

TIP SHEET FOR MANAGERS JOY IN WORK IMPLEMENTATION



Tip Sheet

Joy in Work for Local Health Department Managers



Origins in Authenticity

JOY IN WORK has to come from an authentic place of wanting to create a

team and workplace environment that is positive and supportive. Staff can sense when initiatives, however seemingly well-meaning, come from a place other than in their best interest. Spend time and effort exploring why JOY IN WORK is important to you, and in your context and be very transparent about the reasons behind your JOY IN WORK goals and objectives. Ideally, JOY IN WORK efforts are tied to managers' passions for creating positive work environments so that each team member can thrive.



People First

The phrase, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care" rings true for JOY IN WORK. When managers and staff have genuine empathy and

demonstrate care and concern for each other as people first, before the work, the potential for JOY IN WORK to thrive increases exponentially.



Be Intentional

Teams will need time, space and guided opportunities to explore possibilities to create JOY IN WORK. It takes effort. Be intentional, carve out time and space to think about, reflect and plan for it. Reinforce sentiments that JOY IN WORK is a necessity (not just nice to have) and JOY IN WORK is more about being versus doing a lot of new things.



JOY IN WORK Doesn't Always Look Joyful

JOY IN WORK is a misnomer it doesn't always "show up" with outward traditional expressions of joy. Where and how managers and staff find joy varies, some may find joy outside of work that bolsters their

ability to face challenges at work. There are many different expressions of JOY IN WORK and there is no right or wrong way to experience it. What's important is that everyone knows that they matter, how they honestly experience their life at work is valued and personal fulfillment in work is considered relevant and important.



Shared Ownership

JOY IN WORK is a shared leadership opportunity. Managers can't "own" creating team cultures that

support JOY IN WORK, but they can help model and take some initial steps to build momentum. Everyone is responsible for their own joy and every team member plays an important role in contributing to other team members' JOY IN WORK experience. Related, managers need to be able to communicate when they have reached their own limits and deserve opportunity and space to "not express joy" as no one is expected to be relentlessly positive. Give yourself grace to just feel what you genuinely feel as you support your team.



Looking Inward

Managers need opportunities to strengthen their own personal JOY IN

WORK experience. They also need encouragement and support from senior leaders, peers and staff to intentionally find balance between

taking care of themselves as well as supporting the team, not minimizing their own emotional needs. Modeling how to take ownership of their own JOY IN WORK experience is key. Making effort to do continual introspective work better prepares managers to use a lens of joy as they support staff.



Prototype, Test, Iterate, Scale + Customize

There is no one size fits all way to design and implement JOY IN WORK for local health

departments. Gain insights from your staff and identify ideas to try out. Start by prototyping ideas on a small scale. Test them out with a few people, learn from what you saw, and adapt. Seek feedback and be flexible to refine what works and discard what doesn't. Encourage everyone to try new things and learn as you go.



A Layer Approach

A combination approach is often required to significantly change

the system of workplace culture but even small, initial manager-led efforts can make a lasting difference. Examples of tiered approaches include (1) fun group activities which are often one offs and can really spur some camaraderie and fun spiritedness (i.e., hot chocolate day), (2) initial and regular *What Matters to You* conversations with individual staff and teams that demonstrate empathy and

support (i.e., *What was the best part of your week last week?*, and (3) lasting changes (i.e., incorporating JOY IN WORK strategies into meeting structures; dedicating physical spaces for decompression or private telehealth appointments).



Appreciation Matters

Personalize staff recognition efforts so that they align with individual preferences. Not everyone enjoys being thanked for their extra efforts

in front of others, for example. This takes a bit of research and trial and error. Encourage staff to recognize one another for contributions and provide a few supports to make it easier such as having an in-person, virtual, or text-based appreciation board for staff to write notes to one another.



Maintaining Boundaries

As managers, showing care for staff well-being and their overall experience at work involves finding a balance between caring

enough and over-stepping. Let staff decide how much to share. If conversations feel private, it's a good idea to talk about confidentiality openly. If managers are uncomfortable with the level or context of sharing, seek support from leadership or human resources if available.

Set expectations that you are listening and thankful for the sharing but you can't solve all challenges brought forward. Continue to emphasize the goal of the conversation is to learn more about their experience and areas for improvement, course correction or action-taking will be considered later.

If staff disclose mental health struggles share available supports and resources available through your organization. Help facilitate opportunities for them to access any care that they may benefit from such as providing a provide space for telehealth appointments.



Promote Positive Discourse

People are human and sometimes we say things that may come across as

insensitive or even offensive, contributing to tension among colleagues. Managers can normalize conflict as being a healthy demonstration of people expressing different points of views when appropriate. Managers should also quickly course correct if comments could be hurtful or demoralizing and help re-establish positive interactions. Deeper understanding of one another can only take place with a foundation of psychological safety and trust. Reinforcing that as a team we assume positive intentions from one another, and we give grace wherever possible.



Managing Up

Managers can independently adopt many JOY IN WORK approaches and can experience positive

results without explicit support from high levels of leadership. Occasionally, managers may need to request resources to support JOY IN WORK activities that may require buy-in from senior leadership. As JOY IN WORK efforts progress to making changes to how the organization

functions (i.e., creating private spaces for decompression sessions; establishing peer liaisons for mental health supports) managers may need adaptive strategies to advocate for JOY IN WORK priorities to senior leadership in ways that result in facilitative support and not unnecessary barriers. Consider taking small actions or piloting new efforts to create small successes that can be scaled.



Creative Thinking

JOY IN WORK is a body of work to support the public health workforce so that they can thrive individually and together in their work. Models borrowed from fields such as behavioral health, social work, counseling and mental health may be more effective than traditional ways of thinking and organizing work in public health. Similarly, evaluation efforts should be centered around learning what does and doesn't work in a given local health department or team versus prioritizing measuring progress or improvements. As such, qualitative methods such as stories, key informant interviews and reflections may be useful for process evaluation purposes.



Honor Differences in Work Functions

Take some time to understand how different roles and functions impact individuals on your team. There are considerations that should be made for staff who are more likely to experience work-related trauma, emergency or emotionally charged situations. Building opportunities for group or individual debriefs where staff can be supported as they process events that transpired is one strategy. JOY IN WORK activities may need adaptation for unique situations, in-person- hybrid -remote, neurodiversity, generational differences, or additional circumstances. YES & thinking is needed for JOY IN WORK to thrive. Not everything works for everyone. Some staff need more wellness supports, others need engagement and others need recognition. Some staff need supportive efforts for mental health effects from work challenges/trauma.