

6 C's of the Practice Family Checklist

One indicator of extraordinary groups is the development of strong relationships characterized by trust, mutual respect, and friendship. Recognizing the family nature of workplace teams allows us to apply the strengths of a family-type relationship to the delivery of health care. The return on the investment in learning family-friendly behaviors takes the form of dollars flowing to the bottom line, professional gratification, and personal happiness.

Caring

- Can you count on a “yes,” at least in spirit, when you ask a coworker to cover one of your shifts so you can care for a sick child?
- Does the benefits package offered in your practice include options for coverage of medical and child care expenses? And how about paid time off for sick, maternity, and paternity leave?
- Are staff members supported when their own pets are euthanized in the form of sympathy cards signed by coworkers and/or discounted cremation services?
- Do we express genuine concern about each other's families, their celebrations (birthdays, graduations, weddings, and births), and challenges (loss of elderly parents, divorce, and illnesses), without compromising the focus on patient and client care?
- Do staff members refrain from making judgmental comments, and instead compliment coworkers behind their backs?
- Do staff members help each other in the event of transportation difficulties, such as snowstorms and flat tires?

Collaboration

- Do we work together to plan vacations in consideration of school holidays?
- Do staff meetings support dialogue and shared responsibility?
- Are diverse viewpoints encouraged?
- Do we work together to troubleshoot equipment failures?

Curiosity

- Do staff members, including the boss, ask questions about each other's well-being? (“How did your test go?” “Is the baby feeling better today?” “How is your mom doing?”)
- Do we ask about the client's other pets during one pet's visit?
- During an office call, do we ask the client's children about their day or activities?
- Do we ask to see pictures of family members? Pets?



Celebration

- Are special occasions celebrated (staff birthdays, graduations, births, and weddings)?
- Are these milestones celebrated equally and predictably so that no one feels left out or devalued?
- Are there opportunities for staff members to participate in community activities and charitable events that draw the focus away from “self” toward something bigger?
- Are patients' birthdays recognized?
- Are “perfect” pet wellness exams honored with an award?

Comfort

- Does the practice “lounge” area have the capacity for hot coffee, tea, and hot chocolate on a cold winter day? How about a place to sit and enjoy that nice warm beverage while on a break or during lunch?
- Is there a place to hang coats and safely store purses and other personal belongings?
- Do employees have a work “space” where they are comfortable?

Clowning Around

- Do staff members bring treats to work, for no particular reason other than to contribute good eats, fun, and a part of themselves?
- Are ideas solicited in planning practice holiday celebrations?
- Do staff members feel free to laugh and find humor in daily work activities?
- Do employees join in laughter with clients?

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