



Creating and Sustaining a Virtual Team

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Wellness in the Woods

www.mnwitw.org

The Wellness in the Woods Team

Four departments

- ◆ Peer Support Connection Warmline- Director in Staples- Former music teacher=Assistant Director- St Cloud- Accountant
- ◆ Virtual Peer Support Network Director in Stewartville, Masters in Social Work-Organization efficiency and data collection and reporting
- ◆ Director of Culture and Community Engagement- Beet truck driver, Red Lobster Manager, Born in Nigeria and huge soccer fan!! Legislative liaison- Oversee SAMHSA grant in diverse and frontier areas of Mn
- ◆ Recovery Community Organization- Director in Minneapolis, Former junior high teacher and coach

A team of 50 people in Recovery

- ◇ St Paul- New American
- ◇ Duluth - Felon and house painter
- ◇ Willmar- Mom of 4 special needs children
- ◇ Eagle Bend- White Vanilla woman
- ◇ Stewartville- Masters in Social Work
- ◇ Eden Valley- PHD English literature
- ◇ Mankato- Certified Peer Recovery Specialist
- ◇ Cambridge- Transgender advocate

KEY CONCEPTS OF WELLNESS PER THE WELLNESS RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

- ◆ HOPE
- ◆ PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY
- ◆ EDUCATION
- ◆ SELF ADVOCACY
- ◆ SUPPORT

HOPE

- ◆ Consistent communication
- ◆ Consistent validation
- ◆ Limited surprises
- ◆ Accepting people where they are

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- ◆ Accommodations- Reasonable- skill oriented
- ◆ Expectations- Completed forms for the position
- ◆ Attend team meetings
- ◆ Firm attendance policies
- ◆ Getting paid on time with comparable rates

EDUCATION

◆ Zoom was a big learning curve

- ◆ Connecteam
- ◆ Reporting format
- ◆ Team input
- ◆ Cultural response

SELF ADVOCACY

- ◆ YOUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT
- ◆ WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SELF ADVOCACY
- ◆ WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASSERTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE-JUST BE NICE!!
- ◆ HAVE A PLAN

SUPPORT

- ◆ HOW DO WE KNOW WHO IS A TRUSTWORTHY SUPPORT PERSON OR SYSTEM?
- ◆ HOW DO WE BUILD OUR SUPPORT SYSTEMS PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY?
- ◆ HOW DO WE ADJUST OUR SUPPORT SYSTEMS AS LIFE SITUATIONS CHANGE. IE: AGING, ILLNESS, CRISIS, EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL, DOMESTIC RELATIONSHIPS

VALUES AT WELLNESS IN THE WOODS AND IN THE LONDON HOUSEHOLD

- ◆ RESPECT
- ◆ INTEGRITY AND ACTIONS
- ◆ RESPONSIBILTY
- ◆ TRANSPARENCY

RESPECT

- ◆ TAKE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES INTO CONSIDERATION-
- ◆ DON'T POINT AT POW WOWS
- ◆ LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN



RESPONSIBILITY

- **Being responsible is an enormous privilege... It's what marks anyone a fully grown human..**
- **Peak performance begins with your taking complete responsibility for your life and everything that happens to you..**
- ◊ **AT WITW, WE ARE FLEXIBLE. HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGE IS NOT AN EXCUSE, IT IS A GIFT**

Tips for Virtual Teams <https://noondalton.com/>

- ◆ Avoid Information Hoarding
- ◆ Being an information hub is a key leadership skill for a virtual team manager. A good virtual team leader ensures that information flows readily and that contact among team members is encouraged. One excellent method is to employ a shared file service, which allows vital information to be kept in a central area for everybody to see. It is critical for virtual team members to understand where they may go to find information quickly. When knowledge is not openly exchanged, you run the danger of only a portion of the team being aware. In its worst form, information hoarding can leave virtual team members feeling alienated or left out. To be successful, a virtual team's information must be openly exchanged and easily accessible to all members.

Use Communication Technologies

- ◆ Collaboration technology advancements are making it easier for virtual teams to communicate. Applications that allow you to interact via text, screen sharing, or video conferencing will all make it easier for your team to work and communicate. However, be wary about uncritically accepting the latest technologies. It will be less productive if your virtual team struggles to use an application. Instead, concentrate on technologies that incorporate the tools you require and have a track record of dependability. Vital communication among your virtual team will be easier and more consistent with the correct technology in place.

Clarify Not Only Goals and Roles, But Also Tasks and Processes.

- ◆ In the first 90 days, all new leaders must align their teams on goals, roles, and duties. Coordination is more difficult with virtual teams because members are not physically there. As a result, it is critical to pay closer attention to the intricacies of task design and the methods that will be employed to fulfill them. Simplify the job as much as feasible, ideally by assigning duties to sub-groups of two or three team members. Also, ensure that the work process is clear, with specifics on who does what and when. Then, on a regular basis, conduct “after-action evaluations” to assess how things are progressing and identify process changes and training requirements.

Make a Commitment to a Communication Contract

- ◆ Virtual team communication is often less frequent and always less rich than face-to-face interaction, which gives more contextual cues and information about emotional states – such as involvement or lack thereof. The only way to avoid these traps is for the team to be exceedingly clear and disciplined about how it will communicate. Create a policy outlining acceptable behavior during virtual meetings, such as limiting background noise and side conversations, speaking clearly and at a suitable pace, listening intently and not dominating the conversation, and so on. The agreement should also include recommendations for which communication channels to utilize in particular situations, such as whether to respond by email versus picking up the phone versus spending the time to prepare a report.

Develop a “Virtual Water Cooler”

- ◆ The image of coworkers gathered around a water cooler represents informal conversations that share knowledge and strengthen social relationships. Team meetings tend to become very task-focused in the absence of intentional efforts to build a “virtual water cooler,” which means crucial information may not be communicated and team cohesion may deteriorate.
- ◆ One simple method to avoid this is to begin each meeting with a check-in, with each member taking a few minutes to describe what they are doing, what is working well, and what is hard. Regular virtual team-building exercises are another way to add some levity to the proceedings. Furthermore, workplace collaboration solutions are increasingly mixing shared workspaces with social networking elements, which can help team members feel more engaged.

THE IMPACT OF A WELLNESS ENVIRONMENT

- ◆ KINDNESS AND COMPASSION
- ◆ FEWER MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES TRIGGERED BY STRESS AND TRAUMA
- ◆ STAFF RETENTION
- ◆ PASSION ABOUT THE MISSION
- ◆ HAPPIER, HOPEFUL , PRODUCTIVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS
- ◆ SATISFIED CONSUMERS- WARMLINE TESTIMONIALS

THANK YOU!!!

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