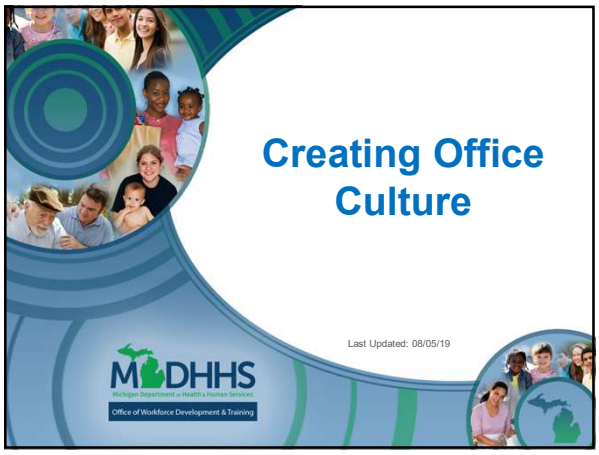
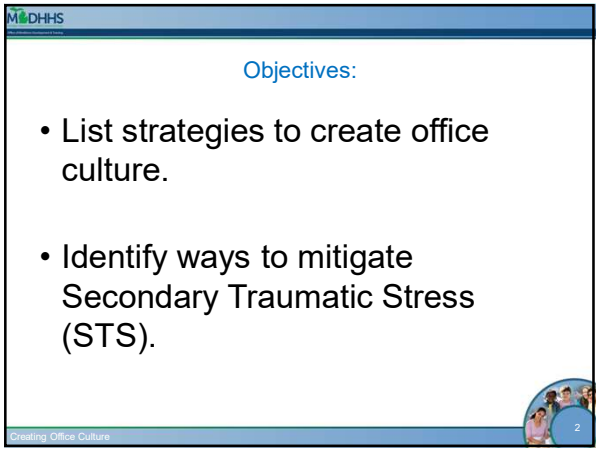
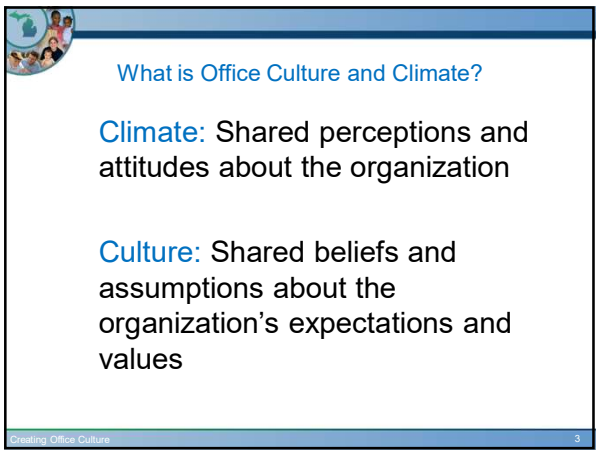

Creating Office Culture
Last Updated: 08/05/19
MDHHS
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services
Office of Workforce Development & Training


MDHHS
Objectives:
• List strategies to create office culture.
• Identify ways to mitigate Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS).
Creating Office Culture
2


What is Office Culture and Climate?
Climate: Shared perceptions and attitudes about the organization
Culture: Shared beliefs and assumptions about the organization's expectations and values
Creating Office Culture
3

MDHHS

What is Office Culture?

- The things we value as we get our work done.
- The way we do business in our office.
- MiTEAM practice model.
- The best practice methods.
- Expectations:
  - That you have for your staff,
  - That they can have of you.

MDHHS

How do I create Office Culture?

- Clearly define what character you expect from your staff.
- Show that you are open to feedback by trying new things if it doesn't work the first time.
- Focus on your staff even if you don't have support from above – you can create your culture in your staff!

MDHHS

Setting your office culture has to be intentional over incidental!

Ways to Create Office Culture

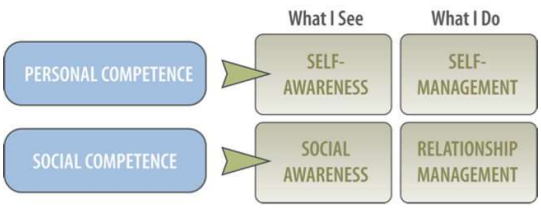
- Coach for Emotional Intelligence
- Continuous Staff Development
- Offer Clear Office Values
- Create Psychological Safety
- Planning for Meetings
- Supporting Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Coach for Emotional Intelligence

- What is Emotional Intelligence?
  - Let's read the handout.
  - While you read it, please come up with 3 test questions that you could ask someone about the article you are reading.

Coach for Emotional Intelligence

4 Core Emotional Intelligence Skills



Continuous Staff Development

- Be intentional in creating an environment where learning is encouraged, supported, and regularly provided.
- The focus begins with you!
- You need to influence your team.
- Create Professional Development Plans.

MDHHS

Creating a Learning Culture

- Have a plan for sharing what is learned with staff.
- Plan for staff development.
- Set aside time for training – support workers when they attend training.

MDHHS

Continuous Staff Development Activity

Review the 5 topics of Staff Development and choose one that you would like to focus on. Pick one video to watch from that topic, if there are multiple ones to chose from.

Watch your chosen video and pick a partner to discuss your video and ideas it sparks in you.

MDHHS

Office Values

- No Gossip
- Support the Team
- Value statements
- Clear Expectations
- Emphasize what we expect from them as a person

Office Values

- Civility
- Respect
- Leadership
- Justice (Fairness)
- Self-Efficacy
- Psychological Safety

MDHHS

Example From the Field of Value Statements

"We do what is right, regardless of consequence, circumstance or feelings"

"We find a way"

"Make great teammates"

"We maximize"

Developing Value Statements

1. **Brainstorming**
2. **Categorize**
3. **Identify**
4. **Naming**
5. **Infusion**

Creating Value Statements Activity

Each table with work together as a unit.

As a table, go through the 5 steps of the Creating Value Statements Activity.

You will report out on your value statement and how you will infuse it into your office.

Supervisor's Role in Creating Office Culture

- Identify, revise, and/or co-create new work norms as needed.
- Set clear expectations for:
  - Self-care
  - Family/work life balance
  - Flexible work arrangements
  - Realistic job previews
  - Use of professional development

Plan for Meetings

- Requirements
- Preparation and Facilitation
- Survey staff
- Self-assess

Plan for Meetings

What is unique about child welfare meetings/supervision?

Leave space for relationship building!

Create Psychological Safety

MDHHS

high

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

low

Comfort Zone	Learning Zone
Apathy Zone	Anxiety Zone

low high

ACCOUNTABILITY

Creating Office Culture 22

MDHHS

Psychological Safety

Creating an environment where staff feel open to discuss issues with you.

- One on one's
- Feedback
- Value diversity

Creating Office Culture 23

MDHHS

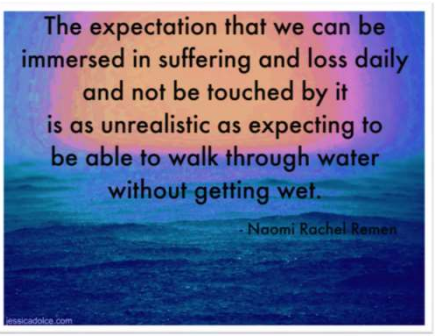
Psychological Safety

- How do we take calculated risks?
  - If you feel unsafe, you expend your energy to protect yourself.
  - When you feel safe, you can focus on your performance.
- Managers need to:
  - Say "I'm wrong, I'm sorry".
  - Teach staff to feel safe to fail.

Creating Office Culture 24

Good Supervisors Promote:

- Being available and approachable
- Openness and fallibility
  - "I may miss something. I need to hear from you."
- Inclusiveness
- Trustworthiness
- Ethical leadership
- Modeling curiosity: ask questions



Secondary Traumatic Stress

Secondary traumatic stress is the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the first hand **trauma** experiences of another. Its symptoms mimic those of **post-traumatic stress** disorder (PTSD).

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network

MDHHS

Secondary Traumatic Stress and Related Conditions

Sorting One from Another

Secondary Traumatic Stress refers to the presence of PTSD symptoms caused by at least one indirect exposure to traumatic material. Several other terms capture elements of this definition but are not all interchangeable with it.

Compassion Fatigue	Vicarious Trauma
Compassion Satisfaction	Burnout

MDHHS

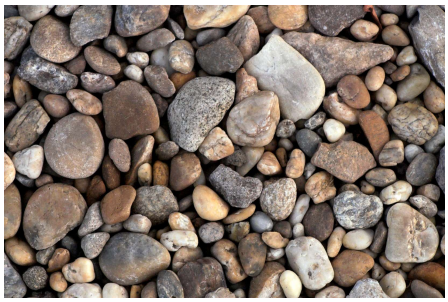
Post-Traumatic Growth

Post-traumatic growth (PTG) can be defined as positive personal changes that result from the survivor's struggle to deal with trauma and its psychological consequences.

MDHHS

"My thought is that if those who work with traumatized children and adults don't have a plan on how to deal with their secondary trauma then they can't do the work, because they can't process what is happening to them personally" (Boyland, 2010).

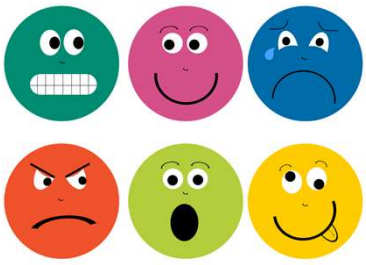
The Big Rocks of Time



Assessment Tools

- Professional Quality of Life Scale (PROQOL)
- Maslach's Burnout Inventory
- Compassion Satisfaction/Fatigue Self-Test for Helpers
- CTAC CC-STS Self-Report Survey

Can You Change Your Mood?



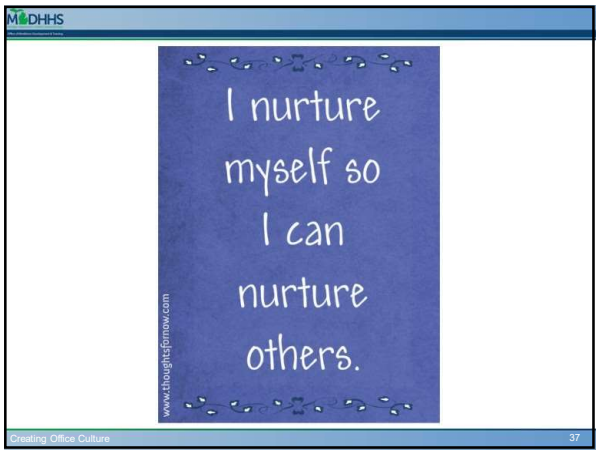
MDHHS

Individual Strategies

- Self care
- Mindfulness
- Caseload management
- Vacation/personal time off
- Non-working lunch
- Setting boundaries
- Making recovery time

MDHHS

MDHHS



Mentoring through Modeling Parallel Steps: Creating Office Culture

A Leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.

MiTEAM

Creating Office Culture 38

References

- Workplace Culture vs. Climate – why most focus on climate and may suffer for it, by Tim Kuppler:
- Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit January 2013
- Free Quiz to test your personal EQ
- Casey Family Programs – In Plain View But Overlooked: The Influence of the Work Unit on Child Welfare Worker's Turnover January 30, 2017
- Child Welfare Information Gateway

Creating Office Culture 39