Nurturing and Assessing of Workplace Spirit in Healthcare: Employee Engagement, Meaning, and Spirit

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Nurturing Our Engagement

The Goal: "Organization members harness their full selves in active work role performances by driving personal energy into physical, cognitive, and emotional labors."

The Person: "Engaged individuals are described as being psychologically present, attentive, feeling, connected, integrated, and focused on their role performances. They are open to themselves and others, connected to work and others, and bring their complete selves to perform" (Rich et. al. p. 619).

The Word Nurture in the Workplace

▶ Nurture means to develop, cultivate, promote, foster, encourage and sustain. The goal is personal and professional development.

▶ Everyone in the workplace has a need to nurture and be nurtured, resulting in deeper engagement in their work and about their vocation at work.

▶ Question: What is the role of virtue and character in the ability to nurture one another and patients? Does the strength of zest, authenticity, hope, or creativity add to the ability to nurture?

Nurture and Engagement: Vigor, Dedication, Absorption

Engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.

- **Vigor** involves high levels of energy and mental resilience while working

- **Dedication** refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and challenge

- **Absorption** refers to being fully concentrated and engrossed in one's work.

Defining Workplace Spirit

▶ Workplace spirit is "a framework of organizational value evidenced in the culture that provides employee's experience of transcendence, resulting in resilience, in the workplace, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy." Giacolone and Jurkiewiez (2004)

Similarities: Workplace Spirit and Engagement

The meaning of both workplace spirit and engagement suggest a sense of completeness and wholeness. Both require nurturance.

Fostering spirit in terms of virtues and values can lead to feelings of completeness and it is expressed in employee engagement. This is work defined as a vocation or calling. Using "Virtue Marking Practices" can foster virtue spirit.

Nurturing Spirit and Work

"Spirit is recognized as one of the crucial dimensions of the human personality. Therefore, if an organization encourages spirituality, then it is encouraging the people to bring their whole self to work." (Krishnakumar and Neck (2002, p. 159).

Nurture the Benefits of Spirit at Work

Spirited Work can give a person the ability to be authentic (creative), that is, to express oneself completely, involving the cognitive, emotional, physical and spiritual intelligence in the performance of one's role.

A course on the virtues to accompany the values would increase spirit at work.

Total Investment Nurtures Others

When employees are highly engaged, they are invested wholeheartedly) and are psychologically present, meaning that they are attentive, connected, integrated, and focused. (Rich et al. 2010

Nurturing Role Connections

In engagement, an individual is **coupled** to his or her role and to others which are essential to well-being and productiveness.

In disengagement, an individual is **uncoupled** to his or her role. This lack of connection to role and others harms well-being and productiveness.

Nurturance is Based on Psychological Safety

Psychological safety has to do with being able to employ and express one's true self without fear of negative consequences to one's self-image, status, or career.

Nurture Psychological Availability

Psychological availability refers to the belief that one has the physical, emotional, and psychological resources required to invest oneself in the performance of a role.

Workplaces that provide employees with physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for role performances will have employees who are more engaged.

Nurture Meaning, Engagement and Self-Transcendence

To achieve a more complete and holistic form of engagement, there must be a strong connection between individuals and their organization that extends beyond the task, job, or role that one performs. It is meaning.

The search for meaning and the need for being part of something greater than oneself (self-transcendence) are key motivators for organizational identification beyond task and job.

Work that is meaningful and purposeful is identified with workplace spirituality and employee engagement.

Nurture Meaningfulness IN and AT Work

- Meaningfulness **IN**: This is the work that one does. Creating meaningfulness in work involves making work and one's tasks intrinsically motivating.

- Meaningfulness **AT**: This is the environment and the context of working. Meaningfulness at work has more to do "with whom one surrounds oneself with as part of organizational membership, and/or in the goals, values, and beliefs that the organization espouses."

Nurture Meaning, Work, Engagement as Vocation

- Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi describe work and meaning from three perspectives, each leading to more and more meaning:

  - A Job

  - A Career

  - A Vocation or Calling

Nurture Engagement, Meaning and Transcendence

Ashforth and Pratt use the term transcendence to describe three loosely coupled phenomenon.

1. Attachment: A connection to something greater than oneself

2. Holism and Harmony: The integration of traits and identities

3. Growth: Self development toward the realization of one's aspirations and potentials

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Nurture Transcendence and Meaning and Workplace Engagement

"Organizations that foster transcendence provide strong linkages between who we are, what we do, and why we are here in this context, while simultaneously connecting workers to something greater than themselves, their tasks, or perhaps even the organization for which they work."(Pratt and Ashforth)

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Nurture Virtue for Workplace Spirit

"Workplace spirit is related to the productive virtues of creativity, honesty, trust, personal fulfillment, and organizational commitment. Concentrating on these virtues may help with workplace spirit and engagement." (Krishnakumar and Neck, 2002).

We must provide workshops that teach these virtues of character to nurture the person at and in work.

Nurture Engagement through Meaning and Safety

People were more engaged in work situations that were characterized by more psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety.

IMESO at Ochsner Health Research to Nurture Wholeness: Spirit at Work

- There has been considerable research on workplace spirit and how it is linked to productivity, meaning, purpose and well-being.

- The following are examples of the concepts and the items for Spirit at Work instrument used in the research that The Institute of Medicine, Education, and Spirituality at Ochsner (IMESO) has conducted at Ochsner Health.

Workplace Spirit and the Individual

Meaning --The is neither physical nor intellectual, but spiritual: It considers what is energized by work and is joyful about work.

Community --This indicates the conditions for   community at the workplace: Personal growth, valued as individuals, and working together.

Inner Life and Values: Reports both attitudes and behaviors about the inner life: hopefulness, awareness of personal values, concern for one's spiritual life.

Note: IMESO uses a research tool, Spirit in the Workplace, that has been shown to be valid and reliable to measure the above factor. Examples of items are shown at the end of this toolkit. Workplace value factors, meaning, community, and inner life, are highly correlated with workplace satisfaction and engagement.

Nurturing Psychological Meaningfulness

Psychological meaningfulness involves the extent to which people derive meaning from their work and feel that they are receiving a return on investments of self-in-role performances.

People experience meaningfulness when they feel worthwhile, useful, and valuable and when they are not taken for granted.

Meaningfulness appears to be at the heart of workplace spirit and employee engagement.

Nurturing Dimensions of Workplace Spirit in the <u>Organizational Unit</u>

Two dimensions

▶ Organizational Values: Perceptions of and attitudes about values of organization.

▶ Individuals and the Organization: Evaluation of the individuals in relation to his or her organization.

Sample Workplace Meaningfulness Items

- I experience joy in my work.

- I believe others experience joy as a result of my work.

- My spirit is energized by my work.

- The work I do is connected to what I think is important in life.

- I look forward to coming to work most days.

- I see a connection between my work and the larger social good of my community.

- I understand what gives my work personal meaning.

Workplace Community Life Questions Percentage of Agreement (In red indicates potential concern about nurturance need.

- Items in red were notably of concern in the IMESO research. They were below 50% of agreement.

- I feel part of a community in my immediate workplace.

- My supervisor encourages my personal growth.

- I have had numerous experiences in my job which have resulted in personal growth.

- When I have fears, I am encouraged to discuss them.

- When I have a concern, I represent it to the appropriate person.

- At work, we work together to resolved conflict in a positive way. I am evaluated in a fair manner here.

- I am encouraged to take risks at work.

- I am valued at work for who I am.

Relationship of the Individual to the Work Unit Questions

- My immediate work unit cares about whether my spirit is energized by my work.

- My immediate work unit makes it easy for me to use my gifts and talents at work.

- My immediate work unit encourages employees to develop new skills and abilities.

- My immediate work unit encourages the creation of community.

- My immediate work unit considers the responsibilities I have to my family.

- My immediate work unit is concerned about the poor in our community.

- My immediate work unit cares about all its employees.

- In my immediate work unit, people are encouraged to learn and grow.

Relationship of Individual to Work Unit Questions

▶ I feel positive about the values of my immediate work unit.

▶ My immediate work unit has a conscience.

▶ I feel connected with my immediate work unit's goals.

▶ My immediate work unit is concerned about the health of those who work here.

▶ I feel connected with the mission of my immediate work unit.

▶ I feel positive about my future with my immediate work unit.

Questions about Relationship to the Organization

- The organization I work for makes it easy for me to use my gifts and talents at work.

- This organization encourages employees to develop new skills and abilities.

- I have a significant role to play in organization.

- This organization encourages the creation of community.

- I feel positive about my future with this organization.

- In this organization people are encouraged to learn and grow.

Individual's Perception of the Organization's Value System Questions (In red, below 50% agreement)

▶ This organization I work for cares about whether my spirit is energized by my work.

▶ I feel positive about the values of this organization.

▶ This organization is concerned about the poor in our community.

▶ This organization care about all its employees.

▶ This organization has a conscience.

▶ I feel connected with this organization's goals.

▶ This organization is concerned about the health of those who work here.

Questions to Ask about Nurturance and Workplace Spirit and Engagement in the Workplace

- Nurturance Questions for Consideration:
  - What organizational and individual methods do we use to nurture one another that result in wholistic engagement?
  - What is the goal of increasing engagement?
  - Do employees including administration feel nurtured at work in terms of personal development?
  - Do employees contribute to the nurturement of self and others at work?
  - Does the organization nurture its patients and employees?
  - Is meaningfulness and purpose at work fostered and nurtured?
  - How is nurturance measured? Is it more meaning? Is it with rewards? Is it in healthier lives and attitudes? Is it in decrease of stress?
  - Others …

Reference Information

▶ For further information about this slide deck concerning engagement and workplace spirit or for workshops offered by the Institute of Medicine, Education, and Spirituality (IMESO) through the Office of Professional Wellness call 504 842 26941or the OPW office.

▶ Look at the IMESO webpage – www.Ochsner.org/imeso.