

Staff Sexual Misconduct Agency Culture

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Introduction

- Sexual misconduct doesn't arise out of nowhere.
- It is embedded in culture.
- Addressing sexual misconduct is about cultural change.

What is Culture?

- It is an organization's way of life
- It is not inherent
- It is learned
- It is the sum of attitudes, prejudices, history, personalities and ethics of leaders and key staff, past and present.

Some Components of Culture

- Beliefs: Shared explanations of experience
 - Example: You can't be promoted unless you attend the Boss' Christmas party and tell a dirty limerick.
- Values: What is considered right and good.
 - Example: If it's offenders vs. staff, the decision supports the staff member.

Some Components of Culture

Continued..

- Norms: Shared rules, “the way things are done”
 - Example: Don’t volunteer for assignments
- So deeply held that they aren’t even noticed unless they are violated.
- Norms are often more powerful than formal sanctions (e.g. sanctions)

Ideal Vs. Real Culture

- Ideal : The values held in principle
 - Table of Organizations
 - Policy and Procedure
 - Formal incentives and sanctions
- Real: The way the culture really works
 - Hidden hierarchy
 - How things get done
 - Who people listen to

Some Influences on Culture

- History: critical events
- Hiring process: qualities sought, backgrounds considered, questions asked.
- Promotional process
- Role of middle manager
- Tone and style of the leader
- Staff-staff interactions
- Staff-offender dynamics

Some Influences on Culture

continued...

- Dress
- Language
- Disciplinary process

Imbalance of Power

- Hallmark of correctional settings
 - Both institutional and community
- Affects those who have it and those who don't
- Distorts communication and interactions
- Those without power will seek to gain control, to equalize the imbalance
- Sexual misconduct shifts the balance of power
(Offender has a secret on staff)

The Code of Silence

- Another feature of correctional settings
- Involves:
 - Non-cooperation with management in critical events
 - Protection of self and co-workers
- Staff will risk discipline rather than violate this powerful norm.

Another Factor: The Context of Supervision

- May differ in community vs. Institutional Settings
 - Degree of Isolation
 - Amount of Flexibility and Independence
 - Policy and Practice

Sexualized Work Environment

- Lack of appropriate boundaries
- Examples:
 - E-mail
 - Jokes
 - Favoritism
- Can be identified on walk through
 - Non-verbal interactions (how close people stand, whether they touch etc.)

Sexualized Work Environment

- Begins with staff-staff interplay
- Offenders learn it by observing and listening to staff.

Key Question

- To what extent is informal culture aligned with and supportive of formal culture?
 - Task is to get it aligned and keep it aligned

How to Address an Unhealthy Work Environment: Change the Culture

- Establish a vision: make it a priority
- Redefine the issue:
 - It's not about sex, it's about public safety and security.
 - Public safety and security are compromised whenever boundaries breakdown and become personal/intimate.
 - Sexual misconduct is the most extreme form of violation of boundaries.

How to Address an Unhealthy Work Environment: Change the Culture

- Educate staff
 - For managers: there is liability
 - For supervisors and line staff: it's a security/
public safety issue
 - It is part of professionalism.
 - No more acceptable than for dentist/patient,
priest/parishioners, law enforcement/motorist

How to Address such an Environment: Change the Culture

- Make it clear that you take it seriously
 - Zero tolerance must mean zero tolerance
 - Consequence: Something has to happen to someone.
- Model the behavior
 - The culture will not tolerate hypocrisy.