Leading Offices in Challenging Times: Supporting Staff Wellness and Job Satisfaction

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TODAY’S OBJECTIVE

• (For once!) the focus of this session is on you & your staff’s needs.
• The goal is preserving...and encouraging...a dedication to the wellness needs of individuals.
• Accomplished by examining: Work/Life (Im)Balance; Personal & Professional Boundaries; The Act of Letting Go (and more)
• For leaders, it will explore how environments can foster Job Satisfaction, Professional Fulfillment, and Managing in Times of Increased Stress/High Demand
WHY?

- **25% of respondents experiencing symptoms associated with burnout.**
  (2022 Study - McKinsey Health Institute)

- **76% agreed workplace stress impacts mental health; 75% identified burnout**
  (2020 - Mental Health America & Flex Jobs)

- **79% “at or beyond workload capacity”**
  (2020 – Qualtrics)
Next week has been exhausting.

"Looks like you've been missing a lot of work lately."
Bob Porter

"I wouldn't say I've been *missing* it, Bob."
Peter Gibbons / Office Space
BURNOUT

Per World Health Organization

- **Occupational Phenomenon** “resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.”

- **Characterized by:**
  - Exhaustion/Depletion of Energy
  - Negative Feelings toward Work/Job—Frustration, Apathy, No Sense of Purpose
  - Reduction in Productivity/Productiveness, Increased Inefficiency
THREE TYPES OF BURNOUT

Nod in the back if you’re picking up what I’m putting down

1. Frenetic Burnout
   • Overwork to the point of fatigue
   • “My day ends when the work is done”
   • Might see self as dedicated or driven – “relentless” work ethic
   • Ignores implications on individual well-being and health
   • Sacrifices (unnecessarily) and can become resentful when not reciprocated
THREE TYPES OF BURNOUT

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2. Under-Challenged Burnout
   • Disengaged, apathetic
   • Work fails to stimulate or provide satisfaction
   • May be disconnected for variety of reasons (e.g., lack of challenge, acknowledgement, professional stagnation or growth opportunity)
THREE TYPES OF BURNOUT
Nod in the back if you’re picking up what I’m putting down

3. Worn-Out Burnout
   - Negative feelings – driven to disengage
   - Builds over a period time
   - Often coincides with poor management – feeling a lack of recognition for contributions/not given their due; being undervalued for what they achieve
IMPACT OF BURNOUT

• Increases Turnover
  2½ times more likely to be actively job hunting
  15-20% of payroll budgets associated with voluntary turnover due to burnout
  (2022 - Gallup & WorkHuman)

• Decreased Productivity
  63% more likely to take sick days— avoidance? recovery? (2018 – Gallup)
  17.9m working days lost to stress, anxiety, depression 2019/20

But...WFH!

• Remote Workers - 2.5 hours additional ‘at work’
• 38% felt pressure to do more
• 61% had difficulty disconnecting on their own
WHY DO TEAMS FAIL?

- Inattention to Results
- Avoidance of Accountability
- Lack of Commitment
- Fear of Conflict
- Absence of Trust

WHY DO TEAMS SUCCEED?

1. Trust
2. Cooperation
3. Sense of Safety
4. Support for Risk-Taking
5. Accountability
6. Equity

Collaboration Moves at the Speed of Trust
DR EXISTS IN A WORLD OF HIGH STRESS, HIGH DEMAND

KEEP CALM
AND DON'T
LET THE BASTARDS
GRIND YOU DOWN
I. ADDRESSING FROM THE TOP DOWN

- Intentional Conversations with Supervision (i.e., Dean, AVC, VP...)
  - Communicate Challenges
  - Determine Expectations
  - Establish Boundaries/Limits
  - When things reach *that* point, is the support there? (Do you trust them?)
HIGH SATISFACTION IS FOSTERED WHEN PROFESSIONALS

• Believe They Are Appreciated and Valued
• Feel Engaged in the Work
• Have a Degree of Flexibility
• Recognize (Relative) Autonomy
• Experience Good Colleagues
II. WORK/LIFE (IM)BALANCE

“The hard truth is balance doesn’t exist. It would be great if it did, but our lives don’t exist in silos... There will be times when work bleeds into your personal life and vice versa.”

- Prioritize LIFE. Work is work, but family, friends, fulfillment in your existence in this world (outside work) is paramount.
- Do NOT incentivize unhealthy behaviors.
- Normalize Turning it Off.
PROFESSIONAL & PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Progress, not Perfection

• Set clear expectations for productivity.
  • Conversation is bi-directional.
  • What do you need? How can we support you?

• Take Time, Make Time.
  • Set expectations for disconnecting
  • Reinforce the power of separation

• A day has to end in order for a day to begin.
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How Is this Achieved?
ADDRESSING STRESSFUL CHALLENGING SITUATIONS
As an Employee

• Do I understand expectations placed upon me?

• Do I have what I need in order to be successful?

• WHAT do I need to successfully meet expectations?

• “I need help.”
ADDRESSING STRESSFUL CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

As a Supervisor

• Have I communicated expectations effectively?
  • Revisit Expectations: Do staff understand?

• Were staff given opportunities to participate in establishing expectations?

• Am I providing staff what they need to be successful (resources, support, ProDev, space/autonomy)?
ADDRESSING STRESSFUL CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

As a Supervisor

• Do not reinforce unsustainable practices
• Reinforce self-care/wellness
• Do not “own” students’ challenges/concerns
• Support students working through their challenges/concerns
• Do not leave individual staff exposed to critique/criticism
• Provide coverage from criticism
COMMON DILEMMAS/CHALLENGES BEING ENCOUNTERED

Can we take 5 minutes or so?

*Who knows...maybe it’ll be cathartic.*
DR EXISTS IN A WORLD OF HIGH STRESS, HIGH DEMAND

(paraphrasing)

You are juggling a lot of balls right now, and you may need to let some drop in order to keep the others in the air. But balls are rubber and not porcelain. They’ll bounce.
DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS?

Welcome to Contact:
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