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TRAINING IN OPTIMAL FUNCTIONING

In order to present the skills and principles of optimal functioning in a way in which participants can effectively utilize what they have learned in their day-to-day work, seven, two hour training modules were developed. The first module in the series is a prerequisite for the other six. This gateway training module is:

- A. **Becoming More Engaged and Effective – A Pathway to Purpose and Pleasure in your Work and Personal Life.** This initial offering will be an overview of the field with an emphasis on the foundational cognitive skills needed to benefit from the remaining modules. At the end of this training participants will be able to:
- Understand the guiding principles of positive psychology and their relation to optimal functioning.
 - Understand the nature of paradigms and their influence on perceived reality and stress.
 - Utilize a basic strategy for increasing self-awareness.
 - Distinguish between an internal vs. external locus of control in their thoughts, language, and behavior.
 - Utilize a basic strategy for cognitively restructuring ineffective thought patterns to increase their optimism.

The other six training modules are as follows:

- B. **Positive Attitudes in Difficult Situations – The Art of Coping Gracefully.** Stress is the spice of life. Just enough makes our life interesting and meaningful but too much can

suck the joy out of it. Staff will learn the critical skills to not just survive, but thrive from stress, both at work and at home. At the end of this training module participants will be able to:

- Understand the physiology of stress and the General Adaptation Syndrome.
- Utilize the basic strategies to restore homeostasis, including diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and meditation.
- Comprehend the stress hardiness attitudes and apply these both at home and at work.
- Utilize strategies to regulate emotions in the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains.

C. Positive Motivations – The Pursuit of Happiness in your Past, Present, and Future.

Research has shown that there is an optimal ratio of positive to negative emotions for effective functioning. Skills to increase the number of positive emotions and successfully cope with negative emotions are the focus of this training. At the end of this training module participants will be able to:

- Understand the role of positive emotions in allowing us to broaden and build upon our existing skills.
- Differentiate between factors that lead to happiness and those that do not.
- Utilize strategies to boost their happiness about the past, in the present, and toward their future.

D. Effective Communication – Ethos, Pathos, Logos. Building upon the ancient Greek principles of ethos, pathos, and logos, staff will be engaged in applying the power of trust, perceptiveness, empathy, active listening, and assertiveness in their everyday interactions. At the end of this training module participants will be able to:

- Utilize the concept of the emotional bank account as a means to build trust in relationships.
- Eliminate blocks to effective listening.
- Actively listen by using paraphrasing, clarifying, and rapport building to communicate a deeper emotional understanding within relationships.
- Utilize a four step strategy to effectively communicate personal needs and emotions while preserving the integrity of win-win scenarios.
- Recognize the importance of body language to congruent communication.

E. Developing Strong Team Relationships – The Ultimate Outcome of Emotional

Intelligence. The fundamental paradigm of the successful individual and organization is the ability to think win-win, especially when conflict arises. Using the skill groups of emotional intelligence to regulate emotions and build trust, perceptiveness, and empathy, staff will learn basic guidelines for resolving conflict, developing theory of mind, and promoting win-win solutions. At the end of this training module participants will be able to:

- Differentiate between win-win solutions and compromises.
- Understand the concept of theory of mind and use strategies to enhance empathic capacity.
- Integrate the skill groups of emotional intelligence in overcoming problems in the workplace and resolving conflicts.
- Understand the factors involved in building positive relationships while respecting appropriate interpersonal boundaries.

F. Strengths and Virtues – A Multicultural Look at Character. Across diverse cultures over time, similar virtues have been identified which are critical in developing character. Research suggests that optimal functioning depends more on building upon strengths than remediating weaknesses. Staff will have an opportunity to discover their signature strengths and apply approaches to improve these. At the end of this training module participant will be able to:

- Identify their signature strengths and discover ways to enhance these.
- Understand how other cultures build positive emotional states.
- Recognize the need to balance justice with forgiveness in maintaining ongoing positive relationships in the workplace.
- Utilize strategies to increase frustration tolerance and persistence in their pursuit of team and personal goals.

G. Enjoy Your Work More - The Power of Play in Learning New Skill Sets. By taking on the challenge of learning to juggle in a light hearted way, staff will gain a deep seated understanding of the power of play. At the end of this training module participants will be able to:

- Utilize strategies to increase the probability of creating flow, engagement, and peak productivity in their personal and work life.
- Recognize the importance of mentally enjoying an activity for its own sake as a pathway to concentration and highly focused attention.
- Practice strategies useful in the development of brain reserve, thereby maximizing the ability to learn new skills faster and more effectively.
- Understand the importance of relaxed concentration, reframing mistakes, and team building in creating optimal functioning.