



# MENTOR ACTIVITY

# UNDERSTANDING OUR CULTURE

This 60-minute activity allows a Mentee to explore the complexities of an organization's workplace culture and evaluate how their personal actions impact the cultural environment of residents, families, and other team members. You'll need a copy of the organization's mission, vision, and values statement. And for the purpose of this activity, the "Mentor" is the person being job shadowed, and the "Mentee" is the new hire.

## STEP ONE: INTRODUCTION TO WORKPLACE CULTURE

# 1

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Review the following principles with the Mentee...

- There are various perspectives to organizational culture, its meaning, and importance. Some people believe culture is how organizations do things or the collection of individuals' perspectives and varied interests.
- We believe that our organization culture:
  - Is a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs
  - Defines what is of primary importance to us as an organization
  - Prescribes how resources are to be used
  - Establishes what members can expect from one another
  - Sets the tone for how members should treat each other
  - Is how we respond, react, and behave
- There are many influences within a workplace that impact the overall organizational culture. Influences may be internal such as organizational values, leadership styles and the physical structure of the building. External factors can also influence a culture such as legal, economic, social norms, and technology.
- The goal of this exercise is for you to gain an understanding of the many things that impact what the organization does, why the organization does things the way that it does, and how individual team member behaviors impact the overall organizational culture.

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**Observation of our environment: Both Mentor and Mentee should tour the community, sit near the entrance of the building, dining areas, and other key spaces, to observe and document responses to the following:**

- What three words collectively describe your surrounding environment?
- What do you smell?
- What did you hear?
- What three words would you use to describe the attitudes, behaviors, and interactions you had with team members during your tour?
- What three words would you use to describe the attitudes, behaviors, and interactions team members had with residents?
- What three words would you use to describe the attitudes, behaviors, and interactions team members had with family members or visitors?

**Review your organization's Mission, Vision and Values and discuss the observed presence or absence during this exercise. What were you surprised to see? What made you excited or proud? And, what made you disappointed?**



## STEP TWO: TALKING WITH TEAM MEMBERS

# 2

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After walking around your organization, find a team member outside of the Mentee's normal work area and ask the following questions:

- What makes you proud to work for this organization?
- What do you most enjoy about your job?
- What is one thing you wish you could change about your job?
- How do you use the organization's values in your everyday work?

## STEP THREE: TALKING WITH LEADERS

# 3

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After walking around your organization, find a leader outside of the Mentee's normal work area and ask the following questions:

- How do you see the organization's values reflected in the organization?
- What makes you proud to work at this company?
- How are decisions made when there is a disagreement and stakes are high?
- How do you as a leader support and motivate your team?



## STEP FOUR: TALKING WITH RESIDENTS & FAMILIES

### 4

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Mentor/Mentee should explain to the resident/families that you are working on a mentorship and training activity. Ask them if they would be okay with answering some questions.

- Why did you decide to join us here at ORGANIZATION NAME?
- What do you enjoy most about being here?
- Do you know what our organization's mission, vision and values are? If they don't know, then read the statements and then ask...What do these mean to you?
- Knowing our values, do you think that we live our values? Why or why not?

Thank the resident and/or family member for their time.

## STEP FIVE: TALKING WITH THE EXTERNAL COMMUNITY

### 5

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In partnership with the leadership team and Executive Director, determine what individual (preferably a vendor or local business community leader) would be best to schedule time with to complete Step 5. It may be easiest for the Mentor to contact the individual and schedule a time.

Thank the community member for taking the time to meet. Explain that the purpose for the call is to complete a mentorship training activity and you are appreciative of the time that they are able to spend with you. Explain that you have a few questions the call should last between 10 to 15 minutes.



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- What do you know about COMMUNITY NAME as an organization?
  - From what you know about us, what are three (3) words that you would use to describe our organization?
  - Do you know what our organization's mission, vision and values are? If they do not, read the statements and then ask...What do these mean to you?
  - Knowing our values, what are three things that you would expect of us as a community member/vendor?
  - Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?
  - Do you have any questions that we can help answer?
  - Mentor and Mentee should work together to ensure that any follow up with external community member is completed.
  - Both Mentor and Mentee should send a handwritten message to the external community member thanking them for their time in answering the questions.



## STEP SIX: REFLECTING ON THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE

# 6

Now that both Mentor and Mentee have had an opportunity to interact and reflect with both internal and external sources of influence on the organization's culture, take time to discuss your findings.

- How would you describe the culture in your organization? Does this definition change from the perspective of team member, leader, resident, family or external member in the community?
- Did you see the organization's values present or "alive" in your interactions? How? If not, what actions could be taken to improve this?
- What is one thing that you can do to have a positive impact on the organizational culture?

Together, discuss and plan any follow up related to sharing observations or providing any recognition to those that supported the completion of the activity.

Review with the Mentee over time as they become more familiar with their role within the organization or have questions about how they can contribute to shaping the organization wide culture. Make sure they know they can always approach their manager or another member of leadership with questions, ideas, and concerns.

