



Building and Maintaining a Supportive Community in the Workplace

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Why a Supportive Community in the Workplace Matters

Employees thrive in work settings characterized by support, collaboration, and positive coworker and supervisor relationships. The quality of an organization's social environment, positive connections between coworkers, and supportive management can significantly reduce burnout.

Pathways to a Supportive Community

There are several pathways organizations can follow to build a supportive community. Those paths include promoting a culture of health, implementing supportive management strategies, building inclusive and trusting spaces, and supporting a community-building orientation.

The best practices included in this guide are recommended by leading national workplace initiatives. Most are already implemented by many agency leaders across northwest Michigan in an effort to build and maintain a supportive community in their organization. Use this resource to identify actionable steps your organization can take to promote a work environment that includes a supportive community among leaders and staff.

Building a Supportive Community Best Practices

Consider implementing one or more of these strategies within your own organization to build and maintain a supportive community.

Ask Staff for Input

- Talk to employees about how to support their well-being
- Seek and respond to employee feedback on organizational policies and workplace community
- Engage staff from all levels and worksites in developing community events
- Ask employees if they experience alienation, or segregation between groups at work

Build a Culture of Health, Wellbeing, and Trust

- Offer an employee wellness program designed to address staff priorities around physical, mental, social, spiritual, and financial health
- Utilize the PERMAH framework and survey to measure organizational and employee wellbeing
- Create open channels of communication that encourage conversation horizontally and vertically throughout the organization

Provide Team Building Opportunities

- Start chat roulettes or scheduled coffee/snack breaks to encourage the development of staff relationships
- Create cross-team peer-to-peer mentoring and learning groups
- Engage employees in working collectively towards a common cause, charitable goal or community service project
- Provide team building activities, retreats, and social gatherings during and outside of work
- Implement the Caring in Action model to help build support within an organization by offering activities that create opportunities for staff to discuss and work through challenges
- Engage employees in working collectively towards a common cause, charitable goal, or community service project

Create Space for Celebration

- Create opportunities for staff to celebrate personal and professional successes and milestones