Action Pact, Inc.

www.Culturechangenow.com

Culture Change in Practice

Circles everywhere!

Wednesday, December 06, 2006
posted by Steph Kilen at 1:25 PM

"Culture Change in Practice" is our own weblog where people can become involved in a conversation about Culture Change as it is practiced by professionals in real nursing homes. Feel free to join the conversation, or post a comment about something you have learned on your journey.

www.culturechangenow.com/weblog.html

High involvement is both a tool for and outcome of culture change. I like to say a culture change organization is more like a house of cards than a line of dominos – every person in constantly important and involved in supporting care for elders. There is no trickle down of directives from on high. Instead, there is continuous sharing of information among all involved. This is why we use techniques for learning and growing based on circles.

In a circle, everyone is equal. There is no head of the table. Also, we can see everyone's face. Because that is the point of meeting in person – being face-to-face. In this way, body language is visible and can help in communication. If you believe the elders and their needs are at the center of your organization, when you sit in a circle, you see that each person is equal distance from and important to the elders and therefore has the same responsibility for the care of elders.

Action Pact promotes five different types of circles for use in a culture change organization. Each has its particular strengths and uses. They are: the learning circle, the community circle, the stand-up meeting, the team meeting model and the competency circle.

The learning circle is the most basic form and can be used by different groups of people for exchanging all sorts of information. The community circle is based on the learning circle but is used more with elders living with dementia. Team meeting models (including the stand-up) are effective and efficient ways of getting the most out of staff meetings in a way that is focused and involves all in attendance. And finally, the competency circle is an ongoing process for training and education wherein staff in groups study important competencies and become "experts" in them so that they in turn can teach the rest of the organization.

On the following pages is a free dandy of a handout that better details these circles. When presenting it to folks in your organization it wouldn't hurt to bring doughnuts or bagels to reinforce the circle concept.

Action Pact, Inc.

Culture Change in Practice

www.Culturechangenow.com

Circles Everywhere Handout

ALL THE CIRCLES

Learning Circle:

An important communication tool in all stages of culture change, the circle makes everyone equal. The rules of the circle help those who typically talk and have the most authority be quiet and listen. And, it encourages those who are typically shy or don't have much formal authority to speak up. It can be used as an activity just to get people talking or as a way to let everybody weigh in when there is a decision to be made. Here's how it goes...

One person is chosen to facilitate

The facilitator poses a question or issue and asks for a volunteer

The volunteer shares his or her answer or view and then the person sitting to the right or left of that person goes next.

The process continues around the circle until all have shared.

There is no cross talk during this process

A person may choose to pass, but after everyone else has shared, the facilitator should offer that person another opportunity to express his or her view.

Once everyone has shared, the floor is open for general discussion.

Learning circles should be used often for best results. Regular use of learning circles creates an open and learning environment in your home. Remember, elders should be involved in the circle whenever possible. You can find out more by reading The Power of Circles by LaVrene Norton, MSW. Find it in the Reprints section of the Action Pact webstore:< http://www.culturechangenow.com/rep -jsw0203 >.

Community Circle for Elders Living With Dementia:

The community circle is similar to the learning circle. The focus is on building community and relationships so the circle includes staff residents and residents' families when they are present. Also, there are extra steps taken to help engage elders living with dementia.

The facilitator and additional staff try to put the focus on one elder at a time and help, as appropriately as they can, other elders focus on that one person. While the process is to go around the circle for one elder to speak at a time, if someone should speak out of turn, the facilitator should honor that person, remember what he is starting to share, help him regain focus on the person who is supposed to be speaking at that time and then, bring him back to what he was going to say when it is his turn.

One of the tenets of the community circle is for staff to know elders' stories so if they are unable to speak, they still have an opportunity to be part of the circle. Staff can talk with them about

Circles Handout, *continued*

Action Pact, Inc.
www.Culturechangenow.com

who they are, what is important and/or families can share about their loved one and their lives together. This is one of the ways people who live with dementia can be reminded of their identity and their story.

The Team Meeting Model

To help the team get through a meeting most effectively, team members volunteer to fulfill roles during a meeting (from the workbook *Champions for Change* by LaVrene Norton). Be sure to take turns with each of the roles so that everyone has a chance to strengthen different skills.

Team Meeting Roles
Meeting Leader: Focus the team on outcomes, work with the team to determine the agenda, to determine the time needed and the process to be used, and then lead the team to follow the agenda. Make decisions when necessary to move the process toward the stated outcomes.

Coach: Observe the process, advise the meeting leader and reflect observations on the process back to the entire team. Assure that everyone has opportunity to share. Gently intervene to reduce excessive talking, to bring people back on track and to acknowledge agreement and conflict.

Timekeeper: Have a clear understanding from the leader or team as to time ("How much time do we want to spend on this activity?") And then remind periodically of where the team is at ("We have seven minutes left, we have two minutes left, "etc.) Point out excessive deviation from agenda ("We had planned to spend 15 minutes on the item, it's now 20 –

do we continue, and for how long and what do we drop off our agenda to compensate for it?)

Scribe: Record on the flip chart or take notes as per meeting or meeting leader's direction. Should work to record words as stated, not reword. Record attendance, key content of discussion, actions steps and outcomes. Distribute copies of notes.

Welcomer (optional but highly recommended to strengthen involvement in the team): Starts off meeting with a bit of inspiration; good news, interesting and relevant article, poem, etc. May also be in charge of refreshments when appropriate. Residents often love this role as they can prepare for it ahead of time and know that they are making a serious contribution.

Standing in a Circle – The Stand-up Meeting or Huddle
While the model above works best for longer meetings where multiple topics will be addressed, the stand-up meeting is a great way to tackle specific concerns or information and can be used when something needs to be addressed outside of scheduled meeting times.

The stand-up meeting, or huddle, is just that - a meeting where everyone who attends, stands up, usually in a small circle or huddle. Psychologically and physically it reminds the group that the meeting will be quick and therefore everyone should stay focused and on target.

The process of communication is through rounds, similar to the learning circle. Participants take turns sharing. Immediate and spontaneous feedback to the

individual sharing is not allowed. However, depending upon your purpose, rules can be developed that either allow or prohibit a second round where questions, feedback and response can take place. Other rules for individual and group behavior can be established to reinforce your purpose and process.

The stand-up meeting is an excellent means of frequent and regular communication within a self-led team. It is of great value when a number of individuals in different roles share in resident care. It improves the flow of communication; allows frequent understandings of each other's roles, concerns and frustrations; and guarantees a time to ventilate feelings. The stand-up meeting can improve team spirit and resolve daily operational problems – both major contributors to increased productivity and employee satisfaction. The stand-up meeting has a specific purpose, a clear process or agenda and a specified length, which must be faithfully adhered to.

The stand-up meeting is also a great way to get out quick news to everyone at the same time. Often, when something comes up a formal meeting is planned for a future time. By the time of the meeting the news has made its way through the grapevine, everybody has a slightly different view of the news and the meeting seems useless because the word is out already or more time is given to the meeting than needed. The stand up meeting serves as a healthy alternative. Consider a notebook in a kitchen drawer that someone fills out after with date, time and summary. Now anyone can catch up if they've missed a day.

Action Pact, Inc.
www.Culturechangenow.com

Circles Handout, *continued*

Competency Circles:

Competency Circles are long-standing groups that form to study and grow a particular competency in an organization. The idea: The circle studies the competency, members practice the competency and the team works together to figure out how to spread the competency throughout the organization. The purpose: That what occurs in the circle will ripple out to the rest of the organization. Each competency circle is comprised of 6-8 people from all areas of the facility – formal and informal leaders. Each circle then works to become "experts" on their circle's competency (that is a set of behaviors that strengthen the organization and then spreads the new information and processes to the rest of the organization). The process looks like this:

- Study the competency
- Understand the behaviors grouped within
- Observe the behaviors first in self
- Observe the behaviors in skillful others
- Develop the behaviors in one's own actions
- Talk about how to talk about the behaviors and competency
- Develop a competency triathlon

    o Experience it: Discover and grow the competency in oneself first
    o Teach it: Use adult learning principles to grow it in others
    o Encourage it: Encourage others to grow it in others

Each facility chooses and defines the competencies they are going to work on.

Critical thinking skills is an example of a competency and includes:
- Analysis - strengthening everyone's ability to see, to understand what they see and to identify cause and effect, big picture and details.
- Judgment – understand consequences of actions and beginning to grow a sense of the appropriate action and response.
- Decision-making autonomously and in team
- Creative thinking and initiative

Home building is another competency. Those in the competency circle work to understand what home is and then work to create home in the organization. The organization talks about what homebuilding would look like in their organization and then begin to grow those behaviors in themselves and others.