

Some Characteristics of Healthy and Unhealthy Organizations

From: A Board/Staff Handbook for Women's Organizations

UNHEALTHY	Overall Score:					HEALTHY
<p>1. Little personal involvement in organizational objectives except at top levels.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Objectives are widely shared by the members and there is a strong and constant flow of energy toward these objectives.</p>					
<p>2. People in the organization see things going wrong and do nothing about the situation. Nobody volunteers. Mistakes and problems are hidden or shelved. People talk about office troubles at home or in the halls, not with those involved.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>People feel free to say they are aware of difficulties because they expect the problems to be dealt with and they are optimistic that they can be solved.</p>					
<p>3. Members at the local level feel alone in trying to get things done. Somehow decisions, policies and procedures don't get carried out as planned.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>There is a noticeable sense of co-operation in planning, performance and in discipline – in short, a sharing of responsibility.</p>					
<p>4. The judgment of all people in the organization is not respected outside the narrow limits of their jobs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>The judgment of all people in the organization is respected.</p>					
<p>5. Personal needs and feelings are side issues.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>The range of problems tackled includes personal needs and human relationships.</p>					
<p>6. People compete when they should get together. They are very jealous of their area of responsibility. Seeking or accepting help is felt to be a sign of weakness. Offering to help is not thought of. People don't trust each other and they speak poorly of one another.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>People readily ask the help of others and are willing to give in turn. A system for helping one another is highly developed. Individuals and groups compete with one another, but they do so fairly and towards a shared goal.</p>					

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<p>7. When there is a crisis, people withdraw or start blaming one another or those outside the organization.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>When there is a crisis, the people quickly band together and work until the crisis situation is resolved.</p>
<p>8. Conflict is mostly secret, avoided and/or dealt with behind people's backs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Conflict is seen as important to decision-making and personal growth. Conflict is dealt with effectively, in the open, at meetings. People say what they want and expect others to do the same.</p>
<p>9. Feedback is avoided.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Joint criticism of progress is routine.</p>
<p>10. The less risk is better.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Risk is accepted as a condition of growth and change.</p>
<p>11. "One mistake and you're out."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>"What can we learn from each mistake?"</p>
<p>12. Poor performance is glossed over.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Poor performance is faced up to, and a joint solution is found.</p>
<p>13. The organization's structure, policies and procedures burden down the organization. People take refuge in policies and procedures and play games with the organization's structure.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>The organization's structures, procedures and policies are fashioned to help people get the job done and to protect the long-term health of the organization, not to give each bureaucrat her due. Policies and procedures are also readily changed.</p>

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<p>14. Tradition is the most important factor in the organization.</p>	<p>There is a sense of order, and yet wide scope for new ideas. Old methods are questioned and often give way to new ones.</p>
<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	
<p>15. New ideas are not widespread and in the hands of a few.</p>	<p>The organization itself adapts swiftly to opportunities or changes in its marketplace because every pair of eyes is watching and every head is looking towards the future.</p>
<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	
<p>16. People swallow their frustrations: "I can do nothing. It's <i>their</i> responsibility to save the ship."</p>	<p>Frustrations are the call to actions: "It's my/our responsibility to save the ship."</p>
<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	

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Please provide any ideas/suggestions/feedback that you think would enhance the programs and services at the Centre: In general, folks report feeling good about the programming at the Centre. "Programs seem to be going smoothly and they appear to take everything into consideration. Staff are able to plan programs they are interested in and therefore take pride in planning and carrying programs out." There was one suggestion to increase the physical activity programming offered at the Centre.

Please provide any ideas/suggestions/feedback that you think would enhance communication among all staff at the Centre: Staff identified staff meeting, the communication book, e-mails and shift changes as all being helpful. Like last year, communication between and among staff members who work on isolated shifts (overnights and weekends) was identified as a challenge area. Staff meeting was seen as a critical component of the organization's communication: staff would like to see more staff members at staff meeting. Staff who are unable to attend staff meeting would like to know when 'significant decisions' are slated to be discussed at staff meeting ahead of time so that they might lend their voice to the discussion. Also suggested was a "Staff Comments" book where staff would have the ability to make anonymous suggestions or voice concerns.

Please provide any ideas/suggestions/feedback that you think would enhance staff member supervision at the Centre: In general, people feel good about the level of support and supervision they receive. One request was made for more one-on-one meetings with the supervisor. Also suggested was a "new staff evaluation" process to be implemented during shadow shifts so that areas of concern might be addressed before new staff members work alone.

Please provide any information you think may be helpful in the Centre's growth and development as an entity: "I think we do a very good job of making use of policies and procedures in a helpful way that allows for both structure and flexibility. I think our practice of re-visiting policies on a regular basis and as issues arise and our openness to create policy that works rather than policy for policy sake is very helpful, although I think it is important we recognize that this way of working is really unique and staff may need support when policies & practices are revisited."