Webinar Series
Advancing Equal Employment Opportunities and Creating Inclusive Workplaces

Part 6: "Building Intentional Culture" - How to foster a welcoming workplace
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Cesilee Coulson, Jaimie Laitinen, & Morgan Cain
WISE - Washington Initiative for Supported Employment
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Introductions

Cesilee Coulson
Executive Director

Jaimie Laitinen
TA and Training Director

Morgan Cain
Operations and Communications Coordinator
Building Intentional Culture

How to foster a welcoming workplace
What is Organizational Culture?

Underlying beliefs, assumptions, values, and ways of interacting that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization.
Impacts of “Culture Fit”

What aspects of our culture are important for everyone to be aligned on?

What aspects of our culture should be flexible?

Where could we benefit from new perspectives?
So What Works?

Knowing more about your culture can help you understand who fits well, who doesn’t, and why?

People stay longer in organizations when they:

- Are able to learn and grow
- Feel both independent and supported
- Can specialize in areas where they naturally do well
- Fit well within the culture
Cultural Norms

How an organization’s culture presents itself

Behaviors and rules of conduct can be:
- formal or informal
- healthy or unhealthy
- often not actively reflected on or challenged unless new people come in
Example - Formal & Healthy Norms

Culture: “Learning Organization”

Norms

• Annual training budgets for staff
• Trainings taken seriously (informal)
• Leadership open to new ideas
Example - Formal & Unhealthy Norms

Culture: “Closed-door Decision Making Process”

Norms

- No mechanism for collecting staff input
- No transparency around items such as budgets, priorities, hiring
- Staff are not sure how decisions get made
Changing Norms Formally & Informally

Be intentional about how you contribute to your organization’s culture:

• Recognize, reflect on, and acknowledge unhealthy norms
• React with intention
• Prepare to welcome someone that will change the culture
• Start conversations
Inclusion & Equity
Group Activities

Organizational Culture Snapshot
Complete individually and review with your team or department

Exclusive vs. Inclusive Norms Scales
Typically work on this within your program teams and discuss similarities and differences
Organizational Culture Snapshot
Heroes

who is seen as the hero around here? why?

why do people succeed or fail here?
Norms & Typical Behavior

Norms and Typical Behaviors

- communication styles; comfort with conflict; competition vs. collaboration; perfectionism; ways of celebrating; workaholics;
- sense of urgency; boundaries; allowance for vulnerability/emotion; etc.
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<th>Values &amp; Beliefs</th>
<th>stated &amp; lived</th>
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Hierarchy

draw & describe
### Who is Missing?

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<th>Who is Missing?</th>
<th>staff demographics</th>
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### Cultural Snapshot Example

#### Organizational Culture Snapshot

**Name:** Morgan Cain  
**Position:** Operations Coordinator

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<th>Heroes</th>
<th>Values &amp; Beliefs</th>
<th>Hierarchy</th>
<th>Norms and Typical Behaviors</th>
<th>Who is Missing?</th>
<th>Staff demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Brandi - organized, knowledgeable, functional, multitasker  
Shawn - effective speaker, innovative, mission-driven  
Jaimie - personable, fun, genuine | *Everyone can work:* value of employment  
*Support creativity & innovation*  
*Always learning & growing, both individually & as an organization*  
*Equity - Supported Employment*  
*Individualization* |  
**Executive Director**  
**Assistant Director**  
**Supervisors**  
**Development Director**  
**Financial Director**  
**Program Managers**  
**Assistant**  
**Admin Support**  
25 staff | Communication styles: comfort with conflict, competition vs. collaboration, perfectionism; ways of celebrating, workaholics; sense of urgency; boundaries; allowance for vulnerability/emotion, etc. | Little diversity in:  
languages  
race  
religion  
disability |

**Why do people succeed or fail here?**

**Succeed:** Social, open to learning, proactive, mission alignment, confidence  
**Fail:** Reserved, apathetic, insecure, low drive

**Hierarchy**

- Executive Director
- Assistant Director
- Supervisors
- Development Director
- Financial Director
- Program Managers
- Assistant
- Admin Support
- 25 staff

**Leadership Team:** ED, Assistant Director, Financial Director, Supervisors/TA Director

- Some staff input, leadership decisions

**Who is Missing?**

- Little diversity in:
  - Languages
  - Race
  - Religion
  - Disability
Exclusive vs. Inclusive Norms Scales
Exclusive vs. Inclusive Organizational Norms

**Individualism & Competition**
Single charismatic leaders; Working in isolation from each other; Taking unearned credit.

**Collaboration & Collectivism**
Working together; Taking time to build trusting relationships; Focus on “building a bigger pie” vs. fighting over a slice; Mutual support and promotion of each other’s ideas.

**Paternalism and Power-Hoarding**
No consultation or transparency in decision-making; Holding on to resources, scarcity mindset; Official title outweighs experience; Ideas are valued based on rank.

**Partnership and Power-Sharing**
Decision-making is clear and affected parties are consulted; Ideas from others are requested and space is made for them to be heard; Budgets are made available for viewing
Exclusive vs. Inclusive Organizational Norms

Fear of Conflict and Defensiveness
Politeness valued over honesty; Those who bring up discomfort for others are scapegoated; Feedback is not given in a timely manner; Focus on protecting power and comfort instead of addressing issues.

Growth and Vulnerability
Peers continuously learn from each other; Feedback is given & received objectively; Managers are skilled at providing timely, supportive feedback in culturally and individually responsive ways; Clear structure in place to hear and address grievances.

Urgency and Over-Working
There is a continual sense of urgency for deliverables, but not for community building or capacity building; Strong focus on quantity; Less focus put on the cost of growth on people and relationships;

Sustainability and Self-Care
Space given to address what is important that comes up in the moment; Realistic timeframes are set; Cost/benefit analysis includes all costs; Focus on sustainability and quality; Actively encouraging a culture of self-care; Support of time boundaries, considerate of parental needs, personal health issues; Work plans enable space for unpredictable tasks and creative innovation.
Exclusive vs. Inclusive Organizational Norms

**Perfectionism**
Mistakes are seen as personal and reflect badly on the individual; Little time for learning; As new hires learn their job it is subtly or directly communicated that they must “prove themselves,” setting them up to hide mistakes or face discipline.

**Appreciation and Support**
Mistakes are valued as opportunities for learning; People verbally show their appreciation for one another; As new hires learn their job they are given the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them.
Addressing Unhealthy Norms

Urgency and Overworking

• Understand things may take longer than expected
• Learn from past experiences
• Manage with data
• Write realistic funding proposals and workplans

Paternalism and Power-Hoarding

• Everyone understands who makes decisions
• Leaders are trained to develop the power and skills of others
• Shared decision-making
• Change is a practice
Equity & Inclusion

How do you recruit and include new people who may evolve your culture?

In order to:

- Include more perspectives on the team
- Add more skills, styles, and approaches to the work
- Reach more people with services
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Thank you
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• CESP Credit
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  January 21, 2020
• Part 8: Large Employer Initiatives and Public Sector Employment
  February 25, 2020

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