Change Management Strategies: Build Trust

Trust is Important

The benefit of trust is that it acts as a facilitator to every work process imaginable.   With low trust, there is resistance. With trust, there is low resistance, high buy-in, cooperation and collaboration. The "speed" of trust is described by Covey (2006) as improving outcomes for all organizations by decreasing the time and cost to doing things, while increasing the quality of the product produced.

Covey (2006) described trust in 4 levels:

- Self-trust,

- Relationship trust,

- Organizational trust, and

- Societal trust.

Self-trust entails credibility. The four cores of credibility are: integrity, caring intent, being capable and delivering mutually beneficial results (Covey, 2006). Acting consistently and predictably, keeping your word, and following through on commitments are key foundations to self-trust. Leaders need to self-assess in order to determine first if they are trustworthy before they can seek to build trust with others. You can build self-trust by seeking first to understand, developing a caring attitude, seeking solutions with mutual benefit, acting in the best interest of others, being open to learning and hearing alternatives, and by keeping promises and following through on what you say you will do.

To build relationship trust, examine how your behaviour creates trust with others with whom you work. Covey (2006) outlines the following behaviors to build relationship trust:

- Talk straight.

- Demonstrate respect.

- Create transparency.

- Own up to mistakes and make it right.

- Show loyalty to those with whom you work.
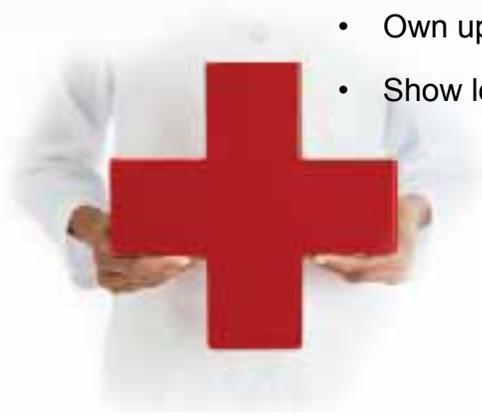
- Deliver results that are win-win.

- Communicate expectations clearly.

- Be accountable for your word and hold others accountable.

- Listen to others first, and demonstrate that you understand them before making your point.

- Keep commitments.

- Extend trust to others, assume the best intentions behind the actions of others, see and draw forth the best in others.

As is outlined in the strategic planning section, organizational trust is built from alignment of your organization's stated mission, vision and values with the actual process of everyday work. In this way, people can trust that what you say and intend within an organization actually matches what you do every day in practice (Covey, 2006).

Societal trust is built by making a contribution and creating benefit to the larger community. In building societal trust, consideration must be given as to what is the larger impact of the work of your organization to the lives of your patients and their families. This trust is built by being responsive to the needs of your community and focusing on how your services can extend the most benefit to those in your community (Covey, 2006).

Trust and Understanding

The need for individuals to be understood is a basic need of being human, so when looking to build trust, seek first to understand the point to view of the other person. When individuals feel basic needs are being met such as being understood, they are more open to trust. Trust is more related to your understanding the other person rather than them understanding you (Wilson, 2006). "The deeper the understanding, the more trust is created" (Wilson, p.35). Trust is identified as foundational to interprofessional, collaborative practice. It is also important to acknowledge that there can be no trust unless team members understand and appreciate the roles and expertise of one another. The lack of understanding, and therefore the lack of trust, results in limited productivity.

Good Conversations Equals Trust

Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Points to Remember

The quality of an organization is as good as the conversations of people (Wilson, 2006). Communication fosters openness and trust by not only being able to voice your view but by listening, respecting what is said, and building on what the other person has said. It creates a work environment where interprofessional team members can easily ask for what they need (Arnold & Underman Boggs, 1999; Nath, 2008; Reina, Reina, & Rushton, 2007).

A lack of communication can be interpreted by others as low trust. However, even when there is little information available to share, what is said is not as important as how it is said. Non-verbal signs can convey to others that their opinion is valued, that the other's point of view is understood and that communication is honest (Firth-Cozens, 2004).