

Create a Positive Staff Culture Contract

(This is a continuation of Zone of Helpfulness Activity from Section 6 of the toolkit.)

Create a Contract for Positive Staff Culture by defining behaviors that lead to a positive culture. This activity is best done over two sessions. First in smaller teams, then shared and synthesized before a meeting with the whole staff. Enlarge the visual on page 6 and put in staff break areas prior to these sessions to get the conversations going and to gather input.

Directions for small groups:

1. Describe your vision of the most positive work environment for you to be able to be your best self in your job. What staff behaviors and attitudes would lead to such an environment? As you listen to each other, review the list of helpful behaviors and attitudes from the Zone of Helpfulness activity in Section 6 of the toolkit. Identify when the helpful behaviors on the list match what staff is saying about staff culture (circle or star them). Expand the list with more behaviors that they believe are important to have a staff culture in which they would want to work.
2. Create a separate consensus list of behaviors and attitudes that support a positive staff culture.
3. Individually reflect, then discuss what boundaries a staff member might want to have to support the helpful behaviors.
4. Discuss how to set these boundaries using the tips from Compassionate Boundary Setting section of the toolkit. Be sure to discuss the hesitance we have in proactively setting and addressing boundary issues with colleagues.
5. Discuss what has happened to you in your life that has impacted your ability to contribute to a positive work culture.
6. Come prepared to the whole staff meeting with your consensus list of behaviors to support a positive staff culture written on flip chart paper. These will be used to write your school's Positive Staff Culture Contract.

Directions for whole staff meeting:

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

1. All ideas from the work groups are displayed on flip chart paper in a staff gathering area. Let staff know that the small group ideas are posted for them to review.
2. Once the staff have time to see what the small groups have done, ask a team of 3-4 to work together to categorize the actions into broader categories removing statements that are repetitious.

AT THE WHOLE STAFF MEETING

3. Display the small group flip charts and handout the synthesized list for comment and any suggested revisions by the staff.




4. Have the synthesized list on flipchart paper too and make any revisions in the moment for all to see.
5. Ask each staff person to identify the five most important actions. Next to each of those actions the participant puts a dot/mark/sticker.
6. When voting is complete, the 10 actions that are most popular items become the base for the Positive Staff Culture Contract.
7. Discuss what activities work best for you to enhance connections with your colleagues and receive support from them in your role at the school? (i.e. Tapping In/Out)

AFTER THE STAFF MEETING

8. The actions are written into a contract. The contract is enlarged and hanging in a staff gathering area for all staff to sign.
9. Copies are made available to staff to keep in their room. The individual copies should include four self-reflection questions on the back. The questions are:
 - A. What behaviors do I regularly demonstrate as a colleague?
 - B. What behaviors might I enhance to be the colleague I want to become?
 - C. What steps can I take to maintain my strengths and grow in areas I identified in B?
 - D. Who of my colleagues can I talk to about these commitments I have made?
10. An example of a staff contract is on the following pages. This was created for a team in human resources in another sector of the workforce. A contract can take on a simpler format and is best when it includes some specific behaviors for each theme.



My Commitment to My Co-Workers

| Category | My Commitment | My Behaviors |
|--|---|---|
| Teamwork and Problem-Solving  | I will be Innovative, flexible and use team-based problem-solving techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I won't point fingers – I'll focus on solutions instead ▪ I'll help those who are carrying a heavier load at the moment; I will put myself in someone else's shoes ▪ I won't take short-cuts if it makes more work for someone else; ▪ I will follow up on issues to ensure resolution has been reached ▪ I will anticipate the outcome and think about the team as a whole when considering my actions and decisions ▪ I will get to know others and let them get to know me ▪ I will try to understand that we're all human – I will give grace ▪ I'll work to look past our differences to find common ground; I will try not to let "quirks" get in the way of business; I'll work peacefully with those around me and have fun ▪ I'll collaborate and leverage my team's collective talent and knowledge |
| Being a Leader | I will be a leader with a positive attitude and will demonstrate respect for everyone on my team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regardless of my role on the team, I will be a leader; I will be courageous and take the lead ▪ I'll be respectful of others' time, workload and current stress/pressure; I will show kindness and be respectful, pleasant and supportive ▪ I will work to maintain a positive attitude and look for the good; I will keep my eye on the big picture and the greater journey beyond today ▪ I will work to maintain a sense of humor and laugh with others ▪ I will acknowledge others and say "hi" to them the first time I see them each day, and I'll ask the same of others |
| Communication | I will focus on communicating effectively with my team and my customers to produce the results we all want | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I will provide outstanding customer service both within and outside of my team; I will represent our team with excellence ▪ I'll follow up on all open issues to ensure resolution ▪ I will not assume anything; instead, I will ask questions, clarify needs and do research ▪ I will communicate my needs and encourage others to do the same ▪ I will avoid gossip ▪ I will respond to calls, emails and text messages promptly |

My Commitment to My Co-Workers

| Category | My Commitment | My Behaviors |
|---|---|--|
| Communication <i>(continued)</i> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will not interrupt when others are talking |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will be honest, provide constructive feedback and praise when it's deserved; I will be supportive with both validation and challenges as appropriate |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will ask you to tell me if there's something I could do better, and I will have the courage to deliver bad news. I'll ask you to do the same |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will work to support, not criticize you, and ask the same of you |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will remain open to feedback |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will share ideas, information, discoveries and knowledge with the team |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will work to remain open-minded and willing to accept change |
| Personal Responsibility and Accountability | I will hold myself accountable for my work and the outcome of my actions and decisions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will do my best; I will work hard, be prompt and be on-time I will take personal responsibility for my decisions, actions, work product and outcomes; I will look to myself first for the reason why something turned out the way it did |
| Personal Growth and Development | I will drive my own growth and development in my current role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will look for opportunities to learn and grow I'll practice flexibility, innovation and remaining calm under pressure I will think outside of "it's not my job" and jump in when needed – I will get involved in the team's business |