

Positive Leadership Practices Checklist: Leadership Virtues in Action

Encourage Collective Noticing and Responding

- ☐ Affirm team members' capacity to care for one another by keeping track of each other and noticing when one member may be experiencing specific difficulties or challenges. In turn, encourage team members to come alongside, listen and communicate support to others on their team. Post visual reminders in staff common areas that promote the value system of looking out for each other.

Foster Team Cohesion and Support

- ☐ When new projects or initiatives are assigned, take time individually or collectively with team members to discuss how changes will impact team relationships and how people can best work together. Use such opportunities to identify strategies for building strong team cohesion and mutual support.

Acknowledge Positive Accomplishments and Experience

- ☐ Take time to acknowledge when team members achieve personal accomplishments or experience positive changes personally or within their families. Such events or experiences might include finishing a certificate program, having a new baby, becoming a grandparent or moving into a new home or apartment. Announcing or celebrating these special times as part of team meetings personalizes interactions and builds a positive sense of team.

Promote Acts of Kindness

- ☐ Designate a compassion week or month for the school team. Prior to this time period, brainstorm with team members a list of acts of kindness (e.g., sending an email recognizing someone's contributions, distributing coffee or water, or bringing in a nutritious snack to share with others on the team). Post the resulting list in a common staff area, and use these lists as prompts or reminders to carry out acts of kindness.

Keep a Gratitude Journal

- ☐ Encourage staff members to keep a gratitude journal to track three things that they are grateful for each day. Once a week, invite members of your team to write an email or personal note to someone expressing appreciation for their efforts or work activities. As a leader, be the first to model and initiate this positive workplace action.

Make a Gratitude Visit

- ☐ Each morning, visit one team member and drop off a note of appreciation for their contribution to the team. Make a plan to systematically connect individually with all team members over several days or weeks with the intent of making a gratitude visit and acknowledging their valuable contributions to the team and school.

Acknowledge Mistakes and Restore Collaboration

- ☐ As a leader, be open to acknowledging personal mistakes or missteps. Go to team members individually to restore relationships or to build solutions for future collaboration. Listen and respond graciously to the thoughts and feelings of others.

Speak Well of Each Other

- ☐ Adopt a common team value of speaking well of each other both inside and outside the school. In other words, colleagues “have each other’s backs”. When misunderstandings arise between team members, encourage them to go to each other individually to clarify understanding and find mutual solutions.

Identify Lessons Learned

- ☐ At times, workplace teams may experience setbacks or not meet with the successes they had intended. Instead of defining these situations as failures, make it a regular practice for the full team to identify lessons learned from challenging projects that can be applied as practical wisdom in future initiatives.

Identify Strengths that Sustain and Move Teams Forward

- ☐ Following a difficult situation or loss for a team, take time to connect with team members individually to see how they are doing. Listen and reflect their perspectives and feelings. At an appropriate time, bring team members together and invite them to identify and elaborate on team strengths that have been essential for helping people to continue moving forward. As a follow-up to this discussion, invite team members to think about how they might use these existing strengths to set new team goals and directions for the future.

Review Policies Related to Team Well-being and Functioning

- ☐ Review team policies and guidelines to ensure the inclusion of practices or priorities that promote team well-being and positive team functioning. Identify existing practices or develop new plans for moving such policies into action or for further embedding them in the school culture.

Collaborate Together to Help Others

- ☐ As a school team, adopt a community-based project for enhancing the lives of individuals or families in the area. This could involve working as a team with a nonprofit organization or providing direct support to those in need within the community.