focusing on the RRC Guiding Principle
Reluctance to Simplify

Mark Your Calendar

March Virtual Training Sessions:
US1372 - Virtual - All Staff RRC Continuous Process Improvement (3 hrs):
05 MAR 1300-1600 ET
10 MAR 1300-1600 ET
11 MAR 0730-1030 ET
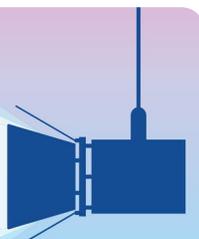18 MAR 0730-1030 ET
19 MAR 0900-1200 ET
24 MAR 0900-1200 ET

Register for Training Here
Turn to page 5 for registration instructions.

MARCH

THIS MONTH'S THEME IS
RELUCTANCE TO SIMPLIFY

In healthcare, the pressure to find quick and easy solutions is constant. But what if the path to safer, more reliable care lies in resisting the urge to simplify? The Ready Reliable Care (RRC) principle of *Reluctance to Simplify* encourages healthcare teams to avoid oversimplified explanations for complex problems.[2] Instead, it promotes digging deeper to uncover the true causes of issues. This approach doesn't mean making things unnecessarily complicated—it's about gaining a full understanding of the work being done.

Reliability in Action Award Spotlight

This month we are highlighting special recognition from Wright-Patterson Medical Center for TSgt Blake Harris and SMSgt Devin Rudd. Their actions exemplified *Reluctance to Simplify*, excellence in service and commitment to RRC principles. ***Turn to page 4 for the full story.***

Reluctance to Simplify values multiple perspectives, challenges assumptions, and questions conventional wisdom. It helps organizations see beyond surface-level explanations and recognize the deeper factors that contribute to errors.[3] Instead of blaming an individual for a mistake, it encourages examining the systems and processes that may have played a role.[4] For instance:

- A medication error might not be the fault of the person who administered the drug. It could stem from unclear instructions, confusing labels, or understaffing.

- A communication breakdown during a patient handoff might involve multiple factors, such as missing information, time pressures, or poorly designed workflows.

By resisting the urge to simplify, high reliability organizations can better understand these interconnected issues and develop solutions that address the root causes.[5]

Applying *Reluctance to Simplify* in Ready Reliable Care

HROs demonstrate *Reluctance to Simplify* by striving to understand complexities rather than attempting to force simplicity into systems, which may lead to dangerous misunderstandings.[6] RRC's application of *Reluctance to Simplify* centers around practices and cultural behaviors in which staff and leaders are able to continually demonstrate this guiding principle. These include:

READY RELIABLE CARE PRINCIPLES

	PREOCCUPATION WITH FAILURE	Drive zero harm by anticipating and addressing risks.
	SENSITIVITY TO OPERATIONS	Be mindful of how people, processes, and systems impact outcomes.
	DEFERENCE TO EXPERTISE	Seek guidance from those with the most relevant knowledge and experience.
	RESPECT FOR PEOPLE	Foster mutual trust and respect.
	COMMITMENT TO RESILIENCE	Leverage past mistakes to learn, grow, and improve processes.
	CONSTANCY OF PURPOSE	Persist through adversity towards the common goal of zero harm.
	RELUCTANCE TO SIMPLIFY	**Strive to understand complexities and address root causes.**

RELUCTANCE TO SIMPLIFY

- Collaborate with your team to exchange ideas, address issues, and find ways to improve processes.
- Resist oversimplified explanations; question assumptions like "this has always worked before" or "someone will catch the mistake".
- Use Comprehensive Systematic Analysis and structured problem-solving tools (A3, fishbone, 5 Whys) to investigate root causes of process issues.
- Pilot changes before full implementation, check for unintended consequences and adjust based on feedback.
- Review multiple data sources before making decisions (e.g., near misses, patient experiences, review compliance).
- Pay attention to workarounds that staff use in their daily tasks. Work with teams to fix these problems so that workarounds are no longer needed.

TOP

Additional Resources to Support Reluctance to Simplify

HELPFUL RESOURCES

DHA subject matter experts (SME) provide additional information and resources to help equip and empower staff towards becoming a HRO through the development of a culture of *Reluctance to Simplify*. A few of these are:

DHA Patient Safety Program's Comprehensive Systematic Analysis (CSA)

A CSA is "a thorough, credible, and acceptable analysis following a patient safety (PS) event that seeks to identify system vulnerabilities so they can be eliminated or mitigated in a sustainable manner to prevent reoccurrence" **(DHA-Procedures Manual 6025.13, Vol. 2)**. The DHA Patient Safety Program offers handbooks, submission templates, checklists, and learning resources to guide you through your CSA.

All Staff RRC Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) Training

This 3-hour class introduces how CPI drives the headquarters strategy and puts high reliability principles into practice. Participants learn how to use scientific "A3 thinking", huddling to solve problems, standard work, and visual controls to make improvements in their daily work. This class provides CPI tools (and a toolkit) that participants can apply immediately within their workplaces to identify and solve problems. **Three (3) CE/CME credits are available.**

- Training is conducted virtually on MS Teams. The list of available dates and times are on JKO. Additional virtual and in-person sessions may be scheduled for groups upon request on SPIDR.
- **SIGN UP in JKO:** JKO > Click on Course Catalog and enter All Staff RRC CPI Training in the Course or Curriculum Name search. Alternatively, you can enter DHA as the course prefix and US1372-Virtual as the Course Number.

Demonstrate Your Understanding

Pose these questions when discussing the Theme of the Month to build your team's understanding of *Reluctance to Simplify*. Submit your answers to our RRC Support Team for a chance to be featured in an upcoming "Real MHS Voices" promotion series!

1. When a problem happens, why is it important to look past the first or easiest answer?

2. If you see a teammate using a "workaround" to get something done, what might that tell us about our process?

3. What *Reluctance to Simplify* practices does your unit/department/facility utilize?

Share Your Response

DHA Ready Reliable Care Point of Contact: Ms. Kelli Tate

TOP

Reliability in Action Award Spotlight

Network 9 Continental, 88th Medical Group
TSgt Blake Harris and SMSgt Devin Rudd
Wright-Patterson Medical Center

RRC Reliability in Action Award recognition was proudly awarded to TSgt Blake Harris and SMSgt Devin Rudd for their efforts which demonstrated a strong commitment to the RRC principles, outstanding service, and a clear embodiment of *Reluctance to Simplify*.

A recent case in the physical therapy clinic highlighted how commitment to our core principles turns challenges into successes. When a patient required a knee brace, TSgt Harris faced a difficult fitting due to significant leg swelling. Demonstrating true respect for people, TSgt Harris patiently tried multiple options, listened to the patient's concern and even took extra time to repair the man's broken shoe. However, the complexity of the fit led to a follow-up problem: a few days later, the patient called unable to remove the brace at home.

Instead of just repeating the instructions, TSgt Harris showed a crucial deference to expertise by immediately consulting SMSgt Rudd, a trained orthotics technician. Understanding the potential safety risk, SMSgt Rudd acted with urgency, scheduling the patient for an immediate one-on-one appointment. Together, they found a new brace that was easier for the patient to manage and provided clear, hands-on guidance.

Their *Reluctance to Simplify* the situation and seamless teamwork directly resolved the patient's issue, ensuring the patient's safety, satisfaction and perfectly embodying the spirit of Ready Reliable Care.

Submit a Reliability in Action Nomination

Know an outstanding team member or team deserving of a Ready Reliable Care *Reliability in Action* award?
Click here to submit a nomination!

NOW AVAILABLE

The **Ready Reliable Care: DHA's Journey to High Reliability** course is now updated! This one-hour course, designed for all DHA personnel and eligible for **1.0 hours of CE credit**, provides a foundational level overview of the DHA's strategic initiative to become a high reliability organization. New content includes short video descriptions of evidence-based practices that demonstrate RRC guiding principles.

New JKO Course Number: JMESI-US108

The RRC Comms Team has launched a set of new tools!

05 Earn Trust
04 Sma...
03 Long-Term
02 Harm...
01 Zero ...eats

5 Perspectives, 1 Mission
What Does HRO[1] Mean to Me?

DHA | READY RELIABLE CARE

[1]HRO = High Reliability Organizaton

...from new mistakes ...m for zero repeats

Access these tools on the RRC Sharepoint

TOP

COMING SOON

The 2026 DHA Patient Safety Culture Survey

Anticipated Fielding Dates

20 April - 12 June 2026.

Survey Reach

The Survey will be fielded across **all DHA military medical treatment facilities (MTFs) worldwide.**

For more information, visit the **Patient Safety Learning Center**.

Targeted Participants

All MTF workforce including:
- Medical and dental
- House staff (including interns, residents, fellows)
- Clinical and non-clinical
- Active Duty and Reserve Component military
- Civilian GS employees, contractors, and volunteers

READY RELIABLE CARE LINKS

Learn more about RRC education and resources through the links below.

Visit the Foundations of High Reliability

Access the RRC Communications and Education Resources

How to Register for RRC CPI Training in JKO

Access the JKO system here, then follow the steps below:

1. Select the "Course Catalog" tab
2. In the "Course or Curriculum Name:" section, enter "All Staff RRC CPI"
3. Scroll to Course Number "US1372-Virtual" and select "Show Availability"
4. Select "Enroll" for a date/time that works for you (click "Details" to view course time)
5. You will receive a confirmation email from JKO with your course information and Teams link.
   Note: You will not receive a calendar invite—block the time on your calendar.

Endnotes

1. Weick, Karl E. and Sutcliffe, Kathleen M. (2015), *Managing the unexpected: sustained performance in a complex world*. Wiley, 62.

2. Ibid.

3. Defense Health Agency. (2023, May 18). *Ready Reliable Care: DHA's journey to high reliability* [PowerPoint slides].

4. Oster, C. A., & Braaten, J. S. (2021). *High reliability organizations: A healthcare handbook for patient safety & quality* (2nd ed.). Dustin Sullivan, 141.

5. Oster, C. A., & Braaten, J. S. (2021). *Instructor's guide for high reliability organizations: A healthcare handbook for patient safety & quality* (2nd ed.). Dustin Sullivan, 17.

6. Green, Steven (2023). *Reluctance to Simplify. In Pilot Competency and Capability: Responsibilities, Strategy, and Command* (1st ed.). CRC Press. Access the full resource here.

TOP