

Leader Tip Sheet

Culture of Positivity

Poor work culture impacts mental health, productivity, and the bottom line. It's just not good for anyone! This guide offers tips on what you can do to lead your team to positivity!

1). Demonstrate your commitment to trust and collaboration within the team.

- **A leader's commitment goes a long way in establishing workplace culture**—either positively or negatively! Be intentional about modeling concern and interest for each individual. Set the bar high for respect, compassion, and engagement.
- **Consider teambuilding activities that your department might enjoy.** These may be quarterly pot-lucks to full day retreats. Get input from your staff about activities that they would appreciate, and be willing to spend a little money! A few dollars upfront could save thousands over the long haul if your team communicates, collaborates and works well together.

2). Identify barriers that destroy collaboration. Common barriers include:

- **Personality clashes and conflict avoidance.** You may need to mediate, but don't work harder on the issue than each person is willing to work themselves! Empower your employees to confidently resolve conflict through training, education and coaching. If issues linger or you're not sure what to do, call your EAP for additional help.
- **Work processes are not working and people are getting frustrated.** This often looks like negativity and poor attitudes, but it really comes down to having a solution-focused conversation about work process—what's going well? What needs to change? What is each person's role? What are some easy fixes? What are the long-term solutions?
- **Grief about losing the past and resistance to change.** Some people adapt very quickly to change while others get stuck on the old way. For those who struggle with change it's important to acknowledge their feelings about the past (maybe a previous supervisor or an old work process, etc.) and validate people's very real feelings of loss. Once you acknowledge how difficult this is for them, in a compassionate way challenge them to look ahead—what opportunities do they see? How can they contribute to a great team today? What are they willing to do to make it better?

Culture of Positivity Cont.

- **It's been a long tradition of complaining, backstabbing, and passive aggression—it's a culture of negativity.** First, role model positivity, optimism, and the principles of servant leadership. Second, clearly define what you want the new culture to look like. Third, clearly communicate that vision to everyone. Then communicate it again. Then find a different way to communicate it. Keep communicating it. Finally, take some action to make it happen. Get people involved in starting Positive Culture initiatives. Be creative and DON'T GIVE UP!! Change takes time.

3). Show your appreciation.

- **Take every opportunity to say thank you.** This may be a quick comment, or a hand-written thank you note. Appreciation is contagious. The more you appreciate others, the more they will appreciate each other.
- **Acknowledge achievements of individuals and the team.** Point out success; people may not recognize it otherwise. Criticism may help correct errors, but affirmation facilitates motivation and engagement.
- **Treat your staff well.** Bring cupcakes just because. Let people leave early sometimes. Smile and laugh together. Let people know that they are valued and appreciated. Often.

Ascension WI EAP

(800).540.3758

EAP@ascension.org

www.ascensionWIEAP.org
