

Thriving Together: Fostering Organizational Wellness in Rural Behavioral Health Settings

Part 1: Organizational Commitment to the Culture of Care

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University of North Dakota
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Mountain Plains (HHS Region 8)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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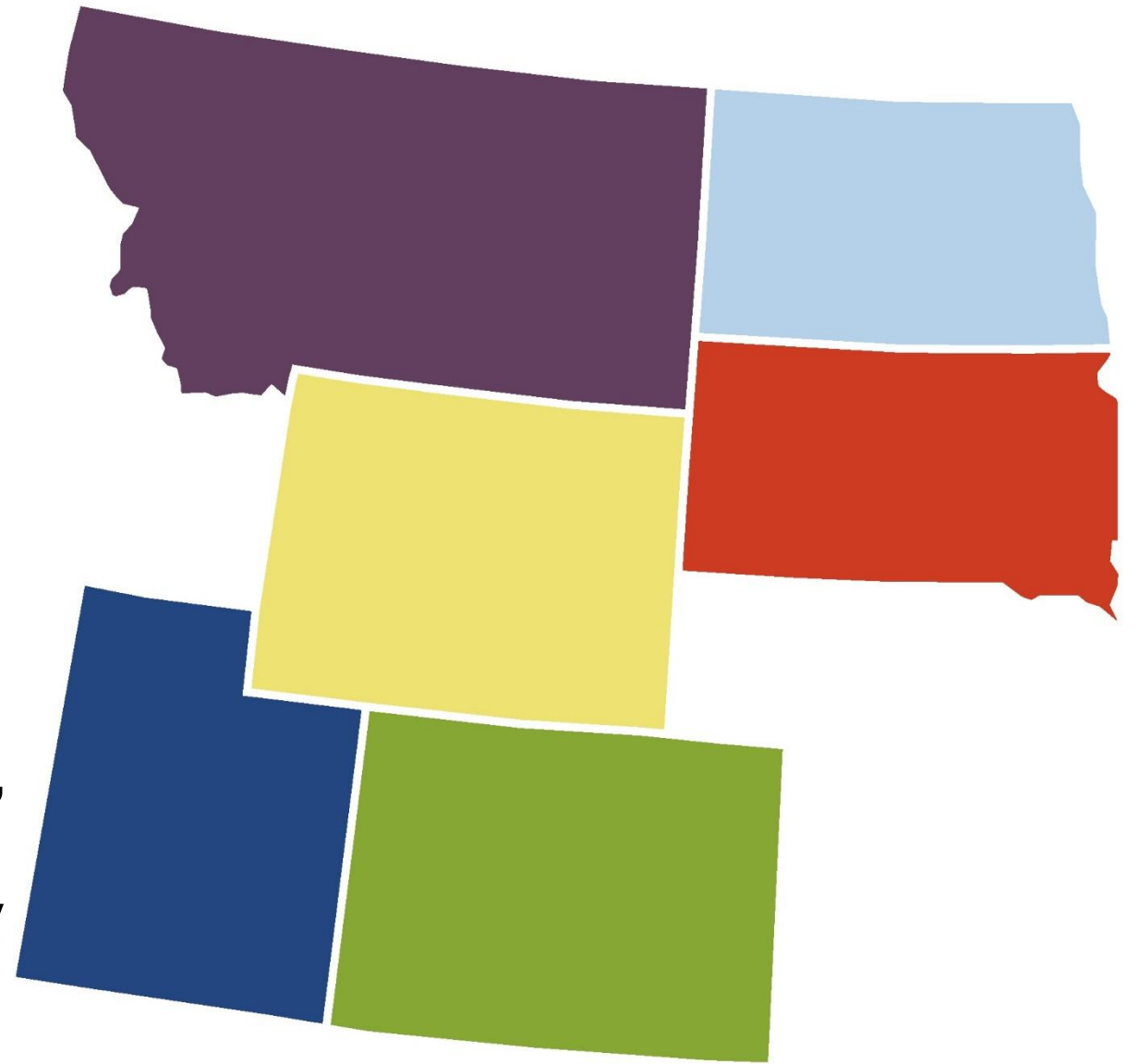
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The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

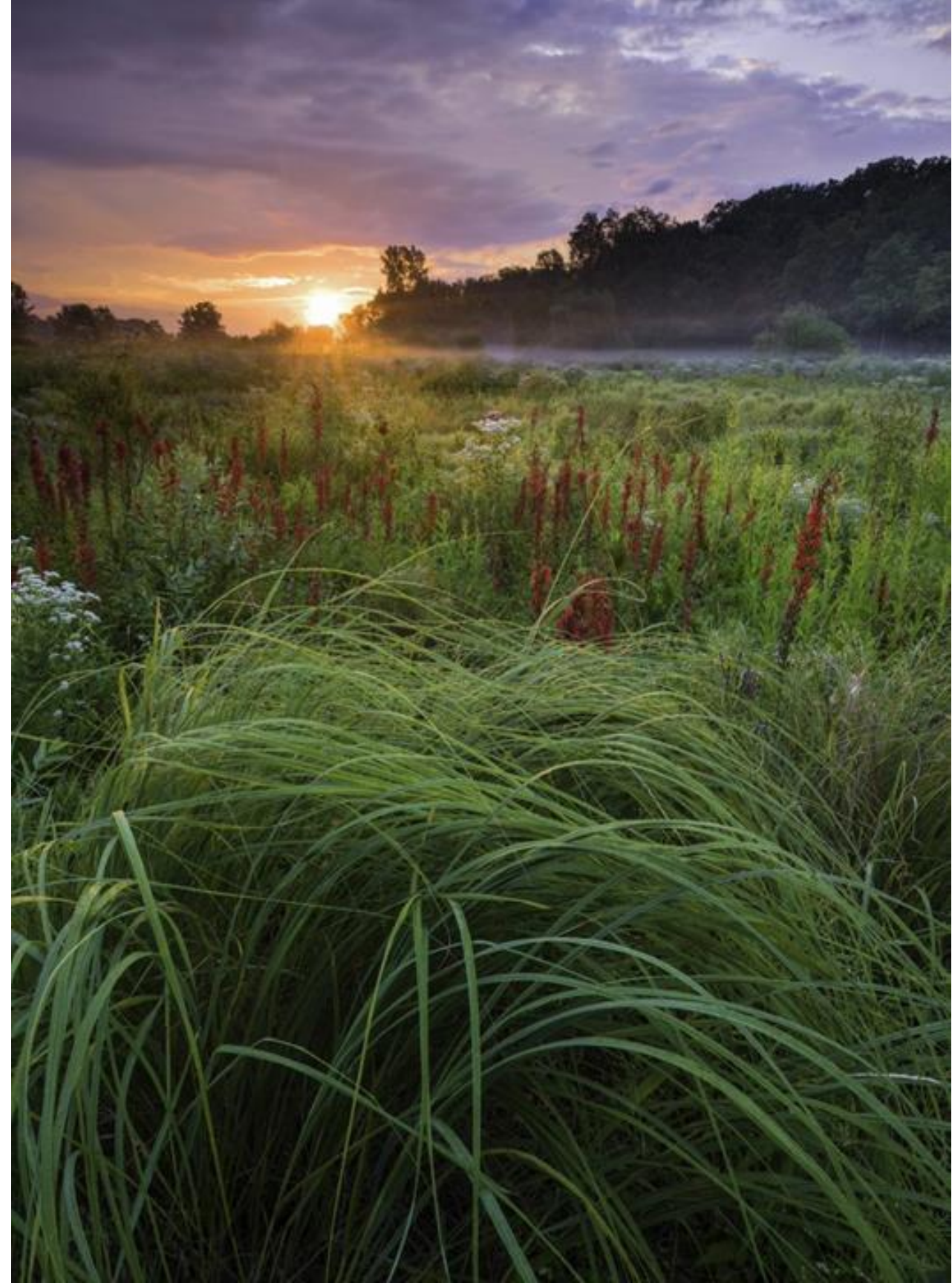
The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (Mountain Plains MHTTC) provides training and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental health concerns throughout Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming).

We belong to the Technology Transfer Center (TTC) Network, a national network of training and technical assistance centers serving the needs of mental health, substance use and prevention providers. The work of the TTC Network is under a cooperative agreement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).



Land Acknowledgement Statement

Today, the University of North Dakota rests on the ancestral lands of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe and the Dakota Oyate - presently existing as composite parts of the Red Lake, Turtle Mountain, White Earth Bands, and the Dakota Tribes of Minnesota and North Dakota. We acknowledge the people who resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Ojibwe and Oyate people permeates this land. As a university community, we will continue to build upon our relations with the First Nations of the State of North Dakota - the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.



The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND
ACCEPTING OF
DIVERSE CULTURES,
GENDERS,
PERSPECTIVES,
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

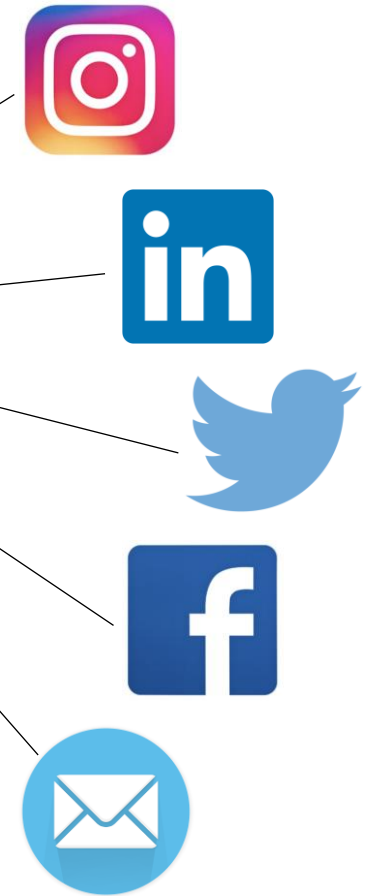
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How do we recruit and retain a
resilient rural mental
health workforce?

We focus on.....

Wellbeing and Wellness

Relationship of Organizational and Personal Wellbeing



Practical Strategies for Promoting Organizational Wellness

- **Organizational Commitment to a Culture of Care**
- **Compassionate Leadership**
- **Assessment of Organizational Culture & Climate**



Today's Learning Objectives

- Define the components of a Culture of Care within an organization and its impact on staff retention and morale.
- Identify effective communication strategies for promoting a Culture of Care and fostering collaboration among staff members.
- Analyze strategies for fostering Organizational Commitment to a Culture of Care, including leadership involvement and staff engagement initiatives.

Components of a Culture of Care

What is an “Organizational Culture of Care”?

- “An environment where **every individual** feels **valued, supported, and part of a community** that genuinely cares about their well-being and performance improves.” (DX Team)
- “A caring culture is an organizational culture in which **leaders consistently** act in ways that **help team members to thrive**, and **team members** consistently act in ways that **help other team members to thrive**. As a result, the organization is able to care very well for customers. To create a culture where everyone on the team is **committed to helping each other** reach their fullest potential and experience real personal growth, the leaders must consistently model caring behaviors.” (Business Leadership Today)

“Organizational Culture of Care” Components

Empathy

Inclusivity

Professionalism

Respect

Mutual Support

Positive
Communication

Compassionate
Leadership

Shared Values
and Mission

Employee
Development


Employee Voice

Recognition

Impact on Staff Retention and Morale

- Less turnover / Increased Retention
- Less Absenteeism
- Less Presenteeism
- Less Conflict
- More productivity
- Greater Job Satisfaction
- Increased compassionate care behaviors
- Increased Organizational Commitment
- Increased Individual Wellbeing





Strategies & Interventions for Demonstrating an Organizational Commitment to a Culture of Care

Organizational Commitment to a Culture of Care

Start with Recruitment

- Effective and fair human resources processes
 - Accessible and reasonable application process for the applicant
 - Equitable evaluation, interview, and selection processes of applications
- Interview day
 - set aside time for an informal meet and greet with current employees who will not be the job candidate's direct supervisors and who do not hold executive director or administrative roles

Organizational Commitment to a Culture of Care

Establish Organizational Rituals and Traditions



Starting each staff meeting with “good” or “new” news that folks would like to share with the group



Monthly social events during the workday (e.g., coffee chats, short group-based scavenger hunts, trivia games, brown bag lunch socials, etc.)



Establish birthday and work anniversary traditions (make sure to ask each staff about their comfort level with this activity)

Organizational Commitment to a Culture of Care

Make Meaningful Investments in People



GENEROUS BENEFITS



PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



ONGOING FORMAL
MENTORSHIP AND/OR
COACHING

Organizational Commitment to a Culture of Care

Hold people accountable with care



Set clear expectations for yourself and your team



Maintain attention on the goal through reviewing progress in 1:1s and team meetings



Create psychological safety aka do not expect perfection



Provide coaching when needed



Provide constructive and solution-oriented responses to missteps.



Communication Strategies for Establishing and Maintaining a Culture of Care



Effective Communication Strategies

- Use authenticity and transparency
- Be mindful of tone and body language
- Be clear, cohesive, complete, concise, and concrete (Five C's)
- Actively listen to others
- Allow for silence
- Provide relevant, specific, and targeted information
- Give consistent, regular, and public updates
- Seek to solve conflicts (not create them)
- Find out what strategies are working and what are not
- Re-empathize vision and mission



Fostering Collaboration

- Engage in co-creation
- Listen and Learn from one another
- Provide opportunities for team bonding
- Highlight team successes
- Set goals collaboratively
- Be flexible
- Lead by Example
- Encourage and accept feedback without fear of judgement or retribution
- Provide mentorship and coaching
- Arrange for opportunities for professional development
- Create a communication and/or collaboration plan





Components of a Collaboration Plan

1. Rationale for team approach & team configuration
2. Collaboration readiness
3. Technological readiness
4. Team Functioning
5. Communication & Coordination
6. Leadership, Management, & Administration
7. Conflict prevention & management
8. Training
9. Quality Improvement activities
10. Resource Allocation

Hall et al. (2014)

Leadership Involvement in Cultures of Care

(Haskins, 2020)

Help other become known

- Advocate for them
- Connect them to others
- Let them shine



Inquire beyond the job

- Provide encourage when staff are managing difficult or charging life circumstances
- Get to know staff with intentionality
- Participate in social events
- Inquire about what structures and resources would help to improve their work-life balance
- Acknowledge and challenge possible stereotypes you may have and actively dispel them by getting to know staff



Celebrate when you can:

- Look for reasons to celebrate
- Honor excellent individual contributions
- Nominate low-profile staff for awards
- Underscore sense of being seen and valued
- Find occasions to express gratitude about small day-to-day things



Assist and be an example

- Provide additional work resources during high stress times
- Ask for, listen to, and defer to staff expertise when possible
- Extend grace for an error or mistake
- Circle back with information on significant questions and requested raised by staff





Run the “High” road

- Avoid ridicule, belittling, gossip, cynicism, and pessimism
- Speak honest and hard truths
- Do not tolerate toxic people
- Eliminate insincere content in all conversations
- Trust staff to be honest and good stewards of organizational resources
- Follow through on promises

Encourage & support multi-faceted learning

- Invite ideas
- Listen for silence
- Provide regular “stretch” work-related assignments
- Encourage community services
- Invite, discuss, and endorse learning opportunities





Staff Engagement Initiatives in Cultures of Care





Definition & Importance

- **Definition of Staff Engagement:**
 - The emotional commitment an employee has towards the organization and its goals.
- **Importance in Cultures of Care:**
 - Enhances employee satisfaction and retention.
 - Improves patient outcomes and overall quality of care.
 - Fosters a supportive and collaborative work environment.

Key Staff Engagement Initiatives

- **Regular Training and Development:**
 - Continuous learning opportunities.
 - Certification programs and workshops.
- **Recognition and Reward Programs:**
 - Employee of the month awards.
 - Public recognition and bonuses.
- **Effective Communication Channels:**
 - Open-door policies.
 - Regular staff meetings and feedback sessions.
- **Wellness Programs:**
 - Stress management workshops.
 - Physical health initiatives like gym memberships.



Measuring & Sustaining Staff Engagement

- **Measuring Engagement:**
 - Regular staff surveys and feedback forms.
 - Key performance indicators (KPIs) like attendance rates and turnover.
- **Sustaining Engagement:**
 - Continuous improvement based on feedback.
 - Leadership commitment to fostering a culture of care.
 - Employee involvement in decision-making processes.



Take Home Messages about Building and Maintaining Cultures of Care

- Starts with recruitment and maintained by investing in people
- Calls for effective communication and collaboration
- Lead by example
- Engage Staff

Questions?