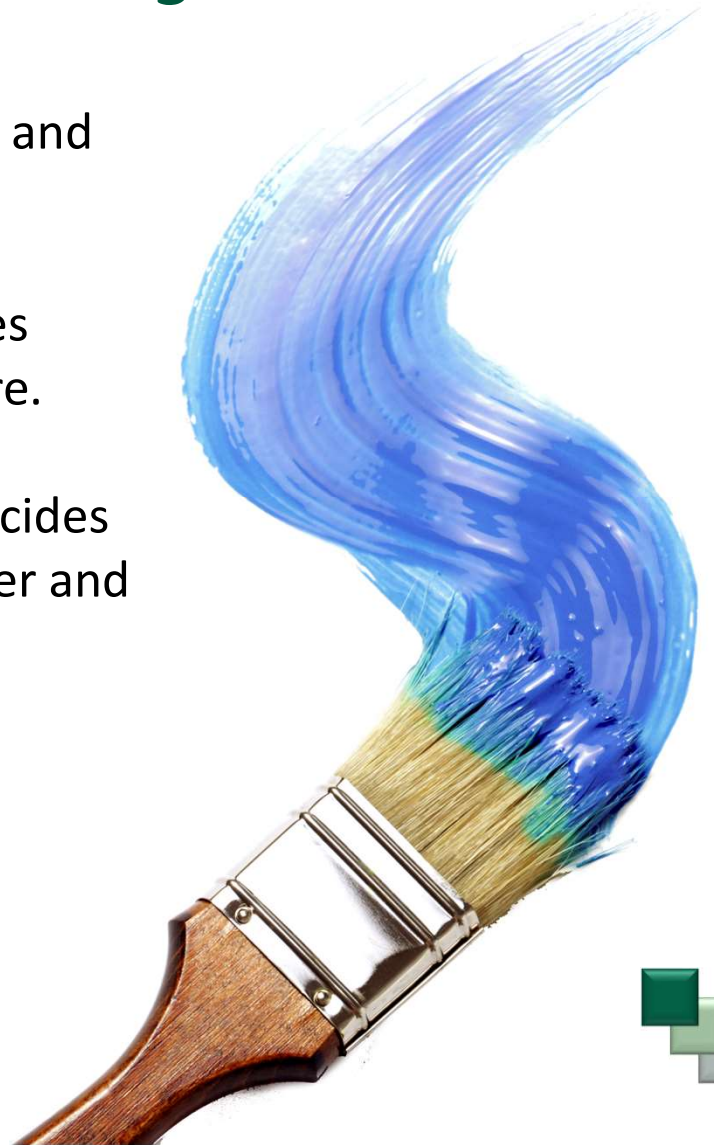
# First Responder Training for providers: Understanding Cultural Differences

MINES & ASSOCIATES
*A National Business Psychology Firm*

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *Organizational Culture: Edgar Schein*

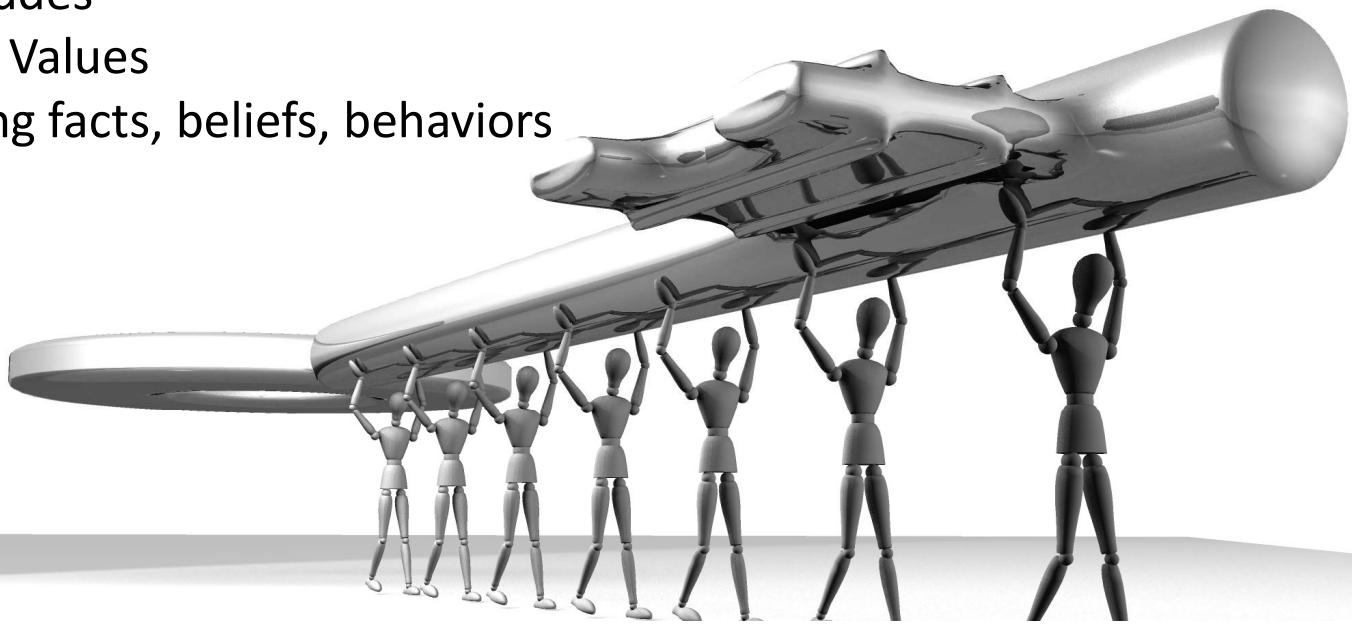
- "Organization culture" refers to the values and beliefs of an organization.
- The principles, ideologies as well as policies followed by an organization form its culture.
- It is the culture of the workplace which decides the way individuals interact with each other and behave with people outside the company.



# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *Organizational Culture*

1. Artifacts
   a) Vision Mission
   b) Facilities
   c) Dress code
2. Values
   a) Values
   b) Mindset
   c) Attitudes
3. Assumed Values
4. Underlying facts, beliefs, behaviors



# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *Overview of First Responders*

*Overall consider similarities and*
*the subtle, but essential differences*

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *POLICE Artifacts*

### Vision Mission

- Public safety: protecting the public.
- Working with the community
- Reducing crime

### Facilities

- Patrol car/motorcycle
- Undercover car
- Jailhouse
- Court
- Police station

### Schedule

- 10-hour shifts (Can vary depending on Department)

### Dress code

- Police- typically Blue
- Sheriff- typically Green

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *POLICE Artifacts: Police Hierarchy*

- Police Commissioner
- Chief of Police
- Assistant Chief
- Police Deputy Chief
- Police Captain
- Police Lieutenant
- Police Sergeant
- Police Corporal
- Police Detective
- Police Officer

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *POLICE Artifacts: Sheriff Hierarchy*

- Sheriff
- Chief Deputy Sheriff
- Captain
- Major
- Deputy or Officer

# First Responder Cultural Differences

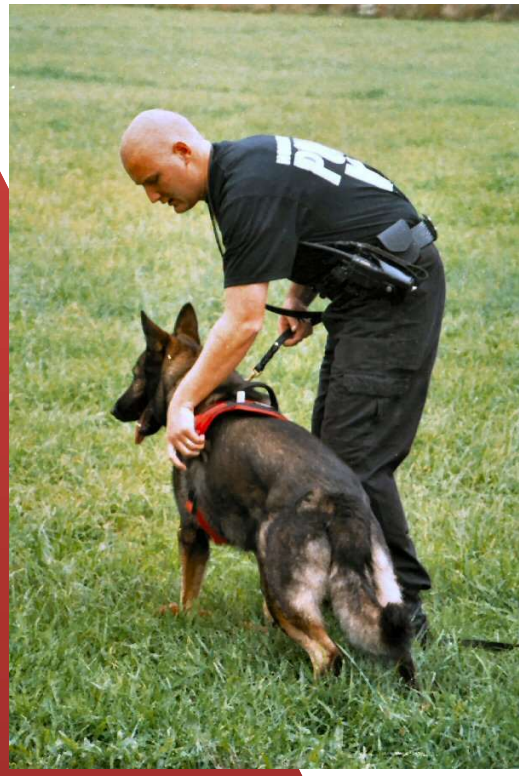
## *POLICE Values*

- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Responsiveness
- Respect
- Dedication
- Excellence
- Service to our communities
- Reverence for the law
- Commitment to leadership quality through continuous improvement

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *POLICE Assumed Values*

- Brotherhood
- Sacrifice
- Service to others
- Taking charge and or in charge
- Selfless
- Calm under pressure
- Power
- Authority
- Need to take command
- Facing death & danger



# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *POLICE Underling Facts*

- Different culture from Fire service: Public Perception
- Culture varies from department to department
- Heavily Scrutinized
  - Internal Affairs
  - Public
  - Media
- Critical and skeptical
- Can be defensive and resistive
- Concrete and clear
- Direct & Want Directness
- Respect collaboration; working with them
- Be willing to move deeply into detail
- Suspend judgement
- Club code of silence
- Regular trauma
- Dark Humor as coping
- Challenge to share with Families

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *FIRE Service Artifacts*

### Vision Mission

- Save Lives through emergency response
- Create safer Communities

### Facilities

- Fire House
- Corporate headquarters
- Fire truck
- Ambulance
- In the community

### Division

- Company
- Battalion
- District

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *FIRE Service Artifacts*

### Dress code

- Hat
- Formal looking blazer
- Shirt
- Tie
- Dress pants
- Shoes
- Formal dress uniform

### Gear

- Fire Helmet
- Turnout Pants and Jacket
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
- Gloves
- Boots
- Personal Alert Safety System
- Axe

### Schedule

- 24 Hours On and 48 Hours Off

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *FIRE Service Artifacts: Hierarchy*

- Chief of the Department
- Deputy or Assistant Chief
- Battalion Chief
- Senior Captain
- Captain
- Lieutenant
- Driver
- Firefighter

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *FIRE Values*

- Professionalism
- Respect
- Providing the highest level of Excellence
- Fire/Rescue/EMS to the public
- Safety
- Problem solving
- Positive Attitude
- Ethical Behavior

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *FIRE Assumed Values*

- Brotherhood
- Dangerous occupation
- Heroism
- Service to the community
- Trauma – exposure to tragedy
- Generally seen as positive
- Calm under pressure
- Take command
- Helpful

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *FIRE Underlying Facts*

- Rotating shift work: 24-48 hours on with often little sleep
- Positive perception
- Guarded –Earn Trust
- Strong “BS” meter
- Dark Humor coping
- Regular Intense trauma
  - Trauma is routine
- More social than police
- Earn your dues
- Expect less directness than PD

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *EMS Artifacts*

### Vision Mission

- Provide cost efficient, high quality Advanced Life Support emergency medical care and ambulance transportation for the citizens
- Highest quality, and most cost-effective emergency health care to the community, while providing the highest employee satisfaction, equipment and employee/management relationship

### Facilities

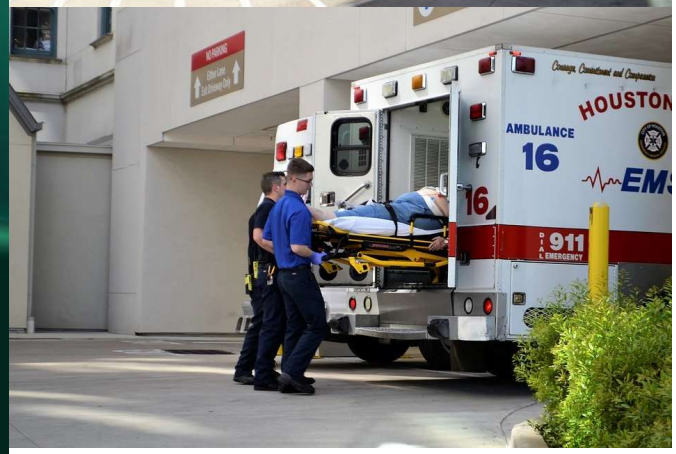
- Ambulance
- Transport Service
- May work out of Fire Service and be more like Fire schedule and environment or mostly on the road
- ER station

### Schedule

- From 8 hours a shift to 24
- Historically, the shift length preferred by both employees and employers has been 24 hours, followed by 48 off between shifts
- A close second is the 12-hour shift, either days, nights or, in some cases, a rotation of both

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *EMS Artifacts*




### Dress code

- There is no single standard paramedic clothing
- Long and short sleeved white dress shirt
- Long and short sleeved duty shirt in a dark color
- Black pants
- Dark polo shirt
- Dark fleece pullover sweater
- Steel-toed boots
- Winter coat.
- Another service may wear:
  - short-sleeved, white, button-down shirts
  - Clip-on ties
  - black or navy pants
  - black shoes or boots

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *EMS Artifacts: Hierarchy*

- Paramedic
- Registered Nurse (RN)
- Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *EMS Values*

- Dignity and Respect
- Progressive Innovation
- Professionalism and Objectivity
- Leadership
- Participation

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *EMS Assumed Values*

- Calm under Pressure
- Rescuers
- Saviors
- Knowledgeable
- Intense situations

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *EMS Underlying Facts*

- Understand the relationship within that district with Fire and PD
- Varies from district to district
- Sensitive to experience being minimized
- Need to learn the lingo E.G “Ran on a kid”
- Currently, COVID may be really creating a breaking point
- Trauma response
  - Involves all sense including touch and smell
  - Loss of humanity of what people can do to each other
- Gallows humor
- Know when it’s normal and then when to explore what it may be covering up
- Sometimes may feel like red head stepchild to Fire
- Less glory
- Transport Service may be involved with patient longer

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *DISPATCH Artifacts*

### Vision Mission

- Safer community by processing all calls
- Effective emergency communication services in the interest of public safety and public service

### Facilities

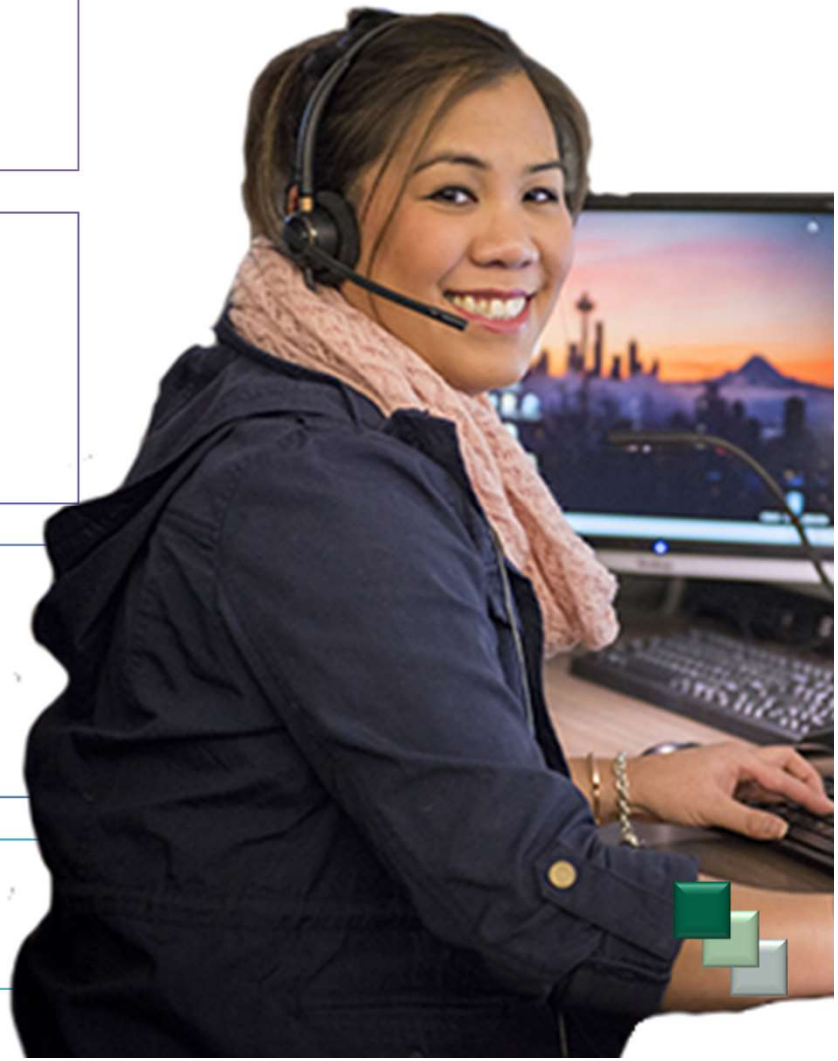
- May be inside Police Department or Fire Service
- May be 1 person in small township
- Might be independent center services multiple agencies
- Typically very tight quarters with people working closely together

### Schedule

- 8- to 12-hour shifts
- Rotating for 24/7 coverage
- Rotating 10-hour shifts
- Different start times

### Dress code

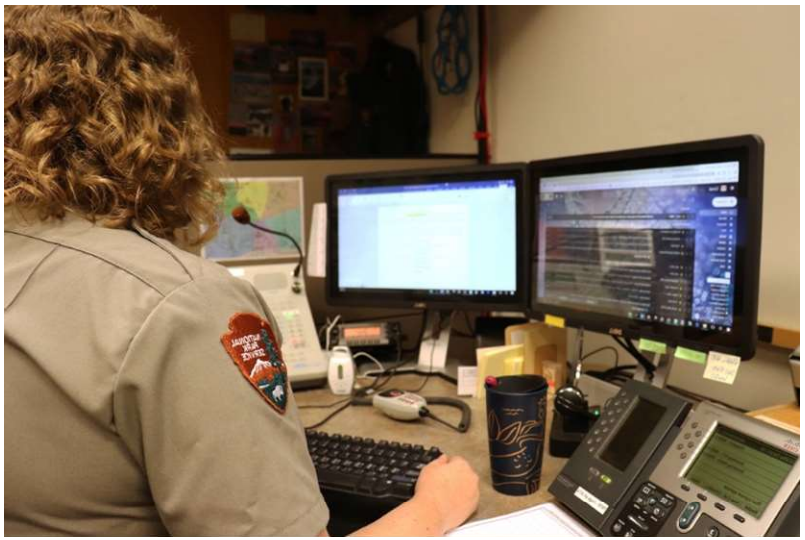
- Some variety from business casual to polo shirts and issues pants to some uniforms.



# First Responder Cultural Differences

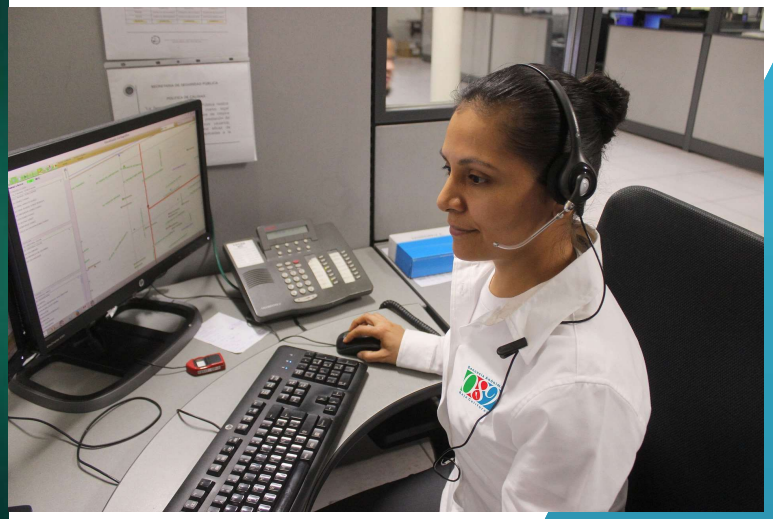
## *DISPATCH Artifacts: Hierarchy*

- Director
- Dispatch Manager
- Dispatch Supervisor
- Dispatch Operators
- Dispatch Cadet



# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *DISPATCH Values*



- Integrity
- Service
- Pride
- Teamwork
- Open Communications
- Innovation
- Diversity

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *DISPATCH Assumed Values*

- Support function
- Time pressure
- Calm under pressure
- Behind the scenes
- Phone support & Direction

# First Responder Cultural Differences

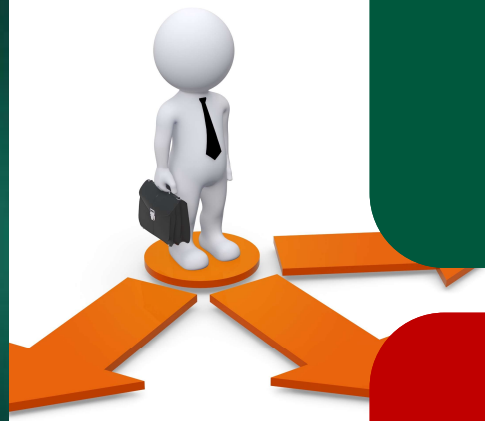
## *DISPATCH Underlying Facts*

- Need to understand unique relationship to department
- Lack of closure
- Multi tasking
- Rarely have down time to debrief, dump stress
- Shifts are typically bid
- Informal hierarchy: Eat their young
- Dark sense of humor
- Contained in a small area
- Can become hardened
- Female majority
- Next Gen 911

*Fantastic Resource: “Within the Trenches” Blog/podcast.

# First Responder Cultural Differences

## *Review: What did we learn*



**Do**

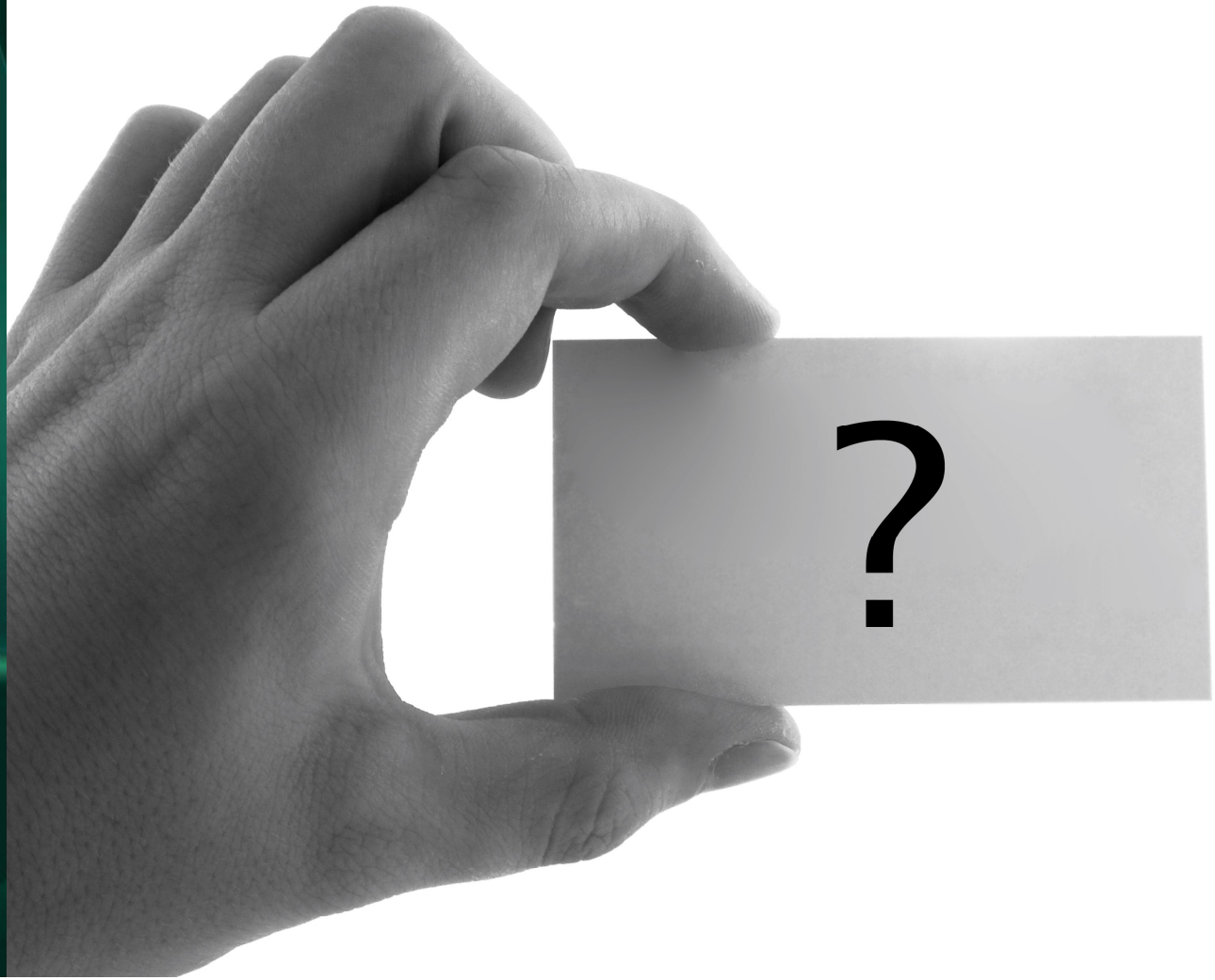
- Seek to understand the specific dept, district, county, culture
- Convey you are interested & wanting to know
- Invite details

**Don't**

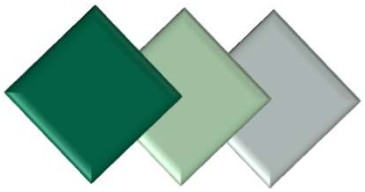
- Overgeneralize
- Assume you are an insider
- Be shocked
- Say you understand
- Overshare your experience

# Questions or Comments?

Contact providerinfo@minesandassociates.com for more information, comments, questions, or requests for resources mentioned in this presentation.



# THANK YOU!!!



MINES
& ASSOCIATES
*A National*
*Business Psychology Firm*

www.minesandassociates.com