

# Board & Care Quality

## F O R U M

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### Promoting a Healthy Workplace Culture

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*A co-worker of yours makes you uncomfortable because she constantly downgrades and makes fun of other staff. You feel she is being malicious and that she expects you to laugh along with her at the expense of others.*

*You overhear an employee complaining to residents and other staff about her low pay. She goes on to tell the resident that she doesn't know how she is going to pay her cable and cell phone bills.*

*During a staff meeting, an employee smirks or verbally challenges you (the manager) when you talk about new policies and procedures, as well as when you invite input from others. When her suggestions are not wholeheartedly accepted or endorsed, she pouts and mutters under her breath.*

Full-time employees spend more than 30% of their total work-week life (or 50% of their waking hours during

the work week) on work-related activities. It is likely that these staff then spend even *more* work-related time once they get home, discussing work activities with family or friends. The culture of their workplace plays a vital role in determining whether such time spent is pleasant, productive, and fulfilling, or stressful and non-productive.

“Workplace culture” can be defined as the shared or common goals or values that shape the daily activities within a workplace. As an example, a home may have a common goal of providing a safe, comfortable living environment for residents while promoting positive relationships among staff.

A positive, healthy workplace culture is vital not just to the successful functioning of the home, but to the satisfaction and retention of staff members. In their report entitled *Who Will Care for us? Addressing the Long-Term Care Workforce Crisis* (<http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=310304>, October 26, 2001), Robyn Stone, Dr. P.H., Executive Director, Institute for the Future of Aging Services of the Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, and Joshua M. Wiener, Ph.D., Senior Fellow & Program Director, Aging, Disability and Long-Term Care, RTI International, report the findings of a study on home

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