

Coaching for Success

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Course objectives

- Identify different coaching and meeting styles, based on desired outcome.
- Learn to deflect excuses and blame, while bringing the conversation back to the topic at hand.
- Learn to be prepared for a difficult meeting.

Coaching for Success

- A measure of success is helping a staff member or volunteer learn how to align with the organization's customer service goals.
- Keeping a staff member or volunteer and helping them learn new skills is very rewarding. It takes time and is not easy, but it can be so rewarding when coaching is successful.
- Coaching is a constant activity. If you're only coaching when things go wrong, then people will learn to be afraid of meeting with you.

High, Middle and Low Performers

- High Performers are your model citizens. Praise them in public, showing the others what sort of work you want.
 - Constantly re-recruit your high performers by empowering them to help you in different ways
- Middle Performers do a good job and are capable of doing better.
 - Praise what they do well, and invite them to do those tasks more often.
 - Meet privately to discuss improvement ideas
- Low Performers must be addressed quickly.
 - You promote what you permit
 - Problems don't solve themselves (sorry)
 - Coach in private, unless the behavior happens in public.

Meeting with a Middle Performer

- If someone is doing a good job overall, but you want something to improve
 - Start with a personal conversation so they feel comfortable
 - Start with what's working well
 - Ask the volunteer how they like their assignment
 - What do they think is working well?
 - Is there any part of their volunteer duties that they would like to change? How so?
 - If the question above does not lead to the topic you want to discuss, ask a question about that specific duty: "So, Meg do you enjoy helping a customer choose gifts?" If she answers she can't or won't or doesn't think it's necessary, you now have the open door for coaching.

Meeting with a Low Performer

- This conversation does not start with a friendly chit-chat
- Tell the volunteer why you brought them into the office, but be certain you are not accusing nor making a judgment
 - “Sara, I asked you to come in today because I received a phone call from one of yesterday’s customers. I’ll tell you what they said, then I’d like to hear what you remember.”
- Keep the conversation focused on the issue at hand
 - This is not about what other people do
 - This is not about how things are done in their neighborhood
 - This is not about harassing volunteers
- Don’t allow the volunteer to get focused on “who told you.”
 - Focus on their performance and how it impacts the hospital’s reputation

“I was just joking.”

- Volunteer told a joke to fellow volunteer in the middle of the gift shop, where customers could easily overhear.
- Volunteer told a joke to a patient who was being discharged.
- We don't know the human experience of others. What I find “funny” may be truly hurtful to another. Work with the volunteers on the art if chit-chat, rather than trying to be funny.
- Finally, people who are ill generally are not finding anything funny. Being aware of your audience and their needs is the primary goal of everyone providing hospital-based services.

Coaching a Good Volunteer

- Is it ever helpful to tell a patient or visitor how “busy” you are? Will their confidence in the service they are about to receive go up or down when you tell them you’re very busy today?
- Try to say, “Thank you for waiting” rather than, “I’m so sorry you had to wait.” Saying thank you acknowledges the issue in a positive way. Apologizing opens the door to complaint or criticism.
- How do you coach someone who meant no harm, but harm was done nonetheless?

Clarifying your Meaning

How do we clarify meaning so we are certain both sides heard and understood what was said?

- At the end of the conversation, summarize with most important points
- Ask the volunteer to repeat back what he or she heard
- Agree on an action plan so there is no question as to what is expected
- Follow up in a week or two so they know you have not forgotten.

Role Play

Get in groups of 2. One is staff. One is a volunteer

- Volunteer was talking to another volunteer in the elevator about “that goofy CEO. You never know what he’s going to do next.” Visitors were also on the elevator.
- DVS calls volunteer in for coaching
- Volunteer cannot believe that you don’t know he was “just joking.”

Role Play

Get in groups of 2, switch DVS and volunteer roles

- Volunteer sits at the desk and points the way for a woman to go get a wheelchair for her husband, because he's "not supposed to leave the desk." The wheelchairs are all the way down the hall.
- DVS calls the volunteer in for coaching
- Volunteer thinks the woman looked perfectly healthy and could have gotten her own wheelchair.

Discussion

- Dismissing a volunteer whose skills have diminished. She's still sweet as she can be, but can no longer do the job.
 - This is the hardest conversation you'll ever have, but it must be done.
 - Have you been rounding on this volunteer and correcting their little mistakes? If not, it will only be harder.
 - Ask the volunteer how he or she is doing. Do you still like volunteering at the Information Desk? Do you still feel comfortable in that role?
 - Have options ready. Offer different possibilities.
 - Even if the volunteer has no idea of his or her diminished capabilities, it is our obligation to keep the organization and the volunteer safe.

Discussion

- Dismissing a volunteer for cause. Have your facts straight, and have two people in the room.
 - Specific instance with example of how a rule was broken.
 - Have Volunteer Manual or other documentation for reference to show that an actual rule was broken or policy not followed.
 - Focus on the process not the person
 - Focus on the impact of his or her actions, not what you think or feel.
 - Don't use phrases like "You seemed angry" or "You come across like you're mad at people."
 - Be prepared for a terrible exchange and try your very best to remain calm. Don't plan a meeting after this one. You'll need some down time.

Discussion

- Coaching a volunteer who is driving the others crazy, but thinks they all love him/her.
 - Chances are the volunteer has NO idea that others are put off by his/her actions
 - Work carefully so he/she does not feel betrayed, but understands you're trying to help them.
 - Often this is a new volunteer who's desperate to fit in. How can he or she become part of "the crowd" without charging through the door?

Questions and Open Discussion

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