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www.Culturechangenow.com

Culture Change in Practice

You Could Be a Model

Monday, February 19, 2007
posted by Steph Kilen at 5:29 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

I live in Milwaukee but occasionally have the opportunity to take a trip to the South. I always come back with a bad case of "the y'alls." After spending a week where people pepper their conversation with the phrase (probably even more than they realize) I come back asking my friends "what y'all do this weekend?" And then, after about a week back in my hometown "the y'alls" go away and I get back to dragging out my "a"s and "o"s like everybody else around here.

It's not a conscious thing, of course, but this is the way we develop culture. Folks do things a certain way and when a new person comes into the fold they watch how everybody else does it (whatever "it" is) and if they stick around long enough, they do "it" without thinking about it and may even influence the next new person.

And this is what we are trying to do – to create a new culture. Of course, many things will be concrete policy changes such as letting elders get up and go to bed when they want. But, to support these things, people will need to develop new attitudes and behaviors. The best way to grow these behaviors in your organization is to model them. When people model rather than dictate, new behaviors are more readily accepted. It also creates an atmosphere of shared leadership, so you're killing two birds with one stone.

Leading by example is "modeling." We think of role modeling mostly for young people, but truth is we pick up behaviors from others all our life. However, to avoid the condescending nature of "do like I do," adults are a bit more subtle and sometimes don't even know they are doing it. Plus, most of us learn best by doing. It works a little like this, for example:

Sue, a CNA, takes a little time when she is waking Howard to say "Good morning" and talk a little about the headlines in the newspaper, which Howard has asked to have each morning. Howard used to be a little cranky in the morning and now it goes much more smoothly. Other CNAs will notice how well this person-centered approach works and will take on similar behaviors.



Try the activity on the next page to encourage modeling behavior within your teams.

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Activity for You Could Be a Model

Encourage the team, especially “formal leaders” to walk the walk instead of, or in addition to, talking the talk.

Get a hold of your organization’s values statement. (Don’t have one? You can borrow these values for starters, but should make an effort to draft a value statement for your organization with input from ALL stakeholders, staff, residents and families. A values statement will be helpful as a guide to keep you on track and focused throughout the culture change journey.)

Person-centered care
Home
Shared leadership
Choice
Respect
Good communication

ACTIVITY

Everyone should have a copy of the values statement. One person should record on flipchart, dry erase board, or on regular paper. Or, the group can be broken up into smaller groups, each taking a value. Look at each value and ask “What does this look like?” For example, if the value is “person-centered care” it might look like “giving elders a choice about when and how they wake and taking the time to make waking a pleasant experience.” Basically, you are identifying behaviors that exemplify your values. Take a few answers from the group for each value and record them. Ask someone to type them up and make copies for everyone. When people start taking action on these behaviors it will be contagious and the overall culture will change. Encourage the team, especially “formal leaders” to walk the walk instead of, or in addition to, talking the talk.

