

OASIS Alert

Management: Use This Clever Tool to Help Staff See the Good They Do

Also find out free ways to help staff in need and how to turn around chronic complainers.

Looking for ways to keep staff satisfied with their jobs and able to do their best for patients?

Start by encouraging them to toot their own horns, which can get everyone working to a more upbeat tune, according to **Diana Waugh, BSN, RN**, principal of **Waugh Consulting** in Waterville, Ohio. To do that, Waugh uses the "Positive Incident Report," which asks care providers to describe what they did in the past week that made a helpful difference in a patient's life (see the form on page 69). Waugh finds that when caregivers complete the form, "they don't say, 'I did a great job starting an IV.' It's more about how the nurse had a talk with Mrs. S about end of life care and Mrs. S seemed to feel better" as a result.

Goal: The purpose of using the form is to teach people to reward themselves, says Waugh. "I think people hesitate to do this sometimes due to the belief that you shouldn't brag." In her view, however, saying, "I did this and that means I'm better than you are" is bragging. But if you simply share what happened in your positive incident report, that's just telling a good story.

As the form indicates, Waugh encourages people to share what they put on the positive incident report form with their managers. She also suggests people complete the form on a regular basis. Doing so "helps people see what they are doing and gets rid of the 'I'm just a nurse aide or a nurse, etc.' mindset, says Waugh.

Find Ways to Show You Care

"Home care clinicians are under constant deadlines, quality checks, and massive paperwork compliance issues, which is often in direct conflict with the quality care and individual attention they want to give to their clients," says **Patricia Jump**, president of **Acorn's End Training & Consulting** in Rice Lake, Wis. These pressures make it more important than ever to find ways to help staff feel appreciated.

Appreciation is a basic human need, Jump says. And showing appreciation doesn't have to be complicated. There are many simple ways to show staff you value what they do, Jump says. For example:

- Verbal or written thanks,
- Company recognition for a specific job done well,
- Small gift cards to local businesses, restaurants, or an ice cream shop,
- A gift certificate for a free back or foot massage, or
- A few hours or half day off with pay.

Tip: Time off is a commodity that is valued more with each passing year, Jump says. If clinicians are routinely "on-call" during weekends, giving them a break from week-end call by finding someone to take his or her place can be a great way to show appreciation.

Be specific: Whatever the show of appreciation might be, state specifically why you are recognizing the employee rather than just saying, "Good job," Jump says. Whenever possible, find out the interest areas or "likes" and priorities of the individual and tailor the reward to fit the recipient.

Reap Unexpected Benefits

Some agencies have found improved morale when they work with other providers through local associations to show appreciation to their employees, says **Francis Battisti, PhD, LCSW**, CEO of **Battisti Seminars** in Binghamton, N.Y.

Gathering together for an annual areawide employee appreciation luncheon can help competing agencies see past the day-to-day business grind and focus on the value of the work they do.

Refocus These Problem Employees

Staff members who continually find fault with everything can zap other people's morale and negatively impact productivity.

Potential solution: What consistently works well in dealing with negative staff is to ask them to come up with a solution to their complaints, says **Cheryl Boldt, RN**, a consultant with **Maun Lemke** in Omaha, Neb. "Anybody can find problems but it takes talent to think of a solution," she says.

Boomerang effect: Managers should also keep in mind that spending a lot of time with negative staff members "sends a message that you have to be negative to get attention around here," Boldt warns.