

Positive Leadership Practices Checklist:

Positive Communication



Carry Out Daily Check-ins

- In the morning, take time to touch base with specific colleagues or employees to see how they are progressing on their projects. This works particularly well when people are involved in joint tasks or projects. Carrying out check-ins allows people to share what they are doing and also communicates your interest in their contributions to the project or team.

Help Others Feel Comfortable

- Be aware of the nonverbal facial expressions of others - they provide cues about their level of openness and how comfortable they are in a given situation. When meeting others, be sure to demonstrate a positive attitude by smiling or nodding to show you are comfortable and open to interacting with them. When a positive attitude is conveyed to others, it may impact how they respond to you both verbally and nonverbally.

Focus on Health-Promoting Team Meetings

- Provide healthy snacks or beverage choices during team meetings. Healthy eating and positive interactions work together to contribute to a comfortable atmosphere, and enhance team members' openness to sharing ideas and problem-solving challenges.

Ensure Undivided Attention

- Give your undivided attention whether you're in a group meeting or with one team member. How often have you experienced being in a conversation with someone who kept looking at their cell phone or elsewhere while talking or listening to you? Lack of focus devalues the conversation and encourages people to tune us out. Maintain eye contact during conversations and meetings, and put all other things aside to visually convey your focus and encourage each individual to stay present.

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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 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.

Deliver Messages in Person

- In lieu of only using emails as an avenue for communicating in the office, take time to drop by team members' offices or work spaces to deliver a specific message. Offering a smile, saying good morning, using people's names and expressing gratitude within our messages adds positive energy to interactions and builds relatedness with others.

Draw Out Strengths in One-on-One Meetings

- In one-on-one meetings with team members or employees, begin by asking what has been going well over the past several weeks since your last meeting. Draw out areas of strength, success and accomplishment and keep notes on these as they are shared. A similar approach may also be used in addressing areas of emerging concern or challenge. Begin by asking employees or team members to share how they would envision moving forward using their strengths and the strengths of the team to respond to areas of concern or challenge.

Remain Open to Others

- Sometimes people may not open immediately to us or may demonstrate a reluctance to interact with us. Such responses may be perceived as cold or even rude. We should remember that people's reactions are most often reflections of what is happening within them, including their experiences, thoughts and feelings. This approach to understanding the responses of others helps us not to personalize the behaviour exhibited towards us, and to be more empathetic in our responses.

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Provide Clear and Concise Directions

- Ensure you are concise and clear in your directions and your communication of expectations. Encourage employees to restate what they have understood and to ask questions and seek clarification as work progresses as necessary. Generally, reviewing one to three expectations or tasks during a given meeting is sufficient to ensure the full engagement of team members.

Follow Up in Writing

- No matter how interesting the meeting was, it is probable that those in attendance may not remember everything that was shared. Before the meeting, designate a person to take notes. Summarize this information into a bullet-pointed email to send to the team as a follow-up or refresher. Short, concise notes will keep important information in the front of people's minds.

Respond - Don't React

- Allow yourself time to formulate thoughtful responses to challenging situations. Reacting too quickly during times of stress can diminish opportunities for processing valuable lessons learned, and can create lasting tensions within team relationships. Take the necessary time to process all aspects of a challenging situation, and to develop a plan for the team to move forward with renewed commitment and confidence.

Share the Credit

- Take every opportunity to share praise, kindness and credit in the workplace. Acknowledge the efforts of your team, and include them in your successes. Make formal efforts to communicate the accomplishments of team members throughout the organization.

