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## Creative Solutions for Untangling the Challenges of Employee Engagement

Tonya Miller, PT, DPT, PhD



## **About TYM Coaching**

- Tonya Miller, PT, DPT, PhD
- More than 25 years of healthcare leadership
- Leadership education, coaching, and development
- Author and researcher
- Certified professional behavioral and emotional quotient analyst



## **Learning Objectives**

- 1. Connect leadership habits and employee engagement
- 2. Design a leadership habit plan to improve employee engagement
- 3. Integrate leadership habits for employee engagement into daily workflow

## **Employee Engagement**

• A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption

Janes et al., 2021



## **The Employee Engagement Challenge**

- Only 30% of all employees are engaged
- Approximately 20% of all employees are actively disengaged
- Half of all employees are disengaged
- Less than 25% of employees feel that their employer cares about their well-being
- From 2021 to 2022, healthcare workforce engagement fell more than any other US workforce

Agrawal, 2022



### **Engagement and Patient Outcomes**

• A significant relationship between engagement, safety cultural scores, and adverse events

Janes et al., 2021



## **The Employee Engagement Challenge**

 Lack of engagement related to the clarity of expectations, resources to do the job, and connections to the organization's mission and vision





#### **Three Engagement Strategies**

Clear Expectations



Opportunity to Contribute



Sincere Appreciation





How would you rate your organization on the following?

#### **Providing Clear Expectations**







How would you rate your organization on the following?

#### Team Contribution to Decisions and Strategy







How would you rate your organization on the following?

#### **Appreciating Team Members**







#### How would you rate yourself on the following?

#### **Providing Clear Expectations**







#### How would you rate yourself on the following?

#### **Contribution to Decisions and Strategy**







#### How would you rate yourself on the following?

#### **Appreciating Team Members**





## **Leadership Habits: Clear Expectations**

- Communicating expectations
  - Reflective communication
    - It's all in how you ask
- "Can you explain this process to me so I can ensure that I stated it clearly and gave enough guidance?"

#### Leadership Habits: Clear Expectations (cont.)

- Reflective listening
  - Understanding how others perceive instructions and processes
- "So, what I am hearing you say is . . . Did I miss anything, or do I need to understand more?"

## Leadership Habits: Clear Expectations

#### (cont.)

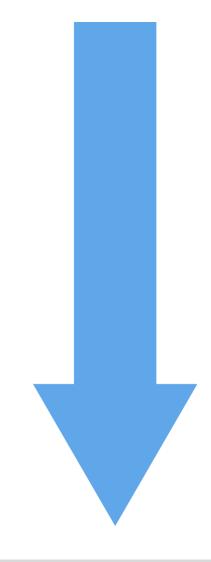
#### Accountable language

- State your current reality
- Use action verbs
- Don't spend time in BED (blame, excuse, deny)

## **Contribution Matters: Mandates Backfire**

#### Mandatory return to office

- 42% of companies have
   higher attrition than expected
- 29% of companies have a more challenging time recruiting
- 76% of employees polled said they would change jobs if flexibility were taken away



Tsipursky, 2023



## **Contribution Matters**

 However, employees reported they were more willing to return to the office if it was their choice

Tsipursky, 2023



## **Leadership Habits: Contribution**

- Decision-making: ask yourself these key questions:
  - Would this decision improve with input from others?
  - Is there an emergent reason why I can't give the decision time for input from others?
  - What is the best way to get feedback about this decision?
  - Who would benefit from providing insight into this decision?
  - What organizational gains are there from a collaborative approach to this decision?

## Leadership Habits: Contribution (cont.)

#### • The next step: collaboration

- Ask for insight on organizational direction and strategy
- Who is at the table?
  - Are there diverse representations from across the organization?
  - Are they given time to digest the content?
  - Are they given the training to feel prepared?
  - Are they provided an explanation of the importance of their participation?



#### **Leadership Habits: Sincere Appreciation**



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engage others sincerely

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## Why EQ Matters in the Workplace

High EQ is a key component of effective management skills and a necessity for attaining sustainable results

EQ connects to positive organizational behavior that fosters engaged employees, high performance, and commitment, which lowers the risk of losing talent

Managers with higher EQ have teams with a higher commitment to the organization

Coetzee, & Pauw, 2013



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## What We Know About Leaders With High EQ



# What We Know About Leaders With High EQ (cont.)

- Leaders who understand their own emotions and the emotions of others positively influence employee retention
  - Teams felt compensation was fair
  - Teams were more satisfied with their job roles and responsibilities
  - Teams reported a higher level of support

Burger, 2016



# What Happens When the Whole Team Has High EQ?



I use my good mood to overcome obstacles



I can tell how people are feeling by listening to their tone of voice



When I am happy, I know how to build on this feeling



I know why my emotions change



I can openly share emotions



I am aware of my nonverbal expressions and their impact on others



I use past experiences to understand and approach current ones



I can empathize with others when they share life events

Reavichandran et al., 2011



## Leadership Habits: Emotional Intelligence

- Self-awareness and selfregulation
  - Take pauses to reflect on your emotions throughout the day
  - Examine when emotions impact your actions
- Social awareness and social regulation
  - Examine interactions and reflect on the "tone" of the room
  - Use emotions to create positivity
    - Gratitude messages
    - Be purposeful with praise and positive statements

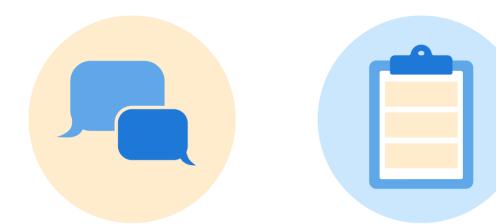


## **Developing Leadership Habits**

Consider	Determine
Consider your current role and team members	<ul> <li>Determine one focus area for each category</li> <li>Clear expectations</li> <li>Contribution of the team</li> <li>Sincere appreciation</li> </ul>
Get	Use
<ul> <li>Get regular feedback on your progress</li> <li>360 feedback is ideal</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Use the data!</li> <li>Examine retention data on your team</li> <li>Ask team members in 1:1 meetings</li> </ul>



## **Daily Habit Integration**





#### **Clear Expectations**

 Choose one or two discussions to use reflective statements in

#### Contribution

 Be purposeful about reaching out for input from team members

#### **Sincere Appreciation**

- Start each day by thanking a team member for something
- Pause 2–3 times a day and do an emotional check-in with yourself



# How confident are you that you can integrate a daily strategy for each of the following areas?

**Clear Expectations** 

Very confident

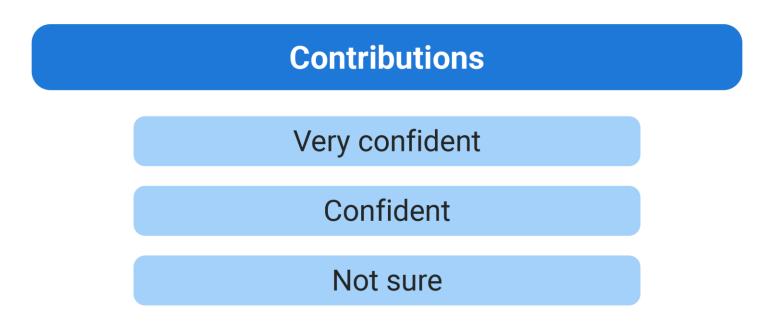
Confident

Not sure





# How confident are you that you can integrate a daily strategy for each of the following areas?





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# How confident are you that you can integrate a daily strategy for each of the following areas?

**Sincere Appreciation** 

Very confident

Confident

Not sure



## **Key Points**

- Employee engagement challenges all industries, but especially healthcare
- Employee engagement directly impacts patients
- All team members can develop simple daily habits that improve engagement
- It doesn't have to be difficult, but it does have to be consistent



# Suffer the pain of discipline or the pain of regret.

—Jim Rohn



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