



WALK IN MY SHOES

Solution

Why...

What a wonderfully diversified collection of talent it takes to operate a healthcare organization. From plumbers to technicians of all sorts, from folks who run the revenue cycle to those who run the boilers, from those who prepare the meals to those who prepare high-tech infusions, from those who have their hands on the patients to those who never even see a patient.

Everyone's job is important, or else it wouldn't exist.

Not surprisingly, as employees, leaders, or providers, we often understand and experience only a small portion of the roles of others who work within the organization as we go about our day-to-day responsibilities. When others are "out of sight and out of mind," we can feel disconnected from their importance and contributions, and this may lead to diminished respect, appreciation, and empathy for these departments and the people within them. And then, when those situations do arise when we must work together, it can be a bit more challenging.


And the more informed we are, the better able we are to "manage up" other departments and people.

What ...

A "Walk in my Shoes" is an organized effort to enlighten the workforce as to the diverse roles and responsibilities of the various job functions and departments within the organization. In some organization, the name may be different (e.g., "A Day in the Life," etc.)

In essence, it is an effort that helps to expose the answers to questions that often circle in the minds of the workforce; questions such as "I wonder what they do all day? or night?" "Why is that job even needed?" "I wonder what skills are most needed to work in that department or role?"





“ If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from his angle as well as your own.”

- Henry Ford

How...

It is recommended that an employee-driven effort, such as via the Employee Training and Communication Team as part of their action plan, commit to creating, continuing, and improving a “Walk in My Shoes” program that includes a process for monthly focuses on specific departments and/or job roles.

It is up to the creativity of the employee-driven team to determine how best to create these “Walk in My Shoes”-type experiences and then communicate them to everyone in the entire organization.

Some examples for the team to consider as they create or improve such a program are included below. As always, teams are encouraged to “make it yours, and make it better” – meaning, “how can you take one or more of the ideas below and “one up them” to create something special and unique for your organization?”


EXAMPLE 1

Virtual Walk in My Shoes

- ▶ The Employee Training & Communication Team will select department and/or job roles to be featured each month.
- ▶ The department to be featured will be notified 2 months prior to being featured.
- ▶ The department will develop a slide or video presentation approximately 5-10 minutes in length. This brief presentation won't be able to include every little thing yet should include the highlights that help others to understand what life is like in a typical day.
- ▶ The department's presentation is to be sent to the Employee Training & Communication Team 2 weeks prior to the start of the assigned month so it can be formatted and uploaded to HealthStream system.
- ▶ The department's presentation will be circulated to everyone via the



HealthStream system from the first day of the month through the last day of the month.



“Where there's no mutual respect, there is trouble.”
- Dizzie Gillespie

EXAMPLE 2

Walk in My Shoes – Role Swap

- ▶ The Employee Training & Communication Team will select 2 departments and/or job roles to be featured each month.
- ▶ The departments/roles to be featured will be notified 1 month prior to being featured.
- ▶ One employee from each of the two selected departments will coordinate a 1 hour “job shadow” in each other's departments. (e.g., one employee from housekeeping goes to pharmacy for an hour ... than one employee from pharmacy goes to housekeeping for an hour).
- ▶ In that hour, each employee observes and asks questions to understand what it's like to “be in their shoes”
- ▶ After these experiences, each employee is to answer the questions (see below) ... based on the instructions of the Employee Training & Communication Team. This can either be in writing (for a newsletter or flyer, and maybe include some pictures) or captured on video (most often, it is on video, like they are being interviewed, but the employees know the questions and have thought about their answers already).
- ▶ The Employee Training & Communication Team will work with these employees to collect the information from their experiences and package the information in a way that it can be delivered to all employees.

Job Shadow / Role Swap Questions

1. *Your name, who did you shadow/position, in which department*
2. *What did you find most interesting?*
3. *How was this position different from what you thought it would be?*
4. *What happened that you didn't expect?*
5. *What aspects of this job seem challenging?*
6. *In what ways are their department and/or jobs like yours?*
7. *What are the education requirements to work in this job or department?*
8. *What other departments does this unit interact with often to do their work?*



9. How did they use ISBARQ handoff protocol?
10. How do they use Teach Back?

Based on the practice of The Richland Hospital, Richland Center, WI.

