



QUATTRONE CENTER

for the Fair Administration of Justice

SENTINEL EVENT  
REVIEWS  
WHAT, WHY, HOW

Introduction to the Madison Common Council Executive Committee  
July 14, 2020



**A NATIONAL RESEARCH AND POLICY HUB CREATED TO  
CATALYZE LONG-TERM STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE US  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.**

# THE PROBLEM: PREVENTING ERRORS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**ERROR: ANY OUTCOME NOT INTENDED / NOT DESIRED BY THE SYSTEM.**



**COLD  
CASES**



**WRONGFUL  
CONVICTIONS**



**OFFICER-INVOLVED  
SHOOTINGS**



**DEATHS  
IN CUSTODY**

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Contributing factors, such as **errors**, **deviations from policy** and **intentional misconduct**, lead to bad outcomes.

# SENTINEL EVENT: MADISON PROTESTS TURN VIOLENT



HOME NEWS WEATHER SPORTS WATCH THINGS TO DO





**HOW DO OTHER COMPLEX SYSTEMS PREVENT ERROR?**

# HEALTHCARE

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## THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY USES PEER REVIEW.

When adverse medical events occur, they are followed by a **multi-stakeholder peer review**.

The **goal** of this confidential evaluation process is to **identify contributing factors** to the event.



# TRANSPORTATION

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## THE TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY USES EVENT REVIEW.

After major accidents, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) **launches an investigation.**

“Go Team” investigates and produces a report **identifying contributing factors** to accident and proposing and implementing system reforms to **prevent similar harm in the future.**



# CRIMINAL JUSTICE: SENTINEL EVENT REVIEW

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A CONFIDENTIAL, NON-DISCIPLINARY PROCESS TO IDENTIFY  
AND ADDRESS THE CONTRIBUTING CAUSES OF CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE ERRORS.





# SENTINEL EVENT REVIEWS: FORWARD-LOOKING ACCOUNTABILITY

SENTINEL EVENT REVIEWS HELP BUILD PUBLIC TRUST AND LEGITIMACY BY ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

Forward-looking accountability prevents error recurrence and further erosion of trust and legitimacy.



RETROACTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

Administrative reviews  
Criminal charges  
Litigation

vs.

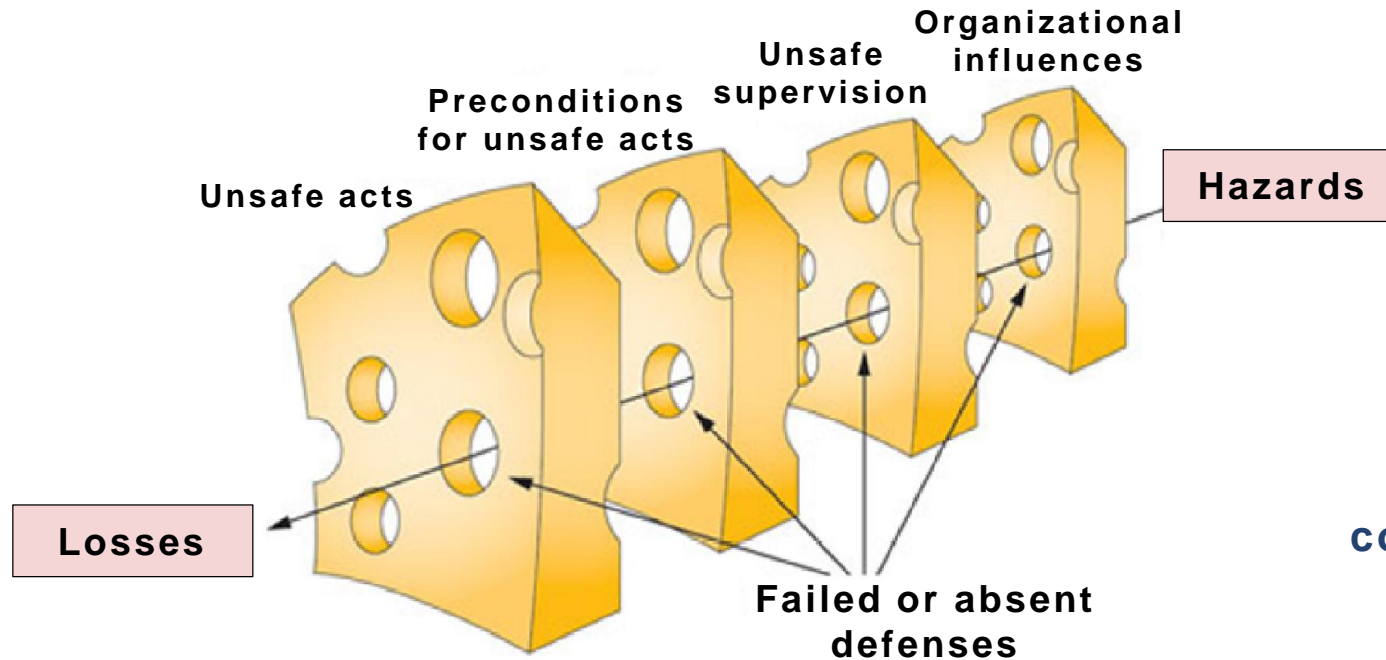


FORWARD-LOOKING  
ACCOUNTABILITY

Sentinel Event Reviews

By identifying core **causative factors** of an error,  
we can create an **action plan** to address those factors.

# SENTINEL EVENT: MULTIPLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS



**“We can’t change the human condition, but we can change the conditions in which humans operate.”**

**– James Reason**

# OUR EXPERIENCE

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**WRONGFUL ARREST**

**CHARGING ERROR**

**WRONGFUL CONVICTION / INCARCERATION**

**OPIOID-INDUCED FATALITIES**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITIES**

**OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTING**

**FAILURE OF SPEEDY TRIAL**

**PROTEST RESPONSE**

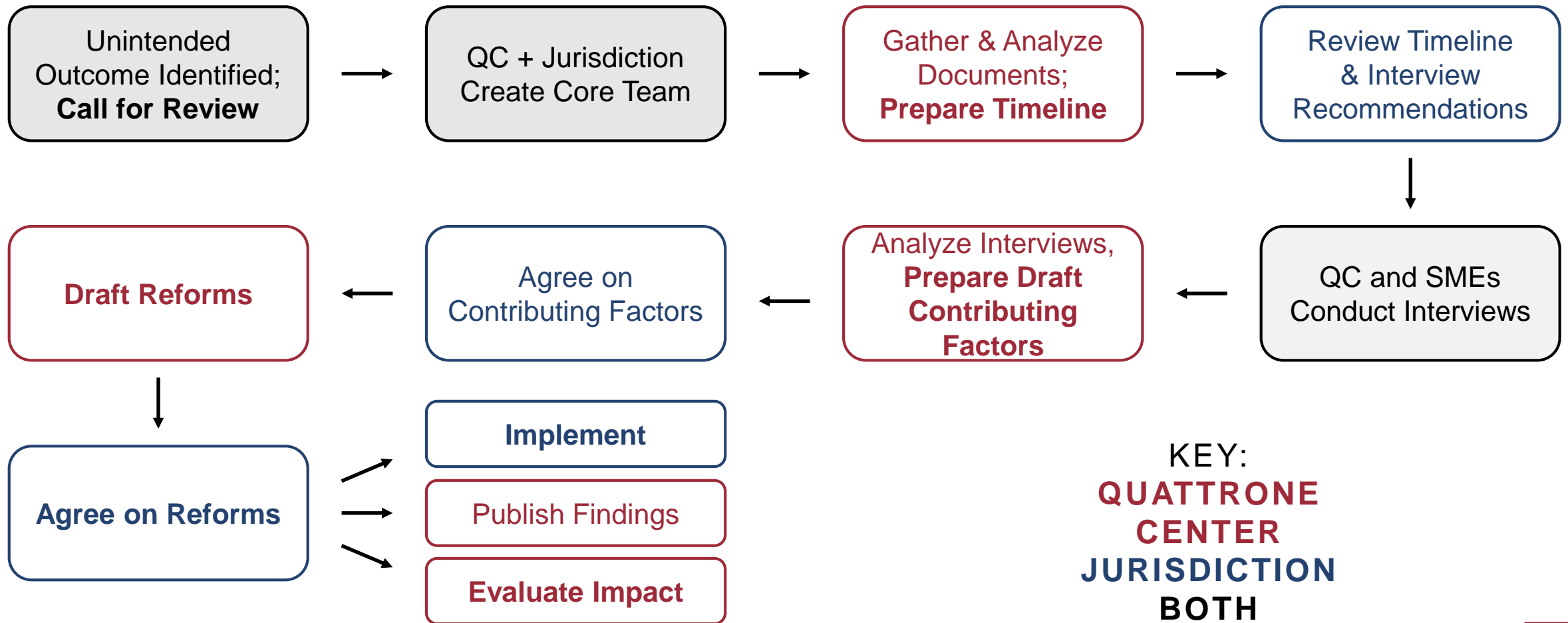
# SENTINEL EVENT REVIEWS PROMOTE A JUST CULTURE

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A culture that recognizes that  
competent professionals make mistakes  
and may develop unhealthy norms (e.g.,  
shortcuts)  
but has zero tolerance for misconduct  
or reckless behavior.

# SAMPLE REVIEW PROCESS

## THE REVIEW PROCESS FUNCTIONS AS A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CYCLE.



# QUESTIONS / NEXT STEPS

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