

# Effective Leadership in the Maternal Child Department: “Changing the Culture”



## **Facilitators**

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**AI Training:** Las Vegas, NV November 12 – 15, 2013

**Organization Description:** Memorial Hospital of Carbondale is a 150 Bed Hospital in rural Southern Illinois and is part of a three hospital system. Memorial employs over 1,200 people, 150 of which work in the Maternal-Child Department. Memorial is the only hospital in the system with a Maternal-Child program which consists of a Labor & Delivery unit averaging 2,000 deliveries a year, an Antepartum unit, Postpartum unit, Special Care unit, and Pediatric department.

**AI Core Group:** The Maternal-Child Department has two managers, one coordinator, and six shift supervisors: Michelle Gerler, MBA, BSN, RN, Jennifer Gilpin, MHA, BSN, RN, Angie Bowen, BSN, RN, Heidi Boggs, BSN, RN, Holly Barrett, RN, Renee Coleman, BS, RN, Stephanie Little, BSN, RN, Jennifer Williams, BSN, RN, Cindy Covington, BSN, RN.

## **Positive Topic**

The shift supervisors in the department have various strengths, degrees of experience and engagement, and two are new members of the team. Through some conversations and observations with team members, it became evident that a team intervention was in order to bring the team together toward a common vision and reignite a focus on leadership. Questions were developed which would focus on engagement and when they felt at their best in leadership. We met on January 9, 2013 for Day One Summit and Feb 25, 2014 Day Two Summit.

## **AI at Carbondale memorial hospital Maternal child department**

The current state in the Maternal/Child department is a fragmented leadership team that is not fully engaged in the development of the department.

## **Desire:**

The management team in the Maternal/Child department wants to turn around attitudes, increase ownership change the culture and focus on full engagement of the management team resulting in shifting from a problem based unit to a unit focusing on possibilities.

## **Purpose**

To discover a sustainable source of positive energy to nourish both personal and organizational change

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to transform our maternal child department.

### **Interview**

Face to face paired interviews were used as the method to inquire into exceptionally positive moments. Those pairs became a part of groups of four to six to share the paired experience and to develop themes.

Following is the interview guide with combined responses from the appreciative interviews:

Interview tips: Listen deeply. It is not a back and forth dialogue. From time to time, you can say things like, “Tell me more about that..” Allow time to actively read and understand the interview guide. Trust the process.

\*Using the questions below take brief notes and ask follow up questions as appropriate to dive deeper however remember this is not a time for conversation.

\*After interview complete form notes on the summary sheet.

1. Recall a time when you participated in a powerful leading experience—a time when learning was inspiring energizing, challenging and exciting; where you and others seemed to be highly engaged and learning rapidly. Tell me that story. What made it exceptional? Who was involved? What did others do to support the learning?
2. Share a story about the best experience you’ve ever had when participating in a team or organizational change effort. What motivated the change effort? What was your role? What efforts did you and others make to ensure that the change would be sustained? What positive impact did it have on you, the team or the organization?
3. When you are feeling best about work, what about the task itself do you value?
4. What do you experience as the core value of your leadership team? Give some examples of how you experience those values.
5. Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself—as a person, as a learner, Leader and as change agent?
6. What three wishes do you have for this department, leadership team and yourself as a leader?

### **Summary (Life Giving Forces)**

1. What was the most appreciative quotable quote that came out of your interview?

If I don’t like you, you may not know it.

Although we have different ideas as a team we still come together and discuss amongst ourselves and not ax each other out.

I wish we could inspire everyone to work better together and get along and I can be a role model for it.

In my years of experience over the years in SIH the examples I have had to follow have allowed me to become leader I am today.

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I want to learn and bring back to the organization.

Inspire to be a better person.

Glass always half full

I'm energized every time I come to work.

2. What was the most compelling story that came out of your interview? What details and examples did the interviewee share? How were the interviewee and or others changed by the story?

Nights great teamwork, comradely just did it. NICU staff

New mix new unit empowered staff and charge nurse role

Implementing QS in OB start, education changes having ownership inspire others to be onboard.

Passion for team. Baby Codes, teamwork comradery

HS chem. Teacher letter form students thankful inspired student to do better.

Staff state been helpful and trust me.

3. What was the most “life-giving” moment of the interview for you as a listener?

Confirmation same concerns

Trust issue

Acknowledgement of what's working

Think about similar exp in own life

Sense of pride in accomplishments excitement in what they do Believe

Desire passion want to make changes be a positive example

Caring passion she is a great asset to the team.

Attempting to voice for staff with changes. Empathize but not sympathize.

4. Did a particularly creative and or innovative example of powerful leadership emerge during the interview? If so describe what you learned about it.

Experience be involved in change and shared leadership

Enjoys research EBP

Helping others to learn

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Being innovative

AWHONN nursing Congress Learning

Optimism

Shared Leadership Role

Leader all the time regardless which role

5. What three themes stood out most for you during the interview?

Change

Tolerance

Complacent

Positive attitude

Inspiration

Role model

Support team/staff

Learning Education

Empowerment

Pride

Ownership

Teamwork

Positive

Passion

Desire

Optimism

Leading

Trust

6. Personal development for more effective leadership

Working together Synergy

Utilize diversity each of us brings.

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Utilize strengths help each other to be better.

Realize gifts of imperfection.

Effective communication

Optimism

## Themes Identified resulting in dream state of team

Although we have different ideas as a team we still come together and discuss amongst ourselves and not ax each other out.

Passion for team, baby codes, teamwork, and comrade

Sense of pride in accomplishments excitement in what they do. BELIEVE

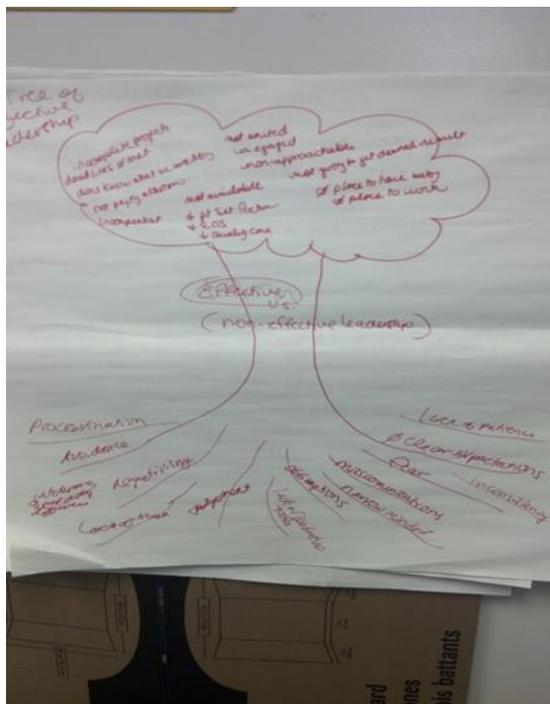
Leader all the time regardless of which role.

3 themes: Teamwork, positive attitude and pride

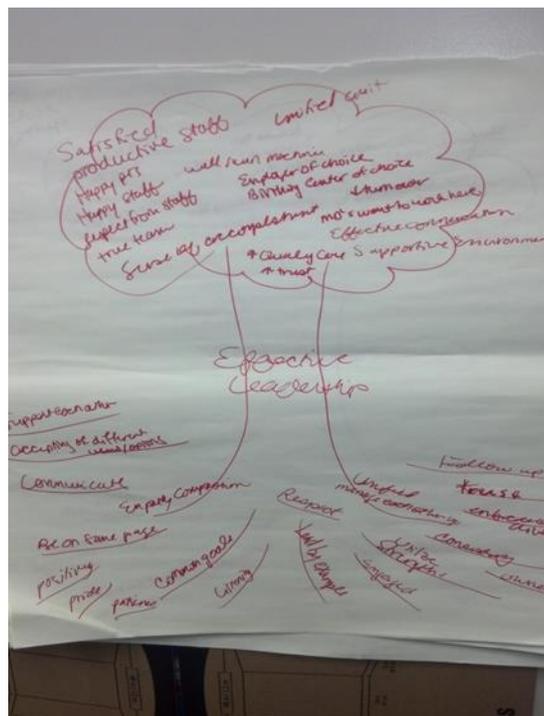
## Tree of Ineffective Leadership and Effective Leadership exercise.

Exercise: Tree of effective Leadership

Results of Exercise: Trunk of tree=effective vs. non effective leadership



Non-Effective Leadership  
Effective Leadership



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Roots of the tree= Support each other, accepting of different views/opinions, communication, empathy, compassion, on same page, positivity, pride, patience, common goals, listening skills, respect, lead by example, engaged, utilize each other’s strengths, unified, manage each other up, consistency, ownership, pride, embrace diversity, trust, follow up

Leaves of the tree= Satisfied staff, productive staff, happy patients, happy employees, respect from staff, true team, sense of accomplishment, unified unit, run like a well machine, employer of choice, birthing center of choice, decreased turnover, MD’s want to work here, effective communication, supportive environment for patients and staff, increase quality of care and increase trust.

**Reflected and Chosen inspiring themes:** Power/passion/Purpose, Positive leadership that inspires passion and pride, trust, positive attitudes, utilize strengths to help us be better, desire passion want to make positive changes, be example, leader all the time regardless of role.

**Dream:** What is our greatest potential? What is our position, our potential, our calling and our unique contribution we can make as a leadership team? (Read pg . 217 *Example for a Guided-Image Exercise. Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination. Watkins, Mohr, Kelly, 2011*)

Create the preferred future Dream when all of these themes are present fully and at their best. (Visual imagery, songs, skits, collages, dances etc.) What are the high points identified in the stories are the everyday reality. “You are literally designing the structure (resources, business processes, policies, whatever) – for achieving this desired future”.

Development of Provocative proposition (Possibility Statement, Shared Vision, Dream Statement) (Bridges “what is” with your own intuition of “what might be”). The statement stretches the realm of the status quo, challenges common assumptions or routines, and helps suggest real possibilities that represent desired possibilities for the group. What might “it” look like if “it” happened all the time? Must be provocative, grounded, desired, affirmative, and provoke action. Example: “our actions create positive change”, or “We are a team of highly trained technical professionals with extraordinary problem solving skills and the ability to create positive outcomes from difficult situations. Team members support each other and promote a sense of fun in the workplace.”

## **Provocative Statement:**

### **The 7 C’s**

We are competent, confident, caring, compassionate, and courageous leaders who collaborate to create a cohesive team.

### **Presentations: Videos**

1st video: song lyrics (snow white seven dwarfs high ho off to work we go):

High ho, high ho It’s off to work we go we keep on smiling all shift long high ho

We work, work, work

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Work in our rooms the whole shift through  
We work, work, work, that is what we like to do  
And it ain't no trick to be competent and confident  
If you work, work, work with caring and compassion  
Work, work, work the whole shift through  
Got to work, work, work, it's what we like to do in our rooms in our rooms  
Where a million collaborative cohesive creative nurses shine  
We got to work, work, work day and night  
We got to work, work, work to reach our goals  
Work, work, work our vision is in sight  
Creating a happy and passionate team  
Our scores will soar  
And we will know what we are working for  
High ho high ho  
It's off to work we go  
We keep on smiling all shift long high ho high ho high ho

2nd song (YMCA): BONUS

Workers why don't you come and see  
Workers this is the place to be  
Workers come on a board, we will make it work it  
It's fun to work at MHC OB  
its fun to work at MHC OB  
Workers workers come on along workers workers join in our song

### **Strategic Intentions/Initiatives:**

1. Come in with a positive attitude every day.

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2. Laminate the provocative statement and post it everywhere.
3. Call each other on the commitment. Personal and Peer accountability.
  - a. Have “critical Conversations” with each other.
  - b. Coach/facilitate our staff to have “crucial conversations” with their co-workers.
  - c. Create standard work calendar for tasks completion accountability and shared responsibility.
4. Communication: Huddles, GEMBA, Shift Reports, completion of tasks, follow up, and Debriefings.
5. Cohesive team:
  - a. Encourage and empower staff to be a part of the process/changes/solutions.
  - b. Validate their concerns and make sure they know their ideas matter.
  - c. Possible ideas using candy incentives/recognition: Lollipop moment, life saver moment, idea is worth a million grand, pay day moment.
  - d. Activities to blend departments together.
    1. Ask staff for suggestions at staff meetings.
    2. Possible outing at winery/ballgame/picnic at park
    3. Possible eat lunch in another department or with a member of the other department.
    4. Secret Pals
  - e. Welcoming program for staff that float to your department.
  - f. Activities off site for management team individual with managers and as a team to build relationship and create team unity.
    1. Need very good pre-planning send out dates
    2. Include husbands/significant others and children at some activities
    3. Need commitment to really make this work.
    4. Movies, pool party, bands: Holly and Cindy to look at upcoming activities and mail them out to group to pick activity.
  - g. Individual Goals/Initiatives – Commitments to the Team
    - a. Heidi: Being involved and role modeling the Power Passion and Purpose program throughout SIH. Champion for relationship based care.
    - b. Angie: Being involved in and implementing the communication program Team Steps in OB.
    - c. Cindy: Committed to working on the relationships with each other on the management team. More of a stake with each other and not let each other down. Going to go and eat lunch in the other departments on my shifts.
    - d. Holly: Help to plan and organize the activities working on relationships with team. Look at ways to welcome the new staff more than just a “hi”.
    - e. Jennifer: Working on accountability of self and team. More involvement of front line staff work on helping to empower and engage them in our department.
    - f. Renee: I am the eternal optimist. Always smile and ask others how they are doing. Interact with the staff. Shine and sing to them.
    - g. Stephanie: Work on self care and leaving work at work “letting things go”. Knowing that I did my best and it is ok if not everything is completed.

### **Progress toward Intentions/Initiatives:**

1. Team is committed to having conversations with each other or agreeing to a mediation to work through problems in the management team and to lead by example.
2. Provocative Statement has been posted in department for all to see.

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3. Staff meeting shared the results of the AI as well as the video of the management team performing their skit. Asked about ideas for bringing departments together, suggested a walk in my shoes so each area can gain perspective.
4. Management team is turning in their standard work calendar with completed tasks and assisting others with completion when their shift is busy, etc.
5. Explored ways to provide positive feedback to the staff for a job well done giving the management team more of an appreciative outlook celebrating what is right.
6. Purchased candy and in process of printing out motivational labels.
7. Have worked on having someone greet new employees and take them on a tour on day one.
8. Have joined with the shared leadership team to work on implementing Relationship Based Care in the department and living out the Commitment to Co-workers agreement.

### **Impact or Results**

*“Be the change you want to see in the world.” Gandhi.*

The impact is actionable items that the team will continue to work on to have an effective leadership team in the Maternal Child department. Communication, collaboration and teamwork of the management team will improve as we continue to build relationships. Employee morale and satisfaction in the Maternal-Child department will improve as we present ourselves as a cohesive team.

### **Continued On-going Success**

As leaders of the management team and facilitators of this AI experience, we are committed to ensure that the team continues to move forward with goals and initiatives developed through the AI experience. We meet monthly as a management team and review our provocative statement, our dream state and action items and as stated earlier, have continued our development with the shared leadership team. We will gather stories of success by sharing our stories with the management team in meetings and in conversations and with other staff members. These stories will also be shared with the larger management team at our hospital and within our system as we also start every meeting with success stories or celebrations. We will continue to support each other through communication and positive words of appreciation for what we are doing well and focus on what we want more of as a management team. We will celebrate positive feedback from the staff and reward and recognize others for their efforts, especially positive responses from the candy moments.

### **Reflections on the inquiry:**

1. What did you wish for in the inquiry? What did you learn from the inquiry about yourself and your facilitation? What was your “personal best” experience related to facilitating the Inquiry?

**Jennifer:** I continue to learn about my strengths and my weaknesses through the experiences I am a part of through facilitating. My tendencies are to be a “problem solver or the fixer”. If I do not have the

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answer, I will find it and make a decision. I tend to want to mark items off of my list having things hang out for further discussion makes me feel incomplete. Through AI I am learning to let go of the need for immediate completion or to be the solution finder. I am finding peace and strength in being a facilitator. I enjoy being a part of the AI process developing my patience and truly perfecting the art of listening to others along with recognizing the non-verbal cues of my team. My vision and goal for the team is to look at each other and see our strengths. Build on what we are naturally talented at and have a tolerance for diversity. This will lead to a management team that is united and supportive of each other. We will live the theories of relationship based care through connecting with one another. AI has personally changed how I communicate with my work family and at home. It is a process and a transformation that I work on daily. I am committed to making this who I am. My personal best in this activity is seeing the team come together and present their dream state. To see them perform and interact with such unity was empowering and inspiring. I loved to see them laugh, create and unite as a team with a common purpose and vision.

### **Michelle:**

My wish for the inquiry was that the team could come together and find core passions and desires that would connect them as a team. We were looking for ideas that would help engage them as leaders and help us to motivate, encourage and reward the front line staff as well as celebrate what is right in the department and appreciate the good in everyone’s strengths. The management team is very diverse as having team members with various levels of nursing and management experience as well as diverse personalities with various strengths and weaknesses. This experience has helped them to see that each of them has passion for their job and wants our department to be successful and can come together and discuss our issues keeping our core desires in mind. The best outcome of the experience was that while the team was creating and performing their skit, the two members of the team which have been very judgmental of each other were working together and actually worked on and performed another song together on their own. The team had fun and through the laughter, walls that had been built disintegrated. Watching this happen was empowering as a leader and I knew there was not only hope for our team but that we would be successful.

What I learned from myself during the process is to trust the process and to listen attentively so that all of the ideas and opinions of the group were captured. I was careful as a facilitator to not let one person’s voice or opinion over power the other as all ideas and suggestions are valuable and each person needs to be recognized as an important member of the team. I thought Jennifer and I worked together well as a team in this area when brainstorming was moving fast, she scribed and listened and I listened to the team and helped her keep the ideas captured. More importantly, as a facilitator, I found it hard when it came to developing the strategic initiatives to not be involved or voice my opinion and to let it be the ideas and opinions of the team. This went well even though it was hard however I am trying to be a transformational leader and this process helps to see the value in engaging your team to come up with the answers. The questions are the key for reflection and each one learned so much about themselves as we each learned something about each other that day that we did not know that was important to building and strengthening our relationships as a team.

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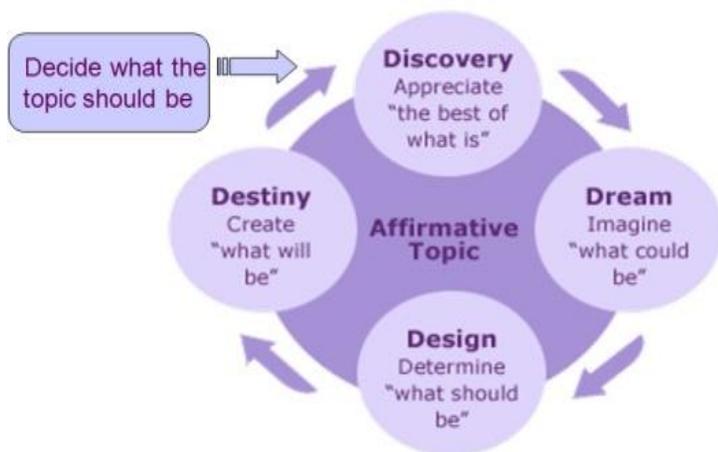
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My personal best during the facilitation was during the introduction and defining the concepts of Appreciative Inquiry. My passion for the process showed portraying to the team that I believed in the process and believed we could obtain monumental results if we all embraced the concepts and stayed open to the process. Jen and I were both very excited to learn about AI and found joy in bringing AI to our team. My personal best will be realized when our management team fully embraces the concepts of AI and begins to live it on a daily basis. As we continue to talk about AI and the positive changes we can make from celebrating what is right and exploring how we get more of it, we will see a culture change both in leadership and in the morale of the front-line staff.

### Permission to Share

Yes, any information, stories or pictures can be used.



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