METHAMPHETAMINE AND SUICIDE PREVENTION INITIATIVE (MSPI)

Training and Technical Assistance Program

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Considerations & Tips for Retaining Staff

Once you have effective and hard-working staff, you want to strive to keep them and this is the essence of staff retention. Staff retention is important because it retains expertise and experience in the program, creates a consistent presence in the community, eases training newer staff, and allows for procedural systems to be put in place over a period of time to support job performance. Below are some points to consider when seeking to retain the outstanding staff that you have.

- Have an active employee self-care program that offers support for employees (such as one-on-one guidance for job challenges, traditional healing or guidance, time off, exercise, and healthy eating).
- Allow some flexibility in the office so that employees feel like they have the freedom to manage their own time. This can include allowing people to take 15 extra minutes on their lunch break if they have an appointment, to occasionally work from home, or even work outside on a nice day).
- Consider creating a recognition program for your staff that includes public recognition in front of peers as well as small rewards. Rewards can be small gifts, meals, or even some paid time off
- Ineffective staff can seriously hurt staff morale. Letting go or transferring under-performing staff members demonstrates to other staff that the work is important, and that you want to ensure that they all have team members that will help to share the workload and not create additional burdens.
- Allow staff to pursue interests of their own, including working on other project or writing grants that speak to their personal areas of personal and professional interests.
- Empower staff to manage their own time and tasks. Micromanaging staff can hinder their own personal drive and make them feel 'watched'. Encourage them to set their own priorities, and provide them the tools and resources to organize their time and tasks well.
- Involve staff in problem solving rather than jumping in and providing the answers to every situation that arises. Group discussions and decision-making as well as asking staff how they would like to resolve a problem can lead to a sense of collective ownership of the program or department. This also means that supervisors need to allow for creativity and be open to new ideas
- Create a feedback process that allows employees to speak freely and honestly without fear of repercussions (this may include a system for anonymous feedback, as well).
- Provide instruction and guidance at a level that does not make your employee feel micro managed but doesn't make them feel lost either. Weekly check-ins are a good idea to ensure progress and promote communication.
- Ensure that your staff feels challenged, and not underwhelmed by their job tasks.
- Make sure that you projects are fully staffed. Understaffed projects can lead to overburdened employees, frustration and burnout very quickly.
- Provide training and staff development opportunities regularly. This includes allowing and budgeting for staff to participate in in-services, cross training staff on different tasks, conferences, online and live trainings.
- Supervisors should think of themselves as role models and not just managers. Be the employee that you want your staff to be. Try not to ask anybody to do something that you would not do yourself.
- Ensure advancement opportunities exist (including raises, promotions and changes in job titles).
- Conduct employee performance evaluations regularly so people feel like their performance matters.