THE POWER OF
POSITIVE
MORALE

A Guide for Building Morale in Pediatric Residency Programs
Walt Disney's Philosophy to Success was to help employees overcome limitations, inspire and motivate them. According to him, without people you can not succeed in the work environment.

Coordinators can immolate Walt Disney's philosophy by positioning themselves to be motivators. The coordinators' role is more involved and important than others may think. The ability to lead and influence the motivate others in morale building comes from the ability to help them do their work better and to create empowerment.
INTRODUCTION

This guide serves as a resource for promoting positive morale in your Pediatric Residency Program.

It provides an overview on the following:

- What is morale?
- How it effects residents' performance and self-worth?
- What tools are available to the coordinator to build morale?

How will this guide support the residents' success? It will allow them to...

- Feel valued and build their self-esteem
- Realize that their overall well-being is important.
- Recognize that their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated.
- Create happier relationships.
What will this guide mean to you, the coordinator. It will help you . . .

- Realize the effects of morale building on the entire residency program.

- Appreciate the importance of coordinator's contribution to resident morale.

- Understand the influence of morale building on the coordinator's role.

- Learn about specific ways of improving morale.

How will this guide enhance your role as coordinator?

- Known as a valuable resource.

- Further develop and demonstrate talents and skills.

- Provides diverse activities.

- Viewed as a part of the team.

- Build confidence.

- Promote risk-taking.
MORALE

What is it?

Dictionary Definition: “It’s the mental state that makes it possible to sustain courage, determination, and endurance in times of test and trouble.”

Why is it important?

Morale (whether caused by positive or negative experiences and/or situations) affects emotions and behaviors.

Positive morale motivates, encourages and inspires individuals. Simply, it influences how individuals feel about themselves and their environment.
Take the pulse of your program?

Is it high or low?

High  Carefree/Risk-Taker/Fulfilled
- Committed to work
- Self-Assured
- High Self-Esteem
- Positive Thinker
- Enthusiastic

Low  Anxious/Apathetic/Angry
- Undermines Commitment
- Less Motivated
- Lower Confidence
- Negative self-talk
- Negative Thinker
Everyone has to deal with change at one point or another – especially the pediatric resident.

Many residents are not prepared for the unexpected realities of residency:

- Feedback
- Criticism
- Personal/Work style changes
- Balancing lifestyle
- Long Hours
- Stress
- Working with diverse personalities
- Self-Doubt

What makes the temperature rise in your program?
Because morale can be harmful in many ways:

Personally:
Low morale can harm your physical and mental health

Socially:
Difficulties with friends and family members may occur.

Professionally:
Quality of care and commitment may drop. Tension among co-workers may result. Conflicts with patients may arise.
What are the symptoms of low morale?

The Many Faces of Low Morale

**Mr. Attitude:** Has a negative attitude that affects all.

**Brooder:** Is in a bad mood, obvious to others.

**Hand-Holder:** Needs constant reassurance.

**Mr. Blameless:** Has an excuse for everything.

**Know-it-all:** Thinks he knows all the answers, thinks he’s great!

**Whiner:** Complains no matter what.

**Worrywart:** Has personal problems that impact performance on job.

**Thumb-Twiddler:** Lacks motivation.

**Clock-Watcher:** Is in a hurry for shift to end.

**Antagonist:** Challenges you in front of others.

**Tortoise:** Show up late or not at all.

How can you assist in transforming these faces into happy ones?
Diagnose what is important to residents in order to raise morale and cure symptoms.

But how?

Seek information through one-on-ones, in a group, email, or even conduct a survey.

For Example: What do they value? Have them rank in order of importance.

1. Stimulating Work
2. Nature of Work
3. Efforts Recognized
4. Open Communication
5. Salary
6. Control over actions
7. Control over own work
8. Availability of faculty
9. Respect, trust, Support
10. Treated Fairly

What would you prescribe?
ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE:

A. FUN ACTIVITIES

Baby Picture Contest

Games
Jeopardy, Fantasy Football, Trivia Questions, etc.

Social Gatherings
- Residents night out
- Happy Hour
- Parties (Dances, Holidays, Annual Theme Party, etc)
B. PERSONAL RECOGNITION

Special Occasions
- Birthdays, Weddings, Births . . .

Awards
- Good Fellow Award, Extra Smile Award, Resident of the Month . . .

Prizes
- Movie Tickets
- Theater Tickets
- Extra Meal Tickets
- Sports Event Tickets

Breakfasts, Lunches, Dinners
C. PROVIDE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE
Let them know you care!

Problem Solve

Presentation Preparation

Help them improve and do better through coaching, teaching, demonstrating, urging, etc. - Doing anything and everything you can to help residents.

Employee Assistance Program

Personal Involvement

Some problems may be too complex to handle and professional counseling may be needed. Know when to refer a
resident to a professional counselor and help the resident feel comfortable with the decision.
C. SUPPORTING RESIDENTS THROUGH COMMUNICATION

Open Door Policy

Being available when residents need to discuss issues.

Listen

Being heard makes residents feel valued and respected.

Represent Residents

Represent resident issues at meetings, i.e. Selections & Promotions, Resident Advisory Council, etc. Will demonstrate to residents that you care about their issues.

Positive Feedback

Everyone needs to feel appreciated! Compliments and words of encouragement help reduce anxiety.
E. IT’S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER

- Acknowledge Residents
  
  Good Luck on your presentation

- Know residents by first name
  
  Good Morning, Joe, Nancy, Kim, Sally

- Positive Attitude
  
  Why don’t you stop by my office and we can brainstorm on how to solve this dilemma?

- Positive Reminders
  
  To Residents: As a reminder, all faculty evaluations are due Friday.

Be creative, think outside the box to raise morale at your residency program.
Take advantage of morale building.

It’s important for:

- The success of the program
- Training confident and highly-skilled physicians
- Building Relationships
- Enhancing your coordinators’ role
- Promoting your skills and talents
- Increasing your visibility with team members

The residents' good mental health matters to everyone – even to you!
List your Morale Builders:

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________
4. ____________________________
5. ____________________________
6. ____________________________
7. ____________________________
8. ____________________________
9. ____________________________
10. ____________________________