

Organizational Culture

"Culture." When you hear this word... what comes to mind?

Is it the differences in people's beliefs?

Is it what people value?

Or maybe... it's the shared expectations people have to act a certain way?

Now think of your workplace. How is this different from OTHER places where you've worked or studied?
How were expectations different? Did your employer value different things?

The fact is ... ALL workplaces are different. They ALL have their own organizational culture. This means they ALL have different norms, meanings, values and beliefs. Different employers have different expectations of their workers. All of these factors help form "an organizational culture." Workers use this culture to decide HOW TO act and HOW TO solve problems.

What does a POSITIVE organizational culture look like?

Well, let me first tell you a story.

This is LeAnne.

LeAnne feels constantly stressed at work. She feels that her work environment lacks respect, trust, and honesty.

LeAnne works very hard but feels that in order to succeed at her job, she has to fit in with the culture, or it may be considered a sign of weakness. She's always in competition with her coworkers. Everyday LeAnne comes to work wanting to look for another job... somewhere ANYWHERE but here.

This was an example of what a negative organizational culture could look like.

On the other side of things, workplace cultures that ARE psychologically safe and healthy have trust, honesty, and respect... people treat each other with civility and respect. Decisions are made in a fair way. People feel like they're part of a team, working toward the same goal.

Some signs that you have a positive culture would be:

- that people are satisfied with the work they do;
- there's great morale and teamwork;
- and you feel supported.

A workplace with a positive organizational culture is somewhere where people WANT TO work and WANT TO stay. People in the community feel it's a good place to work, even if they don't work there.

So, what are some things that you can do in your workplace to help build a positive organizational culture?

Employees can try a teambuilding activity.

Managers can look at starting a mentorship program between emerging and more experienced leaders.

Everyone can help set the tone for positive organizational culture by:

- Writing down what your company BELIEVES... what they VALUE...and what is the PURPOSE of the work you are doing.
- Starting a walking group or activity during lunch. Getting outside. Connecting with nature.
- Taking your breaks. Have some time to connect with your coworkers or someone in your life.

Take some time NOW to write down what YOU are ALREADY doing to contribute to a positive organizational culture and what YOU CAN BE DOING. Even if it's just ONE thing, YOU can make a difference.

Organizational culture is one of 13 factors that support psychological health and safety in the workplace. Learn more at: [MentalHealthCommission.ca/NationalStandard](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/NationalStandard)

For more resources for your workplace, check out [haveTHATtalk.ca](https://www.haveTHATtalk.ca)

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