

example, policies giving guidelines about annual and maternity leave. This can build staff members' connection to the institution.¹ Equally important is having fair and transparent systems that highlight the duration of a posting (particularly to remote settings) and clear processes to address any difficulties or grievances in a supportive manner.

Status and career advancement

Staff members are more likely to stay if they understand the potential career path open to them and know exactly what they must achieve in order to be promoted to a more responsible or demanding post with more benefits.

Continuing professional education

Training enables health care professionals to set – and achieve – personal goals, retain their professional registration, and develop their skills and careers; all of which is motivating and improves their willingness to remain. Training existing staff members (for example, through online learning) can improve and extend the services offered at an eye clinic or hospital. This may be more cost-effective than recruiting new personnel.

Recognition

There are many ways to express our appreciation of a person. These can be inexpensive, yet effective, such as regular 'checking-in' by the supervisor to see how personnel are doing or what they need, receiving a kind word from a manager/director to commend good work, or simply noting the birth or graduation of a family member. Awards or recognitions build the confidence of staff members and contribute toward the feeling of being valued and included.

Teamwork

Working as part of a team is highly motivating. This requires first and foremost that the organisation genuinely values teamwork and ensures that everyone in the team clearly understands, accepts and values their own and each other's roles – whether clinical or non-clinical. Involve staff members in planning and identify what each member is willing to take responsibility. This ensures ownership – and pride! – when the team succeeds.

Hospital infrastructure and community relations

The good reputation of an organisation within the community, smooth patient registration systems, functioning equipment, reasonable wait times, and pride in providing quality care all are big motivators for staff and patients. Demonstrate, and encourage staff members to develop, a relationship of mutual respect, trust and acceptance with the local community.

Reference

1 Roberts H. Creating motivation, identifying incentives and enablers, and encouraging staff development. *Comm Eye Health* 2005;56(18):122-124. www.cehjournal.org/article/creating-motivation-identifying-incentives-and-enablers-and-encouraging-staff-development/

Guatemala: How we create a welcoming workplace for our staff and patients



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Change and growth in our hospital can be stressful. We decided to address this by promoting staff motivation and team efficiency. Here is a short description of what we do at Visualiza in Guatemala.

We have created a hospital-wide engagement process to prevent and address problems of wide concern. The process is led by a service committee (SC), consisting of leaders from each of the departments, including counselling, outpatient, surgery, management. The SC is responsible for promoting improvement and motivation throughout the hospital.

Interaction

The SC identifies problems that require improvement and carries out activities with all 135 staff members. Through quizzes, talks and games, they encourage groups to be creative and design solutions to the problems that have been identified. All are encouraged to make suggestions, and prizes are given to the most popular solutions in order to keep the process fun.

The SC also collaboratively develops – and then promotes – a profile setting out the qualities of a good employee. We train everyone in the "Magic of Service" and choose service tutors who observe and congratulate other staff members who offer high quality patient service.

Continuity

After tutoring, the training is kept alive with reminders and activities to enforce the change. For example, we have lunchtime cinema every Tuesday to play a segment of a movie that brings out a situation that is thought-provoking and appreciated by the staff. We encourage everyone to participate.

The director encourages the SC to keep up with their motivational activities for the hospital by reviewing the SC agenda of activities, schedule and providing a budget.

Outcomes

The willingness of staff members to express ideas has increased. Communication between managers and their team has improved. For the most part, team members are happy in their work area. This has a positive impact on teamwork and on the atmosphere the patients feel. We believe this positive culture-building attracts patients and boosts our overall quality of care.

Regional and institutional culture influences what kinds of motivation and team building activities are effective. How would you apply this example from Latin America to your own eye hospital or department? Please share your experience and ideas with us by writing to editor@cehjournal.org



A group puzzle game spells out: 'Your health and wellbeing is our reason for being'. GUATEMALA

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