

2011 BECAUSE KIDS COUNT: TEACHING HOPE

**Positive Work Culture and Climate:
Key Ingredients to Successful Youth
Programs**

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Introductions

How many people work in afterschool programs?

**How many people work in other kinds of youth
programs?**

How many people are supervisors?

**How many people think that your program needs some
“tweaking” in the area of culture and climate?**

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Workshop Description:

High-pressure, unfair and insensitive...unfortunately these words are used all too often to describe today's workplace. Managing the climate of the work environment is an important responsibility of managers and supervisors, yet many have had no formal training in doing so. **This workshop will focus on developing strategies for creating a positive work culture with the ultimate goal of improving work conditions and enhancing the quality of services to program participants.**

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Bodies of Knowledge that Inform this Discussion:

- Organizational Development
- Social Work Code of Ethics
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Emotional Intelligence/EQ
- Nonprofit Management literature

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Assumption

High quality client services are best delivered by agencies/programs that are sensitive to the needs of staff and clients and are managed by inspiring and disciplined managers.

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Definitions

- **What is workplace culture and why is it important?**
- **How is it defined by the experts?**

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Jim Collins - "Good to Great and the Social Sector"

"a great organization is one that delivers superior performance that makes a distinct impact over a long period of time. For a business, financial returns are a perfectly legitimate measure of success. For a social sector organization, however, performance must be assessed relative to mission, not to financial returns. In the social sectors, the critical question is not "how much money do we make per dollar of invested capital" but "how effectively do we deliver our mission and make a distinct impact, relative to our resources?"

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Edgar H. Schein - Social Psychologist from MIT

Culture is a property of a group. Whenever a group has enough **common experience**, a culture begins to form. One finds cultures at the level of **small teams, families, and work groups**. Culture also arises at the level of **departments, functional groups, and other organizational units** that have a **common occupational core and common experience**.

Cultures are found at every hierarchical level. Culture exists at the level of the **whole organization** if there is sufficient shared history. It is even found at the level of a **whole industry** because of the **shared occupational backgrounds** of the people industry-wide. Finally, culture exists at the level of regions and nations because of **common language, ethnic background, religion and shared experience**.

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Frances Hesselbein - former CEO of Girl Scouts of America

“ the power of inclusion, language, shared interests, coalitions...including inclusive policies and practices (celebrating everyone’s holidays) and supporting activities that are important to staff (e.g. family)

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What do you think makes a great culture in an agency?

- **What about a bad culture?**

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- **What kinds of “subcultures” do you find in organizations?**
- **How do they work for or against the whole organization?**

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- **Nonprofits vs. Forprofits**
and Culture and Climate

Different or Similar?

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Three characteristics of a positive work environment?

- **Hint: what is the best work climate you have ever worked in. What was it like?**
- **Hint: The worst?**

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What are the roles of the manager re culture and climate?

- **Creation**
- **Maintenance**
- **Change**

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Program Self-Assessment - Rate your agency 1 to 5

Review of the elements of a positive agency structure

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What was the self-study like?

(This is your first shot - you will be doing one next?)

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Strategies for Transforming Agency Culture

- **Any ideas?**

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Creating a Work Plan - What steps shall I take to improve my workplace?

List priorities 1 and 2

Share some steps with the group

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Case Discussion

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Some easy tips...can you help to add others to the list?

Be authentic, honest, open

Recognize accomplishments of staff regularly

Remember personal details of staff (e.g. milestones, special events)

Celebrate small victories as well as large

Connect with staff as often as possible

Do not show favorites

Speak with staff about their own "challenges" openly but kindly (no need to yell or be mean)

Have rules that are even-handed

Think about policies and procedures that make staff's lives easier while also protecting and enhancing the lives of clients

Create systems for solving problems

Offer special opportunities for leadership

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Summary and Evaluation

Thanks for coming to the workshop. For copies of the slides and handouts go to the conference website.

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