



mhca's e-Newsletter

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Creating a Culture of Replenishment

A Guest Article from Quint Studer

I love healthcare people. I've worked with them all my life and I've found what most have in common is a great desire to be useful and helpful. When we enter this field we are literally answering a calling to serve others. Yet working in healthcare is far from easy.

The nature of our work is already tough, but the past few years have amped up the pressure. The realities of COVID, along with the political, cultural, and social upheaval we've faced, has people battered, bruised, and weary. Many are struggling with anxiety, depression, debilitating stress, burnout and even trauma.

This puts leaders in a tough spot. It's our job to help people keep pushing through at times when it feels almost impossible. This means replenishing what Stephen Covey calls "the emotional bank account." It's only when people are engaged, mentally healthy, and connected to mission that they can deliver the kind of care that leads to great patient outcomes and organizational performance.

How do that in a time when emotional bank accounts are so depleted? The solution is two-fold. First, we need to address the barriers that get in our own way. Some barriers are external, like the pandemic or the scope and pace of change healthcare has dealt with for decades. We can't change these things. What we *can* do is tackle our internal barriers. These are powerful forces like denial...blame...envy...perfectionism...a reluctance to seek help when we need it.

We shouldn't feel bad about these barriers. They are basic human defense mechanisms. Yet they keep us from living our best lives and being the best leaders we can be. When we do the "inside" work of knocking down those barriers it sets us up for the second part of our job--helping those that work for us overcome the barriers that keep *them* from being the best *they* can be.

Our organizations can be fertile ground that nourishes people and renews their spirits every day. As leaders we can create that fertile ground. The good news is that there are some simple, yet powerful, tactic and behaviors we can build into our cultures that continuously replenish those who work for us and promote mental and emotional well-being. Let's look at a few of them:

Model healthy behavior. Take vacations. Don't work extreme hours. Most importantly, get help if you need it (and don't try to hide it). We desperately need to break the stigma around mental health issues in the workplace. When people see you living in a healthy way, and modeling healthy attitudes, they'll know it's okay for them to do the same.

Practice and promote gratitude. Say "thank you" sincerely and often, both verbal and in handwritten notes. Feeling appreciated is a fundamental human need. Plus, when we learn to see the world from a place of gratitude, it leaves little room for focusing on those things that make us unhappy. It literally rewires the brain. Gratitude is contagious: when leaders practice it, so will those around us.

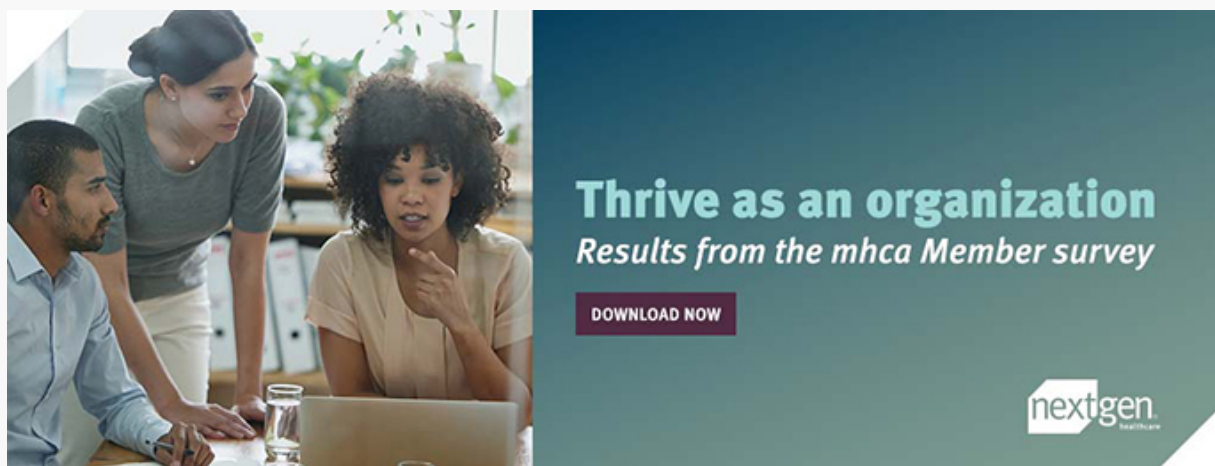
Reward and recognize people where they are. (Celebrate small wins.) If you hit a goal that doesn't seem all that impressive, make a big deal out of it anyway. It creates a surge of momentum that sets people up to hit the next goal and then the next. Recognized behavior gets repeated. replenishes emotional

bank accounts, builds strong relationships between leaders and staff, and creates the kind of culture where talent wants to be.

Use storytelling to connect with people on an emotional level. At every opportunity—during meetings, in newsletters, while practicing Relationship Rounding™—share stories that illustrate how the work people do makes lives better. Storytelling connects them back to mission. It may also help heal burnout, since cynicism/disconnection from one's work is a key component.

When we make these replenishers a part of our culture, not only do we make things better for our staff, we create an organization that attracts and retains the best talent. Today's employees want workplaces where they can thrive—places that keep their batteries charged, that provide a deep sense of meaning, and that perpetuate mental and emotional wellness. When we give them these kinds of workplaces, everyone wins.

Quint Studer is a highly-regarded expert in operational excellence. His books, tools, and techniques are staples in healthcare. His new book, *The Calling*, will be provided to all **mhca** members attending our Winter Conference in Clearwater Beach this week, and his keynote session will be recorded so you can share it with your team. We hope this presentation helps our members replenish themselves, their teams, and their organizations.



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