

# Positive Leadership Practices Checklist: Motivational Knowledge and Skills

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## **Get to Know Team Members**

- ☐ Getting to know what is important to team members communicates to them that they are valuable and worth knowing. When a leader takes the time to invest in team members on a more personal level, it shows that leaders care about who their team members “are”, not just what they “do”.

## **Be Aware: Stop, Look and Listen**

- ☐ Knowing team members begins with regular communication and opportunities to speak individually with them. During such conversations, ask open-ended questions, and do more listening than talking. Take time to walk around the school and to observe interactions, especially the ways that people work with one another. Leaders can learn much about what motivates team members when they make time to STOP, LOOK and LISTEN.

## **Open Up the Conversation**

- ☐ An effective way for leaders to build trust in team relationships is to share some information about themselves (nothing too personal!). This demonstrates to team members that leaders are willing to make themselves vulnerable by being the first to give something away. In return, team members will often do the same by sharing something interesting about themselves with their leaders.

## **Enquire About Displayed Personal Artifacts**

- ☐ Team members often display in their work space or classroom mementos, awards and photos of family or special events that illustrate what's important to them. Inquire about these personal artifacts, and then follow up and keep the conversation going about these areas of interest or significance. Team members enjoy sharing about their passions and genuinely appreciate when leaders take an active interest in things that are important to them.

## **Listen and Check for Understanding**

- ☐ Practice listening to others and checking your perspective with them after you have listened. You may start by asking a colleague or team member to share their perspective about a topic, decision or issue. Actively listen and then restate in your own words what you have heard them say. Ask them to check your perspective to see if you fully understood what they were trying to convey (e.g., "Did I catch everything you were saying?"). Practice this skill over next few days.

## **Know the Answers to Important Questions**

- ☐ As leaders, it is essential to ask the question, "How well do I know my team members?" Take a moment to consider the following questions:
  - ★ Who on your team has a birthday this month?
  - ★ Has anyone been facing a family crisis or personal issue that might be impacting their work?
  - ★ Which team members are married? Have children? Are grandparents?
  - ★ Who on your team is a creative thinker? Who is more analytical? Do they have opportunities to use these skills in their work?
  - ★ Can you name one hobby or favourite activity of each of your team members?
  - ★ Do you know what is most important to your team members in their job?

## **Understand Team Perspectives on Workplace Culture**

- ☐ As part of an upcoming team meeting, ask team members in pairs to identify one practice or consideration that is important to them in creating a positive workplace culture. Invite pairs to share their suggested practices or considerations with the whole team.

## **Incorporate Ongoing Team Building**

- ☐ Team composition, goals, external situations, and relationships continually develop and change. Team building is an ongoing process that needs to be cultivated over the entire life cycle of a team. Incorporating team building activities as part of regular meetings can be a simple and fun way to foster and strengthen positive team dynamics.

## **Create Opportunities for Team Feedback on “What Matters”**

- ☐ Team members should have an avenue for sharing their perspectives, concerns, and their feedback about work activities or projects. This could include having an agenda line entitled “What Matters”. This standing agenda item could involve the inclusion of topics for discussion submitted by team members ahead of the scheduled meeting. Encouraging feedback and discussion enhances engagement and empowers team members to problem solve and use their creativity.

## **Develop Leadership Within the Team**

- ☐ Leaders should be cognizant about when and how team members display positive leadership practices. This involves being aware of how team members take initiative, inspire and encourage others, and positively impact the productivity and the morale of others on the team. Team growth could be promoted through opportunities for shared leadership approaches on specific activities. Opportunities for shared leadership serve to engage and empower team members to take an active role in building the cohesion and effectiveness of the overall team.