

Building a School Special Education Team That Really Works

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Four Elements of resilient leadership

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship management

The Self-aware Leader

- Attuned to his/her inner signals
 - Self-reflection
- Manage and control emotions
 - Affect themselves, their job performance, their staff
- Knows strengths and limitations
- Self-confidence
 - Self-worth and capabilities
 - Vision

Self-management

- Emotional self-control
- Transparency
 - integrity
 - trustworthiness
- Flexible
 - can adapt to changing situations
- Initiative
 - Seizes opportunities
- Excellence
 - Education is on-going
- Resilient optimism

Social-Awareness: Your ability to sense, understand, and react to other's emotions.

- Empathetic
 - Attuned to how others feel

- Shared values and priorities
- Good communication skills
 - Listening
 - Accepting of others perspectives

Relationship Management: Ability to inspire, influence, and guide others during conflict/crises.

- Inspirational - a compelling vision
- Develops others - feedback, guidance, mentoring
- Change catalyst - initiates, manages, leads
- Conflict management
- Networking - builds bonds
- Team building and collaboration

Here are a few suggestions on bringing difficult team members back to the table:

- Consider having an open forum.
- Encourage people to voice concerns; be sure to lay down the ground rules of respect and listening without judgment.
- Acknowledge the person's right to criticize and to recognize the importance of the person's concerns.
- Find something to agree with.
- You don't need to say that you were wrong if you weren't, but it does do a lot for your own integrity to admit you were.

Sometimes we have to lose in order to ultimately win.

- Replace defensiveness with openness.
 - People get defensive when they feel threatened.
 - Let others know you respect their opinions, even if you don't agree with them.
- Remember: you set the beat, you determine the tone, you create the harmony.

Cohesiveness develops from a heightened sense of belonging, collaboration and interdependence. Cohesive teams have higher levels of satisfaction and lower levels of anxiety and tension.

Help your Gen Ed teachers to see where they can modify within the parameters of the IEP. Provide feedback, and acknowledge authorship. Authorship requires autonomy.

- Trusting people to solve problems generates higher levels of motivation and better solutions.
- People need to see their work as meaningful and worthwhile; to feel personally accountable for the consequences of their efforts.

The key to this is communication. The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place. (George Bernard Shaw) Effective communicators are people who can get things done and simultaneously build on relationships.

Less than 20% of communication is our words, the rest is body language, tone of voice. You must be aware of what you are saying, not only with your words, but what you “Say” with your body, with your tone.

Listening. The most important element of effective communication.

- Make every effort to be effective communicators.
 - Most conflicts start because people misunderstand one another. This is often followed by someone jumping to conclusions and making incorrect assumptions.
 - Be accepting of others perspectives
- Three Main Listening Skills:
 - Attending: Giving your physical (and mental) attention to another person.
 - Following: Stay engaged by using eye contact / un-intrusive gestures
 - nodding of your head
 - saying “Okay”
 - asking an infrequent question
 - Reflecting: Paraphrasing / reflecting, using the feelings of the other person. (empathy)

The team has to present a united front, particularly when meeting with parents. Letting parents know that we are in this together.

McKinsey & Company’s Centered Leadership Program distilled a leadership model that is comprised of five interrelated dimensions. (<http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/leadership/centered-leadership-how-talented-women-thrive>)

- **Meaning**, or finding your strengths and putting them to work in the service of an inspiring purpose.
- **Managing energy**, or knowing where your energy comes from, where it goes, and what you can do to manage it.
- **Positive framing**, or adopting a more constructive way to view your world, expand your horizons, and gain the resilience to move ahead even during conflict and crises.
- **Connecting**, or identifying who can help you grow, building stronger relationships, and increasing your sense — and your team’s sense — of belonging.
- **Engaging**, or finding your voice, becoming self-reliant and confident by accepting opportunities and the inherent risks they bring, and collaborating with others.

Mentoring/coaching is a good way to create more peer opportunities. When you can identify who are your strong team members, your exceptional players, encourage them to engage in this role.