



Solution

## Standards of Behavior

*When it comes to behavior, what we accept is what we teach, what we permit, we promote, and what we allow will continue.*

### *What...*

A set of standards that clearly describe the behavior expectations as to how to conduct ourselves and treat others. The standards demonstrate a balanced approach for behaviors related to quality and safety, customer service, people, growth, finance, and community and are aligned with the organization's values.

An organization's Standards of Behaviors could be referenced, labeled, or branded with another name (e.g., "Vernon Virtues" "I-CARE Standards, DRIVE Standards).

### *Why...*

When people know and understand what's expected, they can monitor themselves and take more responsibility for behaviors in support of a civil, respectful, supportive, and encouraging work environment.

### *How...*

Tactics for bringing Standards of Behavior "alive" in an organization:

- ▶ Role model the desired behaviors - to do this, get to know the standards, commit to them, aspire to them, review them often
- ▶ Every interaction is a new opportunity to choose the better behaviors defined in the standards
- ▶ Appreciate the great behaviors of those around you by taking the time to recognize others
- ▶ Consider which behaviors you may struggle with, and one-by-one, focus on improving them. Catch yourself when your behaviors are not in keeping with the standards and choose the better behaviors more often.
- ▶ Have more constructive conversations about behaviors in the workplace, even being willing to give and receive "call-outs" when behaviors are not in keeping with the standards.



Since the majority of people that will be upholding the standards are employees, it is recommended that a representative group of employees create (and update every few years) these standards. Therefore, this is on the action plan of the Employee Experience Team to lead this effort (with input from the Patient Experience Team for the patient experience related standards of behavior, including developing a standard of behavior that references the Positive Communication Standards).

If your Employee Experience Team is very new to your organization, this can be a GREAT first project for them to “gel” as a team. And since this team will ongoingly lead efforts toward keeping the standards “alive” as well, they will have more ownership of the standards after engaging in the creation or updating process.

- ▶ Do not create a standard for something that people will not be held accountable to. It is better to have no standard related to that behavior, than to have a standard that isn't upheld. Gain leadership support and approval, via the Steering Team, for the employee-driven efforts to create the newly minted or updated standards prior to making them official.
- ▶ Standards of behavior should be simply stated and as specific as possible in order to set people up for success in understanding and upholding the standards.
- ▶ Standards are often organized into categories of behaviors (e.g., quality & safety, communication, commitment to coworkers/teamwork, finance, etc.; or possibly grouped by the organization's values).
- ▶ An organization's Standards of Behaviors could be referenced, labeled, or branded with another name (e.g., “Vernon Virtues” “I-CARE Standards, DRIVE Standards) and a symbol/logo may be created that represent the standards.



- ▶ Standards of behavior define how we do want employees, leaders and physicians to behave. Works Rules define how we do not want those groups of people to behave. In other words, behavioral standards are written in the positive, while a work rule is usually written in the negative, such as in these examples:
  - Sleeping while on duty is forbidden in any instance (Work Rule)
  - I will be open to give help, ask for help and accept help. (Behavior Standard)



- ▶ While leaders should also strive to the standards of behavior created for all, there may also be a need or desire to create an additional set of additional standards for specific leadership behaviors. This may also be desired for providers.

Once the standards are developed, an organization-wide commitment event is an event that signifies that “it is a new day” in the organization . . . a future of everyone striving to uphold high standards. This is a time for all leaders, employees and providers to commit to the standards and to celebrate the start of a new culture. Consider having leaders go first (led by your CEO) in committing to the standards, as leaders are never too busy or important to demonstrate their commitment and then role model adherence to the standards.

- ▶ A commitment event often has some sort of “symbolic” show of commitment, maybe the signing of a banner, the receiving of a pin or special name badge, etc. that remains after the event is over.
- ▶ An organization-wide re-commitment event may be desired when major revisions are made to the standards or at specific intervals (every 3 or so years).
- ▶ Targeted standards can be part of a department-specific commitment event if a department is struggling with specific behaviors.
- ▶ New employee orientation can also include a commitment-type event for a group of new hires; or, individual applicants can be required to commit to the standards prior to being offered an interview.
- ▶ The standards could become part of union contract(s), if applicable, and when union members ratify/sign a new agreement, it signifies commitment to the incorporated standards.
- ▶ As part of the annual employee evaluation/appraisal process each year, a self-assessment and leader-assessment of behaviors prior to their annual evaluation, and then the leaders have an opportunity to discuss and set goals with employees on their behaviors, as well as indicate re-commitment to the standards.
- ▶ Provider re-commitment to the standards could also be included as part of the re-privileging process in organizations that have such a process.

*“Behavior is the mirror in which everyone shows their image.”*

- Johann Wolfgang von Goeth

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The Employee Experience team throughout the years ahead will provide “top of mind” reminders regarding the standards through awareness/reminder campaigns in keeping with the communication/training methods organized by the Employee Training & Communication Team.

Selecting one standard, a small sub-set of standards, or entire category of standards each month to emphasize organization-wide is recommended. Leaders can also do the same in their department(s), selecting those standards that are most important to emphasize or elevate in their specific

Training and campaigning are “forever” tactics when it comes to elevating behaviors. Don't ever go quiet on standards by declaring victory too soon or considering it a “one and done” tactic. Behavior change is the hardest change of all. And, behaviors matter most when it comes to a great culture and great results.

*The benefits of a civil, safe work environment where high standards are defined and upheld far outweigh any opposition to such a notion. Benefits such as improved work communication and relationships; enhanced decision-making, innovation and learning; engaged, motivated, and loyal employees; reduced turnover and absenteeism; increased productivity; improved quality and service will ultimately lead to peak performance and the achievement of organizational goals.*

*- McLeod & Tetzlaff*

*The Employee Experience: A Capstone Guide to Peak Performance*

HOW

- ▶ **Grateful Leadership & Giving and Receiving Feedback:** Leaders ongoingly recognize employees for upholding the standards. What is recognized gets repeated. The focus is to bring the standards “alive” in a positive way in the culture. The “Compliments to Correction Ratio” of 3:1 is a guide to being mindful in providing three times more recognition (“compliments”) than correction (“call-outs”). Encourage and mentor



"omni-directional" feedback, meaning that everyone is able to give and receive feedback (compliments and call outs, "I noticed = I care") guided by the 3:1 ratio.

- ▶ **Communication.** Incorporate communication & discussions about chosen standards in huddles, staff meetings, and on communication boards. Focus on communicating WHAT the standard is and WHY it is important.
- ▶ **Rounding.** Ask a custom question(s) during rounding that focuses on behaviors. Who should I recognize for role modeling the standards of behavior, and why? Which standard of behavior should be the focus of our staff meeting next month, and why? Tell me about a time recently when you recognized someone for adhering to the standards of behavior? Tell me about a time recently when you called someone out for not adhering to a standard?
- ▶ **Effective Hiring & Onboarding.** Utilize behavior-based interview question, focusing on the most important behaviors desired/needed on the team. When developing/revising department-specific orientation, emphasize behaviors as well as job task performance standards.
- ▶ **Setting & Achieving Goals.** Behaviors impact safety/quality, patient satisfaction, employee satisfaction & engagement. Consider behaviors when selecting annual department goals and creating action plans. Is teamwork behavior identified as an opportunity to improve on your department's employee survey? Is staff friendliness identified as an opportunity to improve on your patient survey? These are example of possible behavior-based annual goals. For any action plan for any goal, consider: what behaviors, if improved, would help us meet our goal.
- ▶ **Promoting Wellbeing.** Wellbeing is created by healthy behaviors such as resiliency rituals and routines. Maybe these are the behaviors to recognize, ask about in rounding, consider during hiring, and when setting goals.
- ▶ **Bringing and Keeping Standards Alive & Leading Change (Validation).** The annual performance appraisal/commitment process mentioned above is one method for checking in on what behaviors are consistently demonstrated, and which ones are the target of ongoing efforts to improve. The Standards of Behavior Check-In exercise (see below) can be utilized to assess the strengths (to be celebrated) and weaknesses (focuses of ongoing improvement) of individual and group efforts to adhere consistently to the standards.



## *Standards of Behavior Check-In*

**Instructions:** Read through the standards. While reviewing them, note the great behaviors to be celebrated (those consistently adhered to) as well as those specific standards that should be prioritized for improvement for the defined individuals/groups below.

	<i>ME</i>	<i>MY DEPARTMENT</i>	<i>LEADERS</i>	<i>ORGANIZATION</i>
Great behaviors that always happen	1.  2.	1.  2.	1.  2.	1.  2.
Behaviors that need to be prioritized for improvement	1.  2.	1.  2.	1.  2.	1.  2.

