

needs to begin with the recognition of its positive attributes and then ask the questions that will take it along the path toward the organization it visualizes itself becoming. Similar to an athlete using visualization to prepare for an upcoming competition, whereby the athlete mentally reviews every step of the competition and visualizes success, so does Appreciative Inquiry challenge the organization to capitalize on its strengths. Appreciative Inquiry is a guided change process by an OD practitioner adept at maneuvering through the maze of possibilities that might be exposed through the positive issues identified. The OD practitioner essentially helps the organization see the future and then sets the organization off on a path to make that visualization a reality (Cummings & Worley, 2001).

SUMMARY

Organization Development (OD) is a systematic process of addressing organizational issues or implementing change strategies. There are many types of interventions available and at the disposal of a good OD practitioner. The key to a successful OD initiative is one that is based on a thorough analysis of any symptoms of problems, with this analysis based on a thorough analysis of data. The partnership with the organization is critical, and the OD practitioner must work to ensure that ultimately the organization understands and accepts that the responsibility for the success of any intervention lies with the organization.

END-OF-CHAPTER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Identify and discuss the various characteristics of OD.
2. Describe the unique features of OD that differentiate it from other change initiatives.
3. How would you describe the role of the OD professional? What skills are necessary for an OD practitioner?
4. Explain the various components of the Action Research Model.
5. Identify and explain the steps necessary in the OD process.
6. Why is data collection so important to the OD process?
7. Identify and explain the various interventions used in the OD process.
8. What is Appreciative Inquiry and how is it used in the OD process?

Case Study 18-3 Gateway Hospital

Gateway Hospital is a 500-bed tertiary-care hospital located in a busy metropolitan area. A recent employee satisfaction survey scored well below the national norms on most scales. The hospital has been facing higher than average turnover and vacancy rates. Recruitment of professional positions is very difficult because the hospital has gained a reputation as a bad place to work, especially if one is new; the term "eat their young" seems to be a prevalent description. Salaries are below the local market, as are annual pay increases. In many departments there seems to be a critical shortage of staff, and closing services has been a recent topic of discussion.

Additionally, the financial picture of the organization is bleak. The payor mix has changed; Medicare cutbacks are impacting the bottom line, as are changes in private insurance funding. Key physicians are beginning to take their services elsewhere, as they sense the inefficiency of the hospital processes.

The various stresses appear to be having a significant impact on the overall morale of employees. Poor teamwork is rampant, and communication breakdowns seem to be a normal occurrence. Several leaders have been let go in an effort to address issues.

The leadership of Gateway Hospital is extremely concerned about the organizational prognosis and has decided to begin to address the issues by enlisting the assistance of a consulting team. One member of the team is a financial expert who has been hired to address the significant financial issues affecting the hospital. The time frame on fixing the financial issues is one of a critical need; since the environment is rapidly changing, the consultant must get a handle on how to help the hospital operate successfully, given the current financial downslide.

A second member of the team is hired to address the morale and employee issues. A review of the employee opinion survey is conducted, and trends are identified in exit interviews. Employee interviews and focus groups are held in an attempt to determine the root cause of the morale issues, as well as the breakdown in teamwork and communication.

The data collection is discussed with leadership; after a series of discussions, leadership admits that many of the financial pressures have created a "knee jerk" reaction to staffing issues, often cutting back dramatically on employee hours. This would create a crisis mode and the need to ask employees to work harder. This cycle has created a significant lack of trust from the employee's perspective, coupled with the fact that employees have not felt that they have been apprised of the reasons for the roller coaster changes and have not been offered any words of appreciation when they have either reduced their hours or worked in a crisis.

The consultant and the leadership agree that in order to fix the "people" issues of the organization, there will need to be a culture shift of leadership and employee interactions so that a trust can be rebuilt.

Questions

1. On the basis of these issues, what OD interventions do you think should be utilized to address the problems this hospital is facing?
2. How would you proceed if you were the consultant in this case?
3. What skill set do you think the practitioner will need in order to be effective in this organization?
4. What type of a time line would you establish if you were this consultant?

Case Study 18-4 City Hospital

City Hospital is a growing hospital in a large metropolitan city. The hospital is currently experiencing issues that many other organizations are also facing, that of the multigenerational workforce. The senior leadership of this hospital is the typical "baby boom" generation, but the population of employees is slowly growing into one of a younger workforce. The leadership is struggling to deal with issues such as iPods at work, cell phone use, Internet use, tattoos, body piercing, and so on. Equally troublesome is a different perceived commitment to the job and breakdowns in communication. Leadership has decided to hire an outside consultant to help the organization understand the impact of the multigenerational workforce and to try to help become a more cohesive organization.

1. Which type of OD intervention is the leadership using in this situation?
2. What obstacles do you see in this situation that may make this intervention more difficult than other types?
3. What recommendations do you have for this situation?
4. What other interpersonal issues exist in organizations besides generational that may create a need for an OD intervention?