

REFRAMING YOUR ORGANIZATION: Are you working **WELL?**

Teacher wellness might be the missing link in the strategic planning process of education reform.

INTRODUCTION

There are tangible rewards for looking after one's health. Wellness experts suggest that attention to personal lifestyle can improve well-being. Making healthy lifestyle choices can increase our levels of joy, satisfaction and zest for living. Teacher wellness might be the missing link in the strategic planning process of education reform. If organizational theory and models can be used successfully in strategic planning processes to transform organizations, what might the results be if they were used to assist teachers in wellness planning? Is it possible for teachers to view themselves and their schools as 'an organization' that might benefit from the application of such theories and models as they work to enhance wellness?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Attempting to find out 'who we are, what we do, what is working and what is not' takes perseverance and flexibility. As a consultant, working in the area of organizational change I have found Bolman and Deal's (1997) Four-Frame Model as discussed in

their book titled *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership* (p. 15) very useful for teachers and administrators wanting to 'work well'.

They suggest that organizations can be seen through four frames of reference: a Structural Frame, a Human Resource Frame, a Political Frame and a Symbolic Frame.

OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR-FRAME MODEL

	Frame			
	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic
Metaphor for organization	Factory or machine	Family	Jungle	Carnival, temple, theatre
Central concepts	Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Needs, skills relationships	Power, conflict, competition, organizational politics	Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
Image of leadership	Social architecture	Empowerment	Advocacy	Inspiration
Basic leadership challenge	Attune structure to task, technology, environment	Align organizational and human needs	Develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning

Figure 1: From: "Reframing Organizations" (p. 15) by L.G. Bolman and T.E. Deal, 1997, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishers.

STRUCTURAL FRAME

The Structural Frame views an organization as a bureaucracy or a Factory. Key words that describe the Structural Frame are coordination, control, policies and procedures, planning, budgeting, evaluation. A manager or leader working within the structural frame would be analytical, a logical thinker, someone who was organized and concerned about systems management. When applying a Structural Frame to your School Wellness program ask yourself, “Who are our systems thinkers? What does or can the structure of our program look like? Is it a program, an initiative, a pilot project, will it be an in-house or out-of-house program?”

HUMAN RESOURCE FRAME

The Human Resource Frame puts ‘people first’. Within this frame, employees are seen as a primary resource. There is an emphasis on collaboration. This frame is sometimes described as a Family. A Human Resource manager or leader is supportive and participative. To apply a Human Resource Frame to school wellness planning, determine who is the caretaker of the school and staff. Who believes that supporting teacher, staff and student wellness is an investment, not a cost? Where can the leadership in this regard come from?

THE POLITICAL FRAME

Working in the Political Frame a manager or leader might be persuasive, skilled at negotiation and bargaining. This frame assumes

that within an organization there will be conflict or ongoing tension, although that is not necessarily a negative thing. Thus, the Political Frame is sometimes called a Jungle. Awareness of the Political Frame when planning a school wellness program is a necessity. Who are the stakeholders? What/who are the resistance forces, the driving forces and the interference forces?

SYMBOLIC FRAME

Sometimes described as a Theater, meaning, belief, and faith are central to a symbolic perspective. Key words that describe the Symbolic Frame are ceremony, ritual, celebration, and inspiration. Of utmost importance is the Symbolic Frame of a school wellness program. Is there any ritual or ceremony to support the renewal or rejuvenation of teachers in your school? Is there ‘celebration’ for living well?

USING THE FOUR FRAME MODEL

To support a school wellness program and motivate administrators, teachers, staff and students to ‘be the best that they can be’, multi-frame thinking can enhance management and leadership effectiveness. Using the Structural Frame of reference to implement a wellness plan, teachers can focus on establishing a program structure that fits their environment while recognizing that structural thinking is only one part of the picture. Using the Human Resource Frame of reference, teachers will recognize the need to sup-

port both themselves and their colleagues. They might be better able to search out the resources they need to enhance their well-being. Understanding that within any organization there are always a variety of interest groups lobbying for ‘their cause’, teachers can plan ahead as they enter into the Political Frame of reference and manage conflicts that might arise as they bring wellness planning to their school. Use of the Symbolic Frame will help teachers design rituals and ceremonies that support healthy living. It is in celebration of wellness that teachers might see fresh possibilities and create new opportunities for rejuvenating themselves.

As we begin to discover ways in which we can blend or integrate the frames to implement or enhance school wellness programs, we may develop a greater appreciation and deeper understanding of a ‘well’ workplace and realize, as one of the goals of this conference states, “...wellness is more than physical health and before we can help others, we must first be well ourselves.” The work of Newberry (1996) states that “we need both management and leadership and we must comprehend how each component helps organizations achieve their goals” (p. 21). The work of Bolman and Deal gives us a framework to work with to achieve our wellness goals.

“...wellness is more than physical health and before we can help others, we must first be well ourselves.”

References

- Bolman, L.G., & Deal, T.E. (1997). *Reframing organizations: artistry, choice and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Newberry, A.J.H. (1996). *A New Time—A New Schoolhouse Leader: practitioner and scholar-the 21st century imperative*. Vancouver, Canada: EduServ.

