

Analyzing Your Practice's Culture:
 Improve the Structure and
 Performance

Weily Soong, MD, FAAAAI
 Alabama Allergy & Asthma Center
 Birmingham, Alabama

What is Organizational Culture?

- **“Organizational Culture** is the behavior of humans who are part of an organization and the meanings that the people attach to their actions. Culture includes the organization values, visions, norms, working language, systems, symbols, beliefs and habits. It is also the pattern of such collective behaviors and assumptions that are taught to new organizational members as a way of perceiving, and even thinking and feeling. Organizational culture affects the way people and groups interact with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders.”

- From Wikipedia

Why care about Organizational Culture?

- Better moods = better performance
- Happiness = more productivity
- Work is already stressful so why make the workplace stressful?
- Employee retention and low turnover
- Employee recruiting tool: attracts talent
- Helps keep the company better during good times
- A strong culture helps self-select employees that do not fit
- Toxic behaviors wreak more havoc than positive behaviors

One model of Organizational Culture

- **Daniel Denison's model** (1990) asserts that organizational culture can be described by four general dimensions – **Mission, Adaptability, Involvement** and **Consistency**.
- Each of these general dimensions is further described by **three sub-dimensions**.
- Allows cultures to be described broadly as **externally or internally focused** as well as **flexible versus stable**.
- The model has been typically used to diagnose cultural problems in organizations.



MISSION: *Do we know where we are going?"*

- High performing organizations have a mission that tells employees **why** they are doing the work they do, and how the work they do each day contributes to the **why**.
- **Sub-dimensions:**
 - Vision
 - Goals & objectives
 - Strategic direction & intent
- **Examples:**
 - Mission Statement
 - Meeting with physicians, administration, and staff
 - Strategic planning meetings



ADAPTABILITY: *“Are we listening to the marketplace?”*

• High performing organizations have the ability to perceive and respond to the environment, customers, and restructure and re-institutionalize behaviors and processes that allow them to adapt.

• **Sub-dimensions:**

- Organizational learning
- Customer focus
- Creating change

• **Examples:**

- Customer service
- Welcome new ideas and rethink conventional wisdom
- Employees have freedom to think and make changes
- Recognizing flaws in the system and not blaming a person



INVOLVEMENT: *“Are our people aligned and engaged?”*

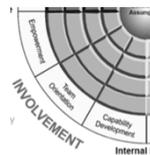
• Highly involved organizations create a sense of ownership and responsibility. Out of this sense of ownership grows a greater commitment to the organization and an increased capacity for autonomy.

• **Sub-dimensions:**

- Empowerment
- Team orientation
- Capability development

• **Examples:**

- Teamwork
- Encourage thinking, opinions, and feedback
- Training and learning
- New roles and responsibilities



CONSISTENCY: *“Does our system create leverage?”*

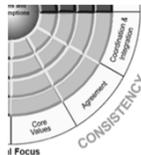
• Consistency provides a central source of integration, coordination and control, and helps organizations develop a set of systems that create an internal system of governance based on consensual support.

• **Sub-dimensions:**

- Core values
- Agreement
- Coordination & integration

• **Examples:**

- Clear set of core value
- Leadership based on these core values
- Policies based on these core values
- Getting multiple opinions and reaching an agreement
- Coordination with other staff and other departments
- Standardizations of procedures



My practice culture rocks...or not

Priya J Bansal, MD FAAAAI



Earmuffs on²

- Most of us try to go to work day to day and may not notice the subtle signs before the pot of water has boiled over and it is too horrible to sustain such a culture any longer.
- We lie to ourselves about the culture because it is not easy to hear the truth.
- Why? We don't want to change jobs. We believe in our coworkers/staff...etc.
- We buy ourselves time - such as - when he/she goes on vacation, it will be better.

How do you know your environment is toxic²

- We, as physicians/practice managers/advance care providers are used to being leaders.
- However, if we get into - "There is only one way to do things, my way," we are causing conflict.
- A rule driven, command and control culture is toxic and will drive talent away.
- You are calling the shots and making all of the rules.
- You are not allowing input to help make your practice better.

The lion and the mouse²

- You are afraid of getting yelled at or are the one they are afraid will yell
- You know/are aware that people change their tone/signal if you are in
- Then you know you are ruling by fear, not trust

Rule number 999,999²

- You do not listen and implement solid ideas
- If you ask the staff how to implement and solve a problem, you are collaborative
- If you already decided you are doing things only your way, you are creating toxicity

Cricket's are chirping²

- The room goes silent when you walk in-
- Secrets are abundant and once again you have a toxic culture

The revolving door of employees²

- Employee 1 comes and goes in 3 months
- Employee 2 comes and goes in 2 months
- Employee 3 comes and goes in 4 months
- And so on and so on---u get the gist

The staff is consistently sick²

- The staff can't sleep
- The staff is getting consistent headaches/stomach aches
- The staff is always exhausted

How do you feel when you walk in?³

- Is the environment tense/hostile?
- Is there a lot of finger pointing going on?
- Are people worried about their jobs?

How do you respond?³

- Do you change the plan every 2 weeks?
- Do people know what plans are before the policy is put in place?
- Are new policies in place that make it harder for your staff to get things done?
- Your culture is broken, but you think everything is fine

No way! Not my practice!³

- You are shocked when you are told that staff is ready to rebel
- You continually ignore feedback given to you
 - Do you just listen and not try to improve when you have hurt a family member? Then why do it in your practice?

I can't believe you said that - you are the problem.³

- In other words, you are shooting the messenger
- You either tell them (or silently think) that things are not that bad or that employee must have issues
- You are squelching that person's talent to lead

You policy the problem away

- You prohibit people from discussing their salary
- You say that if they don't feel like they can do their job, you will find someone who will!
- Too many people complain at staff meetings, so you don't have them

You put a non-waterproof, fast slipping bandaid on

- You give a temporary fix, but don't address the failing practice culture
- You don't soften your viewpoint and step back to see what you can do to make the place great again

My staff is just lazy³

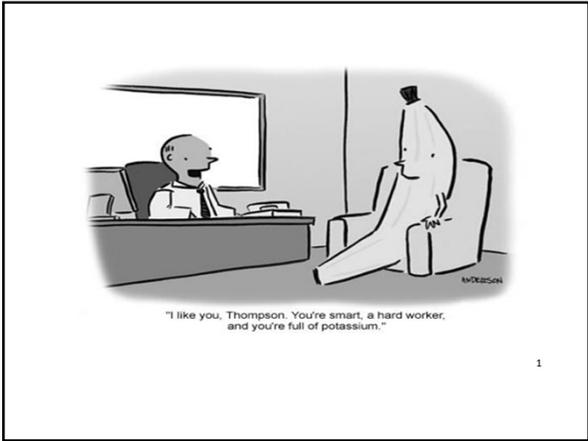
- You blame the staff
- You can't believe you pay their salary for such poor effort
- You believe they just don't care
- You can't see your own part in the break

What they want is important⁴

- Most physicians have a difficult time managing staff because they feel they should treat them the way they themselves want to be treated. What you want is not as important as what they want.

That's not my problem⁵

- Many physicians may not want to get involved in conflict
- This causes poor staff performance, dissatisfaction, and a poorly running practice
- You don't need a starring role - just a support role...a team role



References

1. Reno, Rebecca. 36 Work Cartoons to Help You Get Through the Week <http://www.rd.com/funny-stuff/work-cartoons/1/#>
2. Ryan, Liz. 2015, August 3. "Six Signs Your Company's Culture is Toxic". Forbes. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/lizryan/2015/08/03/six-signs-your-companys-culture-is-toxic/?#14d2c50a21f3>
3. Ryan, Liz. 2016, January 14. "Five Signs You're In Denial About Your Broken Corporate Culture". Forbes. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/lizryan/2016/01/14/five-signs-youre-in-denial-about-your-broken-corporate-culture/?#14a28d2a618e>
4. Hambley, Catherine, PhD. 2016, June 8. "When it comes to Managing Staff: Be Golden". Physician's Practice. <http://www.physicianspractice.com/pearls/when-it-comes-managing-staff-be-golden>
5. Tetrault, Joanne. 2002, September 15. "Staff in Conflict". Physician's Practice. <http://www.physicianspractice.com/articles/staff-conflict>

Analyzing Your Practice's
 Culture: Improve the
 Structure and Performance

 Cheryl Bernstein, RN, BSN, CCRC
 Director: Bernstein Clinical Research Center, LLC
 Cincinnati, Ohio

Improve or Change
your Practice Culture

Organizational Culture: Factors and Elements

- **The paradigm:** What the organization is about, what it does, mission statement
- **Control systems:** The processes in place to monitor what is going on.
- **Organizational structures:** Reporting hierarchy, and the work flow
- **Power structures:** Who makes the decisions, how widely spread is power, and who has a voice?
- **Symbols:** These include organizational logos and designs, but also extend to symbols of power such as parking spaces and executive washrooms.
- **Rituals and routines:** Management meetings, may become more habitual than necessary.
- **Stories and myths:** build up about people and events, and convey a message about what is valued within the organization.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Organizational Culture Change

- Managers (leaders) shape the way people think and behave (**Determine tone and mood**)
- Managers (leaders) are viewed by others (employees) as **role models**
- Managers influence the organization to strive for excellence and work together to achieve organizational goals = **Team building**

**Leadership helps shape culture.
Culture in turn shapes leadership.
They both drive performance.**

Create a Culture of Candor

- Ensure a free flow of information and communication:
Transparency
- That doesn't mean everyone needs to know everything; but it does mean that critical information gets to the right people at the right time and for the right reason.
- Encourage staff to speak the truth and not soften their message: encourage **truth** and open communication. "Say what they mean"
- Resolve issues and problems quickly.
Listen & follow-through

The Wall Street Journal Guide to Management: Alan Murray

Motivating Employees

- Giving staff responsibility can make them rise to the challenge and encourage loyalty to the company
- Develop the staff's imagination, ingenuity and creativity
- Encourage staff to develop self-direction and self-control in pursuit of common objectives and goals
- Reward staff for their achievements and contributions to the office

The Wall street Journal Guide to Management: Alan Murray

Motivating Employees/Changing Office Culture

- Create a positive work environment**
- Encourage open communication**
- Provide realistic problem solving solutions**

"Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it."
Dwight D. Eisenhower

Practice culture tips and behaviors:

- It is hard and takes a lot of time and energy.
- Every organization is different.
- Starts with Leadership from the Top – Physicians and Administrators
- Have a mission statement
- Have strategic planning meetings
- Hire people who fit your culture
- Have employees that know the values and mission of the company
- Know that good decisions can come from anywhere
- Surround yourself with people that fit in your culture. People who do not fit will self-select out of the organization.
- Realize that you are on a team and not a bunch of individuals (need to tell this to physicians)
- Embrace diversity of people and of thought
- Do not blame individuals. Blame the system and try to improve the system.
- Encourage learning and personal growth
- Stay positive and say thank you
- Be humble
- Be fair and straightforward and honest
- Be kind and sincere
- Try not to shout and yell when angry