

Supervisor Forums 10.17.23, morning and afternoon sessions

## **TEAM DYNAMICS AND TEAM BUILDING**

**PCANY facilitators:** Caroline Chant, Brigitte Grant, Carmen Rosario, and Ellen Butowsky

**Programs in Attendance:** Dutchess (3), Staten Island, North Country (3), Jefferson/Lewis (2), Orange, Chautauqua, Rockland, Bushwick, Otsego, Genesee, Broome (2), Morris Heights (2), Jamaica, Columbia/Greene, Sullivan, Madison (2), CAMBA (2) Albany (3), Steuben/Livingston (2), Schenectady, Ontario/Seneca/Yates, Suffolk/Nassau

**22 programs, 34 participants**

Notes combined from morning and afternoon sessions

### **Topic overview**

With so many new programs currently building their teams, and a fair bit of turnover and expansion with some of our longstanding programs, it seemed like a good time to focus on both team building and team dynamics.

**Large Group discussion:** What do you think is needed to create positive group dynamics?

- Clear and direct communication and expectations, creating space for professional development, attending to the parallel process, the ability to be self-reflective and supporting supervisors and PMs to enhance this skill, bringing positive leadership to the team- if the supervisors and PMs are positive it transfers over to the staff
- “Business in the front, party in the back”
- Team commitments have been helpful, especially revisiting them when new staff come on board.

**Break out groups** (30 minutes, groups of 4-5)

- Share your experiences with team building? What have you tried?
- What has worked for you?
- What challenges have you had?
- How have you found team building to be different or similar in times of stress/crisis.

**Groups shared one thing that stood out for them.** Most groups prefaced what they shared by first acknowledging the variety of experience and longevity in their group and the many ideas that were flying as they shared.

- Team building is not just one thing. When you work with humans, everything is multifaceted, and that makes it fun. Like the families we work with who are all unique, so are the personalities in our staff. There is no golden ticket. Remember everyone is different and needs different things. Ask for and listen to staff’s individual needs
- Learn from the past- what worked and what didn’t.
- Appreciated the situationally-based examples offered by each other. As supervisors/PMs, we have control over how WE react to situations. We can shift our mindsets.
- Teamsgiving- having a Thanksgiving celebration with the team, food is a great team builder. A once a year birthday celebration for all staff was done at a park in one site.
- Learning to set clear boundaries and expectations. Reinforcing that if you didn’t do this to start with, you can always go back and re-set them.
- Creative team meetings every month, rotating facilitation not just among management. Having an icebreaker at the start of each meeting and a reflective piece at the end of each.

- Community agreements came up multiple times as a great tool. Revisiting them quarterly so everyone (new and seasoned staff) are at the same place of understanding with them.
- Using HFA's "All about me" so people get to know non-work things about each other.
- Using an image board for team involvement in program planning.

**Some specific challenges were shared:**

- Having multiple sites and trying to feel like one program. There is sometimes a feeling of separation.
- Age differences among staff (early 20's to 70's in one site). There is a need to be sensitive to these dynamics (e.g. avoiding comments like "I can't believe you don't know that song.")
- Getting new staff comfortable with the team building activities; dynamics shift when people leave, "sometimes for the better" but there is still a need to pay attention to integrating people into the culture and figuring out what needs to change.
- Balancing team building with the requirements, like documentation.

**One supervisor asked if a list of everyone's favorite icebreakers/teambuilding activities could be shared.**

The facilitators will send an email requesting they get sent from those who have some to share. Once collected, they will either be added here, or on PCNY's TOL website.

Another supervisor offered, "I love these meetings. I wish they could happen more often."

At the end of the forums, participants were asked to put **a word or sentence into the chat describing their experience in the forum**

**Stress relieving**

**Inspiring**

**Enlightened**

**Supported**

**Helpful x many**

**grateful**

**supportive and informative**

**sense of community support**

**Thought provoking**

**encouraged**

**supportive x many**

**Feeling of community and support in being able to connect and share**

**Enjoyable. I like hearing new ideas**

**insightful**

**just perfect**

**Good quality time. Thank you so much for always being flexible and accommodating to us all.**

**Normalized**

**Motivating**

**Great ideas!!**

**New Ideas**

**Super helpful!**

**feels like we all experienced challenges and are doing the best we can, love the ideas**

**Refreshed**

**Informative and worthwhile very motivating**

**Great meeting, so much room for ACTIVITIES!**