AHEAD FAILCON:
Preparing for your next mistake

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Conference Civility Statement
We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects…
   Access and Inclusion
   and
   Civility and Respect
   …this week and in all aspects of our organization.

1. Why are you here?

2. Why have a conversation about failure?
What is ‘failure’?

- Who decides?
- When is it decided?
- Is failure final?
- What purpose does failure serve?
- What is the relationship between failure and success?
- Failure and resilience? Failure and innovation?

The benefit of failure

Failure is one important component of scholarship, and is necessary to help our thinking progress. But, as a scientific community writ large, we have done a poor job of communicating the frequency of failure, the benefits of failure, and the growth that is possible as a direct result of failure.


Failure and success

“Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.” — Winston Churchill

“Success is not a glistening shiny mountain. It is a pile of mistakes that you are standing on instead of buried under.” — Dave Ramsey
Anatomy of failure

- What happened?
- At what point was 'failure' determined?
- Why type of failure occurred?
- What are second-order and third-order reasons for the failure?
- How does this insight improve our process and operations?

Types of failure in complex systems

- Deviance (individual chooses to violate a practice or process)
- Inattention (individual inadvertently deviates from process)
- Lack of ability (individual doesn’t have the skills or training necessary)
- Process inadequacy (process is faulty or incomplete)
- Task challenge (task is too difficult to be reliably executed each time)
- Process complexity (process composed of many elements breaks down amidst novel interactions)
- Uncertainty (lack of clarity about future events leads to undesirable decisions)
- Hypothesis testing (experiment designed to prove success fails)
- Exploratory testing (experiment designed to expand knowledge has undesirable result)

Ways to encourage failure at work

- Stop playing the blame game
- Encourage idea sharing and early drafts
- Foster a culture of openness and communication
- Embrace failures (however small) and learn from them
Examples

- FailCon  http://thefailcon.com/
- Stanford I Screwed Up  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1LSS9Q3mnQ

Session Evaluation

Please point your phone at this QR code, or go to:

tinyurl.com/AHEADeval

Your feedback helps shape future programming.
Thank you for attending!