



# Wellness & Workforce Summit

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# People-Driven Leadership

## The Missing Link in Recruitment and Retention

Practical culture levers that improve retention, performance, and trust

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**THD** THE HEALTHY  
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# Why This Matters

## Morale Drives Performance

When telecommunicators feel valued and supported, call handling quality improves, situational awareness sharpens, and critical decisions become more confident and accurate.

## Trust Enables Growth

Coaching and learning flourish in environments where people trust their leaders. Without trust, feedback feels like criticism and development opportunities are missed.

## Consistency Builds Stability

When standards are applied fairly and predictably, retention improves. People stay where they understand expectations and see equitable treatment across all shifts.

## Safety Improves Recovery

Psychological safety directly impacts how telecommunicators handle errors and near-misses. When people can speak up without fear, problems get resolved faster and learning happens.

## Accountability Shapes Climate

How we address behavior—or fail to—creates the emotional atmosphere of the entire center. Consistent accountability protects the culture and the people within it.

📌 **Reflection prompt:** Where is your center feeling the strain most right now? What's the cost of leaving it unaddressed?

# Working Definition

## Clarity

People know what "good" looks like in both performance and conduct. Standards are visible, teachable, and repeatable—not buried in policy manuals or left to interpretation.

## Consistency

Standards are applied the same way, every day, across every shift. Fair treatment isn't negotiable. What matters on Monday matters on Friday night.

## Care

People feel respected, supported, and developed. Leaders invest in growth, recognize contributions, and create space for people to bring their whole selves to work.

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## People-Driven Leadership = Clarity + Consistency + Care

This formula builds culture on purpose, not by accident. It transforms your center from a place people endure into an environment where they thrive and deliver their best work.

# Leadership Isn't a Title

Leadership is a set of behaviors—not a rank on an organizational chart. People-driven culture emerges from daily actions, not mission statements posted on walls. Every interaction either builds culture or erodes it.



## Micro-Moments Matter

Culture lives in how we speak during coaching sessions, how we correct mistakes, how we support struggling team members, and how we celebrate wins—large and small.



## Tolerance Creates Standards

What we tolerate becomes the real standard. What we address sends clear messages. Allowing negative behaviors to persist tells everyone what we actually value.



## Recognition Reinforces Values

What gets recognized gets repeated. When we spotlight the right behaviors and outcomes, we signal what matters and create momentum toward our cultural goals.



## Avoidance Allows Decay

What we avoid addressing—the difficult conversations, the uncomfortable truths—grows in the shadows. Unaddressed issues metastasize and poison the work environment.

**Remember:** Every shift has a culture. The question is: is it healthy, or is it slowly deteriorating?

# Culture Signal Test

## Quick Scan — Rate Each Signal 1-5

Use this diagnostic tool to identify where your center's culture needs the most attention. Circle your honest assessment for each dimension, then focus on your lowest score.

1

### Clarity

Expectations are visible, documented, and consistently communicated. Everyone knows what "good" looks like for both performance and professional conduct.

2

### Psychological Safety

People can ask for help without fear of judgment or retaliation. Mistakes are treated as learning opportunities, and speaking up is encouraged and protected.

3

### Recognition & Respect

Good work gets seen and acknowledged. Contributions are valued across all shifts and positions. People feel their efforts matter and make a difference.

4

### Accountability

Behavior standards are real and enforced consistently. Performance issues are addressed promptly and fairly. No one gets special treatment from consequences.

5

### Development

Coaching is consistent, constructive, and frequent. Leaders invest in skill-building. Feedback is specific, actionable, and tied to growth rather than punishment.

**Next steps:** Pick your lowest score. Write down what that gap is costing your center. Identify one observable proof—something you see or hear regularly that demonstrates the problem.

# Debrief: What Does Your Score Cost You?

Low scores don't just represent abstract cultural weaknesses—they create concrete operational and human costs that compound over time. When we ignore cultural signals, we pay the price in ways that directly impact the mission and our people.

## 1 Errors & Near Misses

Cultural gaps create conditions where mistakes multiply and critical information gets missed or miscommunicated during high-stakes calls.

## 2 Training Failures & CTO Burnout

Inconsistent standards exhaust training officers who can't align trainees with shifting expectations. Good CTOs leave when they can't succeed.

## 3 Sick Time & Overtime Pressure

Toxic environments drive people to use sick time as mental health breaks, creating chronic understaffing and crushing overtime burdens.

## 4 Conflict & Shift Warfare

Unaddressed cultural problems manifest as interpersonal conflicts, cliques, and destructive shift-versus-shift dynamics that poison morale.

## 5 Cynicism & Emotional Numbing

People withdraw emotionally to protect themselves, leading to disengagement, apathy, and loss of the passion that brought them to this work.

## 6 Turnover & Quiet Quitting

The best people leave—either physically or mentally. You lose institutional knowledge, operational capacity, and the energy that drives excellence.

**Critical question: If nothing changes, what will this cost in 6 months?**

# 5 People Driven Practices That Move Culture Fast

The five practices that follow create immediate cultural movement when applied consistently. They don't require massive resources or reorganizations—just disciplined execution and leadership commitment.



# Practice 1 & 2: Clarity + Consistency

## Make Expectations Visible

Culture breaks down when people don't understand what success looks like. Create clear definitions of excellent performance and professional conduct that everyone can see, learn, and apply. Make standards observable and repeatable—not vague aspirations buried in policy documents.

- Define "what good looks like" for both performance metrics and interpersonal behavior
- Document standards in plain language with specific examples
- Make expectations accessible and referenced regularly in coaching conversations
- Ensure standards are teachable to new hires and reinforceable with experienced staff

## Run Micro-Leadership Moments

Culture is built in 60–90 second interactions, not annual reviews. Brief, intentional touchpoints keep people aligned, supported, and focused on what matters most. These micro-moments prevent small issues from becoming major problems.

- **Shift-start alignment:** "Here's what matters most today. Here's what I need you to focus on."
- **Mid-shift check-ins:** Quick pulse checks to assess energy, address concerns, and provide real-time support
- **Post-incident reset:** "What do you need right now? How can I support you after that call?"
- **Micro-script:** "Here's the standard, and here's exactly how we'll support you in meeting it."

# Practice 3: Psychological Safety with Standards

## Build Psychological Safety (Without Lowering Standards)

Psychological safety doesn't mean eliminating accountability or accepting mediocrity. It means creating conditions where people can admit mistakes, ask questions, and engage in learning without fear of humiliation or retaliation. High standards and psychological safety coexist when leaders separate blame from accountability.

### Normalize Learning & Coaching

Frame coaching as development, not discipline. Make it clear that everyone—from rookies to veterans—benefits from feedback and continuous improvement.

### Separate Blame from Accountability

Hold people accountable for behaviors and outcomes without attacking character. Focus on what happened and what needs to change, not who's a "bad employee."

### Make "Ask Early" the Expectation

Reward people for raising concerns before they become critical incidents. Create cultural norms where asking for help is seen as professional, not weak.

### Debrief Without Humiliation

Post-incident reviews should focus on learning and process improvement, not public shaming. Protect dignity while addressing performance gaps honestly.

- **Micro-script for leaders:** "We can talk about this clearly and respectfully—because you matter and the standard matters. Both are true at the same time."

# Practice 4 & 5: Emotional Climate + Development

## Protect the Emotional Climate

Toxic behaviors—sarcasm, eye-rolling, bullying, gatekeeping—destroy psychological safety and drive good people away. Leaders must address these behaviors immediately and consistently, regardless of who displays them.

- Address disrespectful behaviors in the moment, calmly but firmly
- Stop "top performer immunity"—no one gets a pass for excellent metrics if their conduct poisons the team
- Correct consistently across all shifts and all people to maintain fairness
- Model the behavior standards you expect from others

**Micro-script:** "I'm holding the line here—because this is how we keep this place healthy for everyone, including you."

## Convert Feedback into Development

Every coaching conversation is an opportunity to build capability. Short, frequent coaching beats long, infrequent performance reviews. Focus on skill-building rather than personality critiques.

- Deliver feedback in brief, focused coaching beats throughout the shift
- Close the loop: follow up on previous feedback to acknowledge progress
- Tie feedback directly to skill development and operational improvement
- Separate the person from the behavior—address actions, not character
- Create action plans with clear next steps and measurable improvements

# The One-Lift Plan

One Problem. One Lever. One Next Step.

Cultural transformation doesn't require fixing everything at once.

Choose one real, pressing issue in your center and apply focused effort. Small, consistent wins build momentum for larger change.

## 1 Choose One Real Issue

Select the problem causing the most immediate pain

## 3 Select Your Practice

Which of the five people-driven practices (1-5) best addresses this issue?

## 5 Proof of Progress in 14 Days

Define what measurable evidence will demonstrate movement

1

2

3

4

5

## 2 Define Target Behavior

Get specific about what needs to change

## 4 First Step in 72 Hours

Take one concrete action within three days

**72 hours**

Your deadline for the first action

**14 days**

Your checkpoint for measurable progress

# Barriers (And How Healthy Leaders Respond)

Cultural change faces predictable resistance. Healthy leaders anticipate these barriers and have clear responses ready. Don't let common obstacles derail your momentum.

## "We're Too Busy"

**Counter-move:**  
Micro-habits beat big programs. The five practices don't require adding hours to your day—they transform how you use the time you already spend leading.

## "We Tried That Before"

**Counter-move:**  
Inconsistency kills change. Previous attempts likely failed due to inconsistent application, not flawed strategy. This time, commit to sustained, disciplined execution.

## "Politics / Union / History"

**Counter-move:**  
Focus on observable behaviors, not personalities or past grievances. Document standards, apply them consistently, and let results speak for themselves.

## "Leadership Isn't Aligned"

**Counter-move:**  
Lead your circle of control and document results. Cultural improvement within your span of influence becomes proof that spreads upward and outward.

**Remember:** Change gets easier when results show up. Early wins create believers and build momentum for broader transformation.

# Your 14-Day Commitment

Cultural transformation begins with personal commitment. Don't leave this session without defining your next steps. Small, disciplined actions compound into significant change when sustained over time.

1

## One Practice You Will Apply

Which of the five people-driven practices addresses your most pressing cultural challenge? Write it down. Make it specific.

2

## One Behavior You Will Address

Name the specific behavior—positive or negative—that you will reinforce or correct in the next 72 hours. Be concrete.

3

## One Micro-Leadership Moment You Will Repeat

Choose a brief, high-impact interaction you'll make a daily habit. Consistency transforms micro-moments into culture.

4

## One Measure You Will Track

Define the evidence that will show progress. What will you see, hear, or measure differently in 14 days?

**Create a culture worth fighting for—because healthy dispatchers save more lives.**



# Thank you for what you do!

The practices we've explored today require courage and genuine care for your people. Consistency is the key to developing these skills so you can access them effectively, every day.

## Your Next Steps:

- Commit to beginning today, and keep at it
- Enroll Your Other Team Members – **you don't have to do this alone!**
- Reach out to **THD** if we can help you get clear on your near-term strategy

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HEALTHY CENTERS SAVE MORE LIVES