



DSHS/Special Commitment Center

Addressing Employee Concerns



Thank you for your input. We have listened to what you have to say and we will work hard to address your concerns.

This year 433 staff responded to the 2007 SCC Employee Survey, 92% of all staff compared to 378 staff responding in 2006 (78% response rate).

Many of the survey results are encouraging and help us to recognize areas where improvements need to be made.

Staff were very generous with their comments and this will be a valuable resource in our attempts to assess our needs and progress. Among the things most often cited as rewarding at SCC were the challenging work, support from the immediate supervisor, and frequent opportunities for learning. One of the issues most often commented on as needing improvement was communication at all levels, but especially from upper administration to other staff levels.

Many staff comments would make great goals for this year. The SCC employee action plan identifies several agency-wide areas to focus our improvement efforts.

Thank you for the energy and forthrightness that is reflected in your comments. From them, I can read your clear commitment to a better workplace for all of us and a better program for the residents and citizens of Washington State.

– Henry Richards, Ph.D. , Superintendent

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Strengths: Employees appreciate their jobs, their supervisors and their co-workers

Employees say:

"I like the ongoing changes in everyday tasks. Being able to work independently and make processes more effective, efficient and practical. Being able to branch out into different arenas. Being tasked to have an impact on the direction the agency is going."

"I really enjoy my supervisor and the fact that she's so open and available to address issues and concerns."

"I have the best of both worlds professionally. I am able to guide and help with growth in those I supervise while being able to implement changes for a positive outcome for the facility I work at. I also continue to be able to interact with residents in a therapeutic manner which for me is crucial for motivation and continued job interest."

"I like the co-workers I work with and being on the security team."

"I like working in the high management program area, teamwork, and co-workers are great."

"I like working with a large diverse variety of people with different backgrounds, race, ages and experience."

Over 70% of employees responded "Always or Usually" to these statements:

- I know what is expected of me at work. – 71%
- My supervisor holds me and my co-workers accountable for performance. – 70%

Over 50% of employees responded "Always or Usually" to these statements:

- I know how my work contributes to the goals of my agency. – 59%
- My supervisor treats me with dignity and respect. – 66%
- My supervisor gives me ongoing feedback that helps me improve my performance. – 51%

Employees responded satisfactorily to the narrative questions regarding:

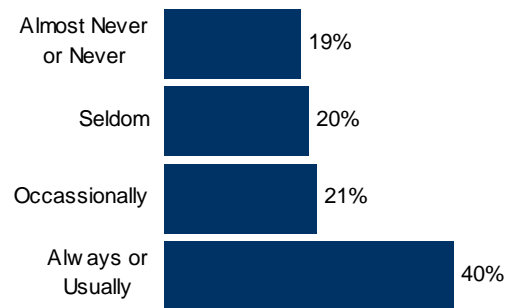
- Job characteristics – 74% of staff that commented are satisfied
- Helping and Working with Clients – 96% of staff that commented are satisfied
- Co-Worker – 83% of staff that commented are satisfied with their co-workers
- Autonomy and Growth Opportunity – 79% of staff that commented are satisfied





Focus Issue 1: More Effective Communication

Question: *I have the opportunity to give input on decisions affecting my work.*



Employees say:

"I would like all of the information, both hard copies and Internet information, to be updated. I find it extremely difficult to receive accurate information because most of the resources are outdated."

"There needs to be much better communication between the leadership and the staff, among the staff, and between the different organizational elements at SCC."

"I would like to see our administration play a more active role in interacting with the rest of the staff. I would like to see the communication process from the top down improve drastically. I would like to see clear expectations provided."

Summary of the Issue

In the past year, SCC has made a great effort to increase communication and to request input from employees on proposed changes. This initiative was prompted by our previous survey. In the current survey, many employees acknowledge that communication has increased, but that some of the decisions were made without using some of the employees' suggestions. Some of you would like to see better communication across the different departments. Others want to see better communication among co-workers and between supervisors and employees. Some of you want employees to be given the opportunity to personally present ideas and issues specific to their work at management meetings. There were employees that wanted to see more open communication between staff in all departments and those that wanted to hear of changes from management while the changes are being formulated and prior to implementation.

What we're already doing

- Posting SCC job announcements on the SCC Intranet to ensure that all staff are aware of new job openings.
- Sharing information related to changes in SCC policies via the SCC Intranet.
- Created a management "Kudos" webpage to share staff's accomplishments.

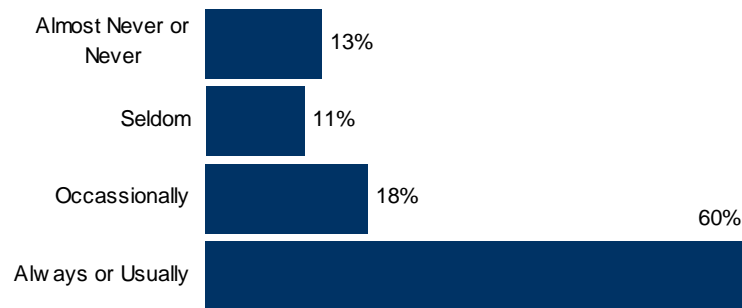
Our plan for the coming year:

- Schedule problem-solving groups (consisting of 4 supervisors or managers and 4 line staff across various areas)
 - Each group will work on a set of issues that are SCC-wide for at least 1 hour, once a month
- Create a Communications workgroup (consisting of staff from all areas and all levels) that will:
 - Develop a SCC Communications webpage (this page will have shared information from all departments, contain "bios" of our employees, and have shared stories, as well as, fun thoughts of the day)



Focus Issue 2: Building a Culture of Accomplishment

Question: *I know how my work contributes to the goals of the agency.*



Employees say:

"I would like a workplace with better qualified people with the knowledge and skills of the facility."

"I would like to see some opportunities to transfer from this work site to someplace like JRA, we have nothing here to support a career track."

"I would like for management to take a more proactive position in setting appropriate standards for the staff at SCC. In my opinion, many of our employees work the system in a way that allows unacceptable behavior to go without discipline."

"There needs to be greater support for RRC staff to be trained to support treatment progress for residents at the SCC."

"I would like a workplace free of discrimination and favoritism. A place I can be proud to work at where I am treated with dignity and MUTUAL RESPECT by my Supervisor."

"SCC needs more of a team effort throughout all areas of SCC. Working together as one, not separately."

Summary of the Issue

In this survey feeling and being connected to the SCC mission was missing for many SCC employees. Many employees expressed feeling that they did not get enough clear guidance or feedback to know when they had done a good job. 45% of employees felt that they receive the information they need to do their jobs effectively, where 26% did not. Others want to see more training opportunities and consistent advancement for growth.

What we're already doing

- Improving Performance Evaluations completion
- Giving staff the opportunity to participate in or work on:
 - Wellness Committee, Combined Fund Drive, Transformational Leadership Program
 - A.R.I.S.E. Completion
 - Mentoring and Peer Training

Our plan for the coming year:

- Develop opportunities for staff to experience and celebrate well-defined accomplishments through:
 - Kudos and Appreciation Webpage (this will allow all SCC staff to input appreciation at any given time, information is automatically updated and all will be able to view)
 - Time-limited projects
 - Specific responsibilities or more complex tasks
 - Begin Partnership for Excellence (a program of 4 half day sessions created to develop employees and give them the skills needed to take SCC to an achievement oriented culture).



Other important issues



There are many other important issues that were raised during the survey that we were not able to include in this action plan. This does not mean that these additional issues are not important or will not be considered in some way. The following are additional issues raised by the survey and our plan to address them.

These are also important issues

- Fairness—In promotional opportunities, on the job experiences, and hiring
- Absenteeism—Driving the need for required overtime
- Career Path- It is unclear how to get ahead from where I am

Our plan

- Make the promotional process more transparent by posting all promotional opportunities, having interview panels that are diverse in regard to multiple departments and discussing on the job training experiences with several candidates.
- Encourage and support advance scheduling of leave by making timely decisions and providing planned coverage.
- Evaluate the need for new position types that bridge clinical and residential disciplines.
- Promote training that is highly transferable to other settings.
- Provide on-site educational opportunities that support key task such as report writing.

We do appreciate your participation in this survey. Your voices have been heard. Although we will not be able to address each individual idea brought forward, we will respond to the overall issues and work with you to improve our organization.