

**Title: Supercharge Your Team's Morale/Spirits**  
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**APA:** Hello, and welcome to our latest installment of Supercharge Your Presence. This is Peggy Mihelich, Senior Director of Member Content here at APA. Today's webinar focuses on improving your team's spirits. Some important points before we get started. The views expressed in this presentation are those of the presenter and may not reflect the views of the American Psychological Association. This program does not offer CE, however, we will email everyone watching today a certificate of attendance. Attendees must watch for a minimum of 45 minutes to receive the certificate.

This presentation is being recorded, and everyone who registered will be emailed the recording in about two weeks. We will chat out a link to the slide presentation during the webinar. If you can't click on it or if you missed it, we'll include a link of the slides with the recording. During our time together, you will be on mute. If you have a question for our presenter, type them in using the questions box located on your webinar screen. We'll have time to answer some of your questions after the formal presentation has concluded.

Our speaker today is Dr. Kyler Shumway. Dr. Shumway is the President and Chief Clinical Officer of Deep Eddy Psychotherapy, one of the leading outpatient mental health practices in Texas. He is also a best-selling author with his fourth book, *Neurodiversity and The Myth of Normal*, being released soon as an Amazon Audible original. He has been featured by *Forbes*, *The New York Times*, CNN, and more for his work in combating the loneliness epidemic.

As a licensed psychologist, thought leader and TEDx speaker who has spoken to audiences across the nation, as well as internationally, his mission is to help people learn to love themselves and others, building satisfying and meaningful relationships, and find their place to belong. Welcome, Dr. Shumway.

**Kyler Shumway:** Thank you so much, Peggy. Hopefully, my webcam is working. I think it is. Okay. Great. Well, thank you all for being here and making time out of your busy schedules. Really excited to talk a little bit today about team morale and culture, and how to supercharge your team's spirits. The way that I want to kick this off is to talk a little bit about two stories that contrast each other, that really highlights how to do things differently. Let's start with company, the first, and this is one that some of you might be familiar with.

This is Sears and as many of you know, Sears went under a few years ago. One of the root causes can be traced back to the leadership of their CEO, Ed Lampert. Ed, he studied at Yale, he worked at Goldman Sachs, he created his own investment company. In the early 2000s, he became really interested in Sears and Kmart as companies and so he bought a bunch of shares, became the chairman and then the CEO, and merged the companies together in this huge departments conglomerate. Ed wanted to turn Sears around.

He was seeing Amazon explode and Walmart and really wanted to maximize return for his investors, but his approach would lead to Sears' ultimate downfall. What was

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the reason why that happened? First of all, Ed was micromanaging his team, especially his managers. He was inspecting every little aspect, every detail of what they were doing, he was correcting and really trying to help them improve. He would also make sure that if in any meetings or discussions, if somebody had a different perspective or opinion than him, he would either try to change their mind or he would get rid of them.

Ed also tended to make some short-term decision-making. He would focus on bottom line, profits over people, and ultimately, he was seeing his own skills and the belief that he could overcome everything all on his own, that's what led to so many people becoming disenfranchised with Sears, the managers leaving, brand name deteriorating, and in less than 10 years, Sears as a company went from being a multi-billion dollar company and employer to roughly a third of a million employees to being billions of dollars in debt and shutting down their stores. That's company the first.

Company the second, and this was the best free-to-use picture that I could find of UPS, a very different company. Chances are you've received a package delivered by UPS this year. The story that I want to tell you about UPS is about David Abney. David was a package delivery guy back in the '70s, and over the years, he worked his way up to executive leadership. As soon as he began his role as the CEO of UPS, again, having started off as delivering packages, he went on this huge worldwide listening tour.

He went all around the globe, he was listening to his employees, and then he took what he heard and he implemented that feedback based on what his team needed. He was investing in expanding their network, helping improve diversity, especially in their management leadership roles. He enhanced their benefits and compensation. Today is no surprise to anybody here, UPS is one of the most successful companies in the world with half a million employees and over \$100 billion in revenue just last year. It's not just all about the money, of course.

There are a lot of differences between these stories, but the most important one is how leadership influenced culture, how culture influenced the team, and then whether or not the team was able to do what they set out to do. Again, it's not about money, and if money is the world's curse, then may God smite us all with it, but this really is about helping your team accomplish their goals. Whether you are an admissions committee, selection team, or you're helping oversee a psychiatric department in a hospital, no matter what role you find yourself in, no matter what kinds of teams you're building, I think we can all agree that you don't want your team to fail.

You don't want things to fall apart on your watch, for your people to rise up in anger against you or just decide to leave. You don't want to be remembered for your mistakes as a leader, the way that Ed is, instead, you want to be remembered like David Abney. How do you do that? How do you help your team succeed and thrive? That's really what we're here to talk about today. This is our roadmap. As a leader, as somebody who wants to be more like David, you want to anticipate and address morale issues preemptively. If you wait until a problem becomes a problem, then your options are far more limited.

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Second, when your problems are identified and ruptures occur within your team, within the culture, you want to be able to make repair and make things right. Third, a strong healthy system depends on a well-cultivated culture. Culture is what creates the stability and the inertia, and any effective leader will know how to foster environments that really help their teams thrive. This isn't just any webinar series, this is the Supercharge Your Presence series, and so we want to go above and beyond, and give you some pointers, some tips for taking creative approaches to your leadership and enhancing team's spirits.

We only have an hour together. This topic is much, much bigger than an hour can contain, so if we're not able to get to something that was really important to you, or if you have questions along the way, make sure you use the chat function. Always feel free to reach out to me personally and directly as well. Without further ado, let's dive in. First, let's talk about some definitions before we get started.

When I'm talking about culture in this presentation, we're talking about the norms, beliefs, values, and relationships of a community. If I'm talking about spirit, that's more the emotional charge, the sense of motivation, excitement, pride, both the way that it's been, and the way that it is now. Morale is much more about work specifically, so how does the team feel towards the work, towards their co-workers? Those top three are used interchangeably in I/O psychology and research, so there's a lot of overlap.

You're going to hear, even in this presentation, I may use these interchangeably, and that's because they are all layered with each other. We'll also talk a little bit about rupture, which is a term that especially our interpersonal therapists may be familiar with. This in a work context is any change or events that leads to some sort of disruption in morale. This might be a change that happens in the system, this might be a loss, somebody leaves the team. Whatever it is, that might be a rupture.

Repair is what leaders can do to address those kinds of ruptures. How can you as a leader respond in healthy, non-defensive ways to help your team stay together and towards the goals? Of course, we'll talk a little bit about turnover, which for those of you who don't know what that is, that just means when you're losing team members, people are either quitting or people are being cut from a team. A couple of important definitions to know coming up.

The first step towards supercharging your team's spirit is to anticipate. If you can anticipate a problem from happening before it becomes problematic, then that gives you the ability to do something about it, which I know seems very basic, but many people miss the basics just like with dental hygiene. If you know the things that might lead to cavities, like eating sugar or not brushing your teeth, then that gives you the ability to adjust your habits to help keep cavities from happening in the first place, but as many of you know, even if you are a perfect brusher and flosser, you're still going to have dental problems from time to time.

Just like there's no way to absolutely prevent cavities from happening, there's no way to absolutely prevent morale and cultural issues from cropping up sometimes, but if you can catch those issues early, if you can anticipate them, address them before they happen, then it makes things so much easier for you. One of my mentors

taught me very early in my career that change is constant when it comes to leadership of a team, but growth is optional.

What that means is that change is part of every system. Everything from the technology that we use to the cultural norms of generations entering the workforce or people from different walks of life, change can and will happen whether you want it or not, but unless you are attentive to the changes and continuously working to adapt and improve, then you're going to be setting yourself up for failure. Change can also be an opportunity, but that's one of the most common risks to team morale.

Let's talk about risks to your team spirits. One of the most important ones that we'll talk about today is change and how that can affect your team, whether positive or negative. We will also want to talk about unmet needs, so financial, emotional, psychological, social. What does your team need to do the very basics of their job to function, but what do they also need to do to thrive?

Inflexibility. When leaders are not flexible with how they run their team, with how team members are able to go about their tasks, that's also a huge risk. We have opacity or opacity, depending on where you're from, which is just the opposite of transparency. Especially when management or leaders are not clear with the choices that you're making and the why behind the changes and other things that may be going on, that can be a huge risk to morale.

Similarly, inconsistency. This might include inconsistent treatment of team members. This might include inconsistent demands and things that people need to do day-to-day. Also turnover. These things can lead to turnover, but turnover has a huge impact on morale. If the people that you're working with seem to disappear on a regular basis, then it's really hard to have connection, which leads us to a few other risks that some leaders don't often think about.

One major risk is boredom. Lack of opportunity, and I like to think about this as being stuck in caterpillar mode. You join this position, this team, and you want to become a beautiful butterfly, but you can't because you don't have the opportunities to, or there's not a lot of inspiration, there's nothing to really dive deep into in terms of your personal growth.

Another major risk is disconnection. People are lonely and unattached. We saw so much of this during the pandemic as people were not in the office together and working remotely. We saw a lot of folks becoming detached from the relationships that were really meaningful to them. We also have burnout and compassion fatigue, which we're going to spend a little bit of time talking about. We have a lot of questions there. It's something that affects so many team members and is hot in terms of discussions of how to best lead teams and help them overcome.

Another common risk that other leaders may not think about is the effect of modern events. I'm here in Texas, and Texas has had our fair share of modern events that have really shaken the way that we approach our work. Many of you knew about the school shooting at Uvalde. You may have heard about some of the anti-trans laws that have been passed and the way that that affects culture.

These are all things that can impact your community and your team, and you want to be aware of those. Lastly, toxic positivity. This is not the same thing as having a positive outlook. This is really about invalidating your team or trying to be a happy cheerleader in the face of real problems, that can be so invalidating and it tends to lead employees to lose morale, to lose spirit, and not want to continue.

Let's talk about burnout, because we had so many questions submitted in advance, and I wanted to spend some time on this because it really is important. Burnout tends to be caused by a few specific things. I think the first, overworking. This is especially common with early career folks, whether it's pushing too hard or too much, stepping outside of the bounds in order to make ends meet in terms of the role itself. Exactly what it sounds like overworking.

We have neglect. This might be neglect by the organization, by the leader, but it also might be neglect by oneself. Self-neglect, not taking very good care of oneself, practicing good self-care. That's a major cause. We also see trauma as a major source of burnout, whether that's direct trauma for people who are first responders, or they're in situations where they're at risk of experiencing violence or other disturbing horrific things, but it's also common for people to experience vicarious trauma, where they're working with folks who talk about these experiences, and you're hearing about them, you're reading about them, you're seeing them. That takes its toll, and it's important that leaders are paying attention to the effects of that toll.

Lastly, we have lack of control. Let's say you're overworked and neglected and traumatized, if you can do something about that, if you can make changes to your workflow, if you can access self-care, that makes a humorous difference, but if you don't have control, no autonomy, no voice, then it's not just that these problems are happening for you, but you also have no ability to make any changes for the better.

These are the main things that can lead to burnout for your team. What can you do about that? There are a few specific things that you can do as a leader to help prevent burnout and address burnout when it's happening. First, it's so important to set boundaries for your team. This will help them both learn the importance of boundaries the easy way rather than the burnout way.

A couple of ways that you can do that. First, consider establishing specific working hours and then hold everyone to them, including you. If for whatever reason you need to work late, it's wise to consider scheduling emails to hit people's inboxes during work hours instead of during weird hours in the evenings or nighttime when the rest of your team might be off. If you see people on your team who are working outside of normal work hours or doing more than is expected, it's probably important to have a conversation with them about that.

In Japan, there's this concept of, and I don't know if I'm pronouncing this correctly, but it's *inemuri*, which is where a person works so hard and so long that they fall asleep at their desk. In Japan, that is awesome. It's a mark of dedication to the organization, to your leaders. While that might seem a bit strange to folks who are not familiar with that culture, hustle culture in America is not so different. You may

not necessarily fall asleep at your desk, but you may respond to emails while you're on vacation, or you may be working late hours for the sake of meeting your KPIs.

Those kinds of behaviors are just so ingrained in all of us because we tend to glorify overworking. A lot of people, especially folks who are early career, see that as a path to success, but that doesn't mean that we necessarily need to reward these things. Although we do want to reward hard work and excellence, it's just we don't want to pair reward and praise with *inemuri* essentially, because it leads to burnout.

Another way that you can help your team prevent that kind of burnout is by doing some schedule management training with them. This is especially important during the orientation and onboarding process, but you can do this at any point, essentially sitting down with your team, looking at their schedule and how they're using it. Does it help them stay productive and work for them? Do they have space for rest and recovery built into their schedule?

This is not something that many people know how to do on their own and it's not always easy to ask for help or know how to ask for help, so it's important that this is something that you just offer as a leader. For example, let's say you've got a therapist who's doing individual therapy sessions all day. If they're getting burned out, then one of the causes of that might be that they don't have time in between appointments. By doing some schedule management training, you can help them block off, say, 15 minutes between each appointments so they can get rest, reset, do documentation. Schedule management training really is all about empowering your team and giving them control over their time.

Next, you can encourage self-care and therapy. Some places will offer things like copay support for their staff to be able to go to therapies. They'll cover the portion that insurance doesn't cover, or they'll offer some sort of health stipend as a way to both reduce the barriers to care, as well as send the meta-message that we as an organization really care about your emotional well-being, psychological wellbeing, and so we want to invest in a tangible way to help make that happen.

Other places might do things like physical activity. It's very easy and affordable to hire a yoga instructor to come into your office or do a Zoom yoga exercise, whether it's just a simple stretch or something a little more in-depth, and that's a great opportunity for them. The most important part with any of these, though, is that it stays optional. If you say, "Okay, everybody now we're going to do mandatory yoga at noon," then people will start to resent that, even if it's something they maybe would enjoy otherwise. It's because they're being forced to do it and you're taking away autonomy, which again, is one of the things that leads to burnout. Make sure that it's optional and that people are able to make their own choices with these.

Lastly, the surefire way to help a person who's exhausted become not exhausted is to give them space for rest. As an organization, if you're able to offer things like PTO or reduced workdays, that's wonderful. I know that not every team has the ability to do that. It might be important to get creative. How can we help people step away from the work, get the rest and reprieve that they need without affecting other systems within our team?

Finally, and while this might seem a bit counterintuitive to what I just said, you might consider giving them more to do, and by more I don't mean that you should make them do more or more of the same kinds of things that they're already doing. Instead, you want to give them opportunities to try something new or take on new rules or new responsibilities.

For example, if you were to give them a new role, one common role that a lot of teams need is a safety officer who's the person who, let's say we have the power go out, or there's a tornado or a hurricane, or maybe there is a person who's intoxicated in the parking lot, whatever it might be, it's helpful to have someone on the team who knows how to respond in that moment. This might not even be a salaried role. This can just be a title that the person's able to have, which feels meaningful and has purpose, but it's also a great way for them to learn and expand their skill set. That would be one opportunity.

Another thing that you can consider is a new task. One thing that we do here at Deep Eddy is we have people at our different office locations will throw together what's called lunch bunch, and lunch bunch will go out just like it sounds for lunch once a week. It's voluntary. Anybody can go. It's not like Deep Eddy is paying for the meals or anything like that, although we do sometimes, just not all the time. The most important thing is that this is something that people on the team can feel like they can lean into that's different from the day-to-day written role.

Lastly, consider opportunities for research or projects that help them learn a new skill. One common one that I've seen a lot of organizations is having someone scope out new technology that might help them with some sort of problem that the team is having. We had a desire to track our inbound referrals more accurately and consistently rather than just keeping it in a spreadsheet, so we had one of our schedulers look into different CRM systems to see which might be most appropriate for us.

That's the kind of thing that you can consider. How could you send them on a quest that may be meaningful for business, but also give them a chance to learn and grow? Let's see if you can get ahead of that burnout and the other risks to morale. There are a few ways that you can get ahead of these things. The first is to hire really well. Who you choose to bring on your team can really make or break your culture. That's the first one. Second, you want to have clear expectations and protocol.

It's okay if you've already been running the team for a long time and there are norms and traditions that you've been following. It's always worth doing a refresher, setting clear expectations and protocol, documenting those things that you can refer back later. The reason why this is important is though really when people are experiencing inconsistency and they feel like there's variable expectation that that leads to burnout.

Next, you want to regularly assess and gather data from your team. This can be gathering data in terms of questionnaires and hard data, but it could also just be conversations. Really this is all about helping you keep your finger on the pulse when it comes to your team. Lastly, surround yourself with diverse perspectives. This

is so that you avoid the echo chambers and being in a room full of yes people, which can lead to all sorts of bad decision-making. These are the ways that you can anticipate some of the issues, and I want to dive into them in a little more depth.

Let's talk about hiring well. The first piece to hiring well really comes down to transparency at the very beginning. When you put up a job listing, you want to have in-depth details about the duties, expectations, and everything that would be involved in the role itself. You also want to be clear about the value proposition. What by I mean value proposition is not just the salary, but any other benefits that may be available so that people can get a good sense and compared for opportunities.

That way they're signing up for something that they really want because the last thing that you want is for a team member to join and they're begrudgingly there and maybe they signed up for something that they didn't expect or were surprised when they actually got in. You can prevent that by being very transparent from the get-go. Then you want to think about the things that you ask your applicants to send to you. The research shows that work samples are significantly more effective for predicting quality of work and effectiveness, competence, all those important things than interviews.

This is a common pitfall that a lot of hiring managers tend to fall into because you can show up to an interview and be incredibly charismatic, you can answer the questions perfectly, but that might be your skill. You may be really good at interviewing and not so much doing the job that you're being hired for. It's important that you're gathering work samples. At Deep Eddy we ask therapists to send us mock therapy videos so that we can get a good sense of how they are in the room, how they practice, and that tells us more than their CV ever could.

Consider gathering work samples, whether it's a therapy video or an assessment report de-identified, or it could be just an example of some sort of tool that they built in Excel, whatever it might be that can help you make really good decisions about people who are trying to join. Similarly, it's important to use interviews even if they're less effective for competence because you want to know if this person's going to be a good fit for your team. When you're interviewing, you'll want to ask questions about culture and your community values.

What are the things that are important? What would differentiate a person who would really belong and fit in with your team versus somebody who wouldn't? These are all the things that are important in mind when you are trying to hire. If you do that, you're going to hire well. What do you do after they're hired? This is really where setting clear expectations comes in. It starts with the job description. Again, just like being transparent with the job listing as you're hiring someone, when they're signing, you want to have a clear breakdown of their responsibilities, their day-to-day tasks, their workflow, and what you as their leader or manager are looking for in terms of their success.

It's incredibly stressful to be managed by somebody and not sure how to make them happy or not sure what they're grading you on. You want to give them a clear, fair, measurable rubric, that way they know how to succeed. You also want to focus in on

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orientation, because orientation is how you get folks who are joining your team prepared and able to land well within your system, your organization.

You want to invest as much as you can in orientation because if you can start things off on the right foot, then the rest tends to take care of itself. A lot of education and experiences to help prepare them for what they need to do. Lastly, you want to have a clear employee handbook, but you want to keep in mind that if you make a handbook full of policies, if you have a policy in your handbook, then you better do it or another way to say that would be, if you write it, you shall abide it.

This is so true in so many different ways. If you have a policy in place, then that gives you guidance for managing difficult or hard situations, but it also helps clarify when, let's say, as a leader, you need to intervene on someone who's acting inappropriately or otherwise disruptively. You want to be able to point back to the handbook to say, "Look, these are the rules. This is the way that we function," and you want to make sure that you stick to what you're writing.

How do you keep track of how things are going? Well, you want to gather data. There are a few ways that you can do this. One that I highly recommend is using regular anonymous surveys or assessments. You want to be looking at how happy and satisfied people are to be a part of your team. You want to ask questions about safety and inclusivity. Do you feel welcome in this space? Do you feel like your coworkers respect you and value you?

You also want to create a safe, anonymous space for people to give you suggestions and feedback for things that can be improved. There's research around anonymity, especially when it comes to bullying because people can sometimes be pretty mean and nasty when they're not face-to-face with you when they're using that anonymity gate, but this is also a way that you can get safe unfiltered feedback from your team.

As long as you're keeping in mind that people may be a little more harsh than they would be to your face, this is a great way for you to be able to gather feedback from people and hear the things that maybe wouldn't be said to you otherwise. That's one. Another one would be to create space for many town halls where people can talk about work, the things that they appreciate, to brainstorm together as a team. This is a great way to have dialogue between managers and folks who are on the team themselves, but this is most important for leaders who be able to listen and tune into what their team needs.

Lastly, one of the most important data points that you can gather is what happens when people leave, or why do they leave your team? You can do that through exit interviews. You shouldn't do those yourself, because just like with the anonymous assessments, there are things that people won't say to you, but they may say to a DEI director, for example, or a peer. That might be a role that you could consider for somebody else on your team. It's important to hear what are the reasons why people are leaving? Are there solvable, changeable aspects to your system that you can adjust and keep good people around? Exit interviews gives you the data that you need for that.

These are just a couple of examples of questions that you'd want to be asking through, say, anonymous feedback or day-to-day conversations. You might ask folks to scale on a scale of 0 to 10 things like how satisfied they are or how likely are you to encourage someone to sign up for this, or how happy are you with your connection with coworkers, things like that. If you like those questions and would like to learn more about them, I highly recommend checking out Gallup's Q12 employee survey. There's also a book by Don Clifton that talks about-- it's called *First Break All the Rules*. It's a wonderful leadership book. It walks through the importance of the Q12, how they help predict retention, employee satisfaction, all sorts of stuff. I recommend checking them out if you're interested.

Now let's talk about how to avoid echo chambers. One of the ways that you can do this is to actively recruit candidates who have unique, diverse life experiences, who have identity markers that are different from yours. It's incredibly important to distinguish tokenization from respect and valuation of diversity. The way that you can know the difference is if you're choosing a person because they check a box, that's not very helpful. If you choose a person because you value their perspective and see them as being able to bring something unique and important to the team, then that's what you want.

You want to be actively recruiting and making changes, adjustments, prioritizing within the way that you run your team to help retain candidates with those diverse experiences. You also want to create spaces for respectful disagreement. Disagreement is a great way for teams to come together, decide on the best decision together as a team. The only way that can happen is if people come in with different opinions or different perspectives.

You want to make sure there's a lot of safety for that and one of the ways that you can tell that, that may not be the case for you and your team is if everybody agrees with everything you say always. One of the ways that you can avoid that is by in any meeting context or where you're making decision, you want to assign the role of devil's advocate to someone. This should be set randomly, of course, but you can just say, "Look, I understand if you may have the same opinion or perspective as me, but what I would really appreciate from you in this moment is to take on the role of devil's advocate."

What a devil's advocate does is they take the opposing role or try to challenge what other people are agreeing to, even if it may not be something they believe themselves. This is more so to create space at the table for diverse perspectives that may not even be a good culture fit. It's a wonderful technique that you can use for gathering that data.

Key takeaways from anticipating and addressing underlying issues. First, again, keep in mind if left unmanaged, these kinds of morale risks can really lead to major problems, can lead to turnover, and all sorts of things. That's why it's so important to focus on gathering data, preventing, and setting expectations and norms early, but really detecting things as early as you can is the most important.

Here's why. When you detect that there's some problem, then that's where repair comes in. Repair in this context, again, is all about the specific actions a leader can

take to address issues that are happening with culture or morale. Repair sounds nice but what does it actually mean in this situation? It means that as a leader, you're going to make mistakes. There are going to be moments where you say the wrong thing, you make the wrong choice, and it's so important that as a leader you know how to make things right, how to fix things, how to bridge the gap between where you are and where they are, and that's because people tend to leave good jobs because of bad leaders.

Conversely, people will endure pretty difficult challenging jobs because they have a leader that they really trust and feel supported by. Some of the key trademarks of a leader who's not making repairs and tends to make things worse are people who react to ruptures with anger where they're aggressive or barking back. They might be avoiding it or trying to sweep problems under the rug and just straight up denying it, telling people that they're wrong or they have the wrong perspective. That's not how you'd want to do it.

When that happens, there are so many common causes that can lead to rupture. We're just going to talk about these top three today because these are the ones that we tend to see the most in workspaces. The first one that we see is hygiene needs being unmet. Second implementation of any kind of change, or we're adding a new thing to the system or making an adjustment. The last one that many people don't think about is a loss or lack of empathy for your team.

We're going to dive into each of these separately. This should look familiar. When it comes to hygiene factors, this is Herzberg's two-factor model of motivation. It's one of those things that you want to know for the EPPP, if that's something we're studying for. Herzberg theorized that productivity depended on two things, we've got hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors reduce unpleasantness, so they make it easier for a person, make it able to function in the work that they do. This is things like financial support and safe space to work and feeling connected with coworkers and things like that.

Motivators are things that can increase morale. This might look like taking on a new role or doing really meaningful work. This doesn't capture the whole human experience, and there's a lot of different models out there, but this is just one of the easiest ways to understand, and I think that it's important to leaders recognize this two-factor model because no matter how amazing your motivators might be, if hygiene met needs are not met, then team morale is going to suffer. One classic example that we saw during the pandemic was the way that hospitals were trying to respond to nurses in distress. Nurses were working constantly, working overtime, working with really difficult situations, and rather than improving pay or adjusting pay, many hospitals made the mistake of doing things like giving a cookie that says "You're a real treat." Those were attempts to motivate and reward and acknowledge. Again, if you're not meeting hygiene needs, then it doesn't matter how much you try to reward, your team's morale is going to suffer.

Since most leaders are good at identifying motivators, we're just going to talk about improving hygiene today, and we're going to break it down by financial and in terms of emotional safety and flexibility and things like that. In terms of financial, there are some ways that you can meet your team's financial needs without impinging on your

budget or affecting your ability to meet your own financial needs. The way that you can do this first is to consider some low-cost, but highly valuable benefits. Things like discounted gym memberships, which many gyms will offer to teams of 10 or more. If you just have a conversation with the manager, you can usually arrange some sort of membership deal or discount.

Similarly, doing things like offering funds for seeking outside training, any kind of training fund that can be tax deductible just depending on where you're working, what the system is. These are things that to a business really aren't that expensive and can be scaled to the full size of the team. But to the individual, to the team member, this can make a huge difference. What might've cost \$100 a month is now \$20 a month because you were able to negotiate a deal with the gym, or what would've cost a \$300 presentation to attend, if they're able to take money that the business allocated for them, that can make a huge difference.

Another way that you can provide a financial bonus is aligning a business need with a reward on a financial level for a team member. A good example of this is a new hire referral program. If somebody you know joins our team and signs on, then we will give you 50 bucks or something like that. That's a way that you can-- and it's money you would've otherwise spent in recruiting or marketing that you can reallocate back to your people. That's really helpful. They also have community built in, so it can be great for connectedness. Other smaller things like food or snacks or drinks, it may not seem that big or like it makes a huge difference. If you stock the employee lounge with water or easy lunches or things like that, that saves folks from worrying about, oh gosh, I forgot to pack a meal, or maybe I'm having a tough time making ends meet this week.

It's not an expense that's going to put you under serious style. Lastly, think about retention investments. One way this can look is any kind of an agreement between you and the employee where you will make some sort of investment or payment on their behalf if they agree to stay for a certain amount of time or pay the business back or the organization back. This is something that we just did with Deep Eddy, is we have this huge need in Texas for autism assessments. What we're doing right now is any psychologist who wants to provide autism assessments, we're fully paying for them to undergo the training for that. The agreement is if they decide they're going to say goodbye to Deep Eddy in the next year after they complete the program, then they would refund the business, pay the business back.

If they stay for at least that year, then they don't have to. That's good for them because they have the training paid for. It's good for the business because we know that folks are going to stick around. It's a win-win-win all around. These are all financial ways that you can improve hygiene. There's also safety and respect factors that you want to be thinking about, because if there's not emotional safety, psychological safety, then nobody will be able to do what they need to. One way you can do this is through DEI audits. This is really common. That's high demand. Essentially having a third party come in to evaluate and assess how diverse the team is, how included different identities are, and recommendations for how you can improve things.

We already talked a little bit about anonymous survey feedback, but there's also the importance of having anonymous reporting. For example, on the Deep Eddy employee handbook, there's a link to a webpage on our website that is not searchable. It's not available unless you have the link where employees can go and post anonymous feedback to the leadership team so that we're able to see that and they can express themselves without fear of reprimand or being seen differently. That's a really healthy way to provide a source of support and safety without making other sacrifices. Again, people can sometimes be mean when they're anonymous. Another thing that we're doing here at Deep Eddy is we have a bigs and littles team. You might have heard of Big Brothers Big Sisters.

We're doing a similar thing with new employees when they join. When they first join the practice, it's a volunteer program, we pair them with somebody who's been a part of the team for a while who wants to mentor and support someone. Sometimes it's very minimal. They might just go out for coffee one time and that's it. Other times it might be they're meeting on a regular basis. They're consulting on cases and things like that. That's a great way that we've been able to promote some safety in the team. You can also think about solutions teams. If you have an employee, teammate, coworker, whatever it might be, who tends to cause issues or tends to get in trouble, one way that you can approach that is a system that schools actually use for addressing bullying problems.

What you do is you get your team all together, including the person who's causing issues, and you talk about how as a team, we might be able to help prevent issues like this from happening. That way the person who's causing problems can be part of the solution. They can help support their team while also recognizing some of the problematic nature of what they're doing. A lot of information that you can learn from solutions teams, I'm not doing it justice, but that's another way that you can help keep things safe.

Lastly, how can you help promote freedom and flexibility? You want to think about things like flexible hours. You want to be focusing on the outcome of the work that people do instead of the nitty-gritty of the specific steps that they take, and you want to let go of ape hangers.

If any of you have seen a chopper motorcycle where they have the handlebars that way up high, if you've ever ridden one, then you know that they are super cool looking, but also super uncomfortable. Your hands lose circulation. It's hard to hang on. They do that because that's kind of how they've always done it. It's tradition. It looks cool. Think about the things on your team, the way that you run it that are similar, that maybe you could start to let go of and move on from. Aside from not meeting hygiene needs, one of the other major sources of rupture can happen anytime leadership tries to make some kind of a change, whether it's a new leader or we're adding some new technology and I talked about this earlier, if you write it, you must divide it.

If you are making a change and that involves the protocols that you've written, that can actually be a major risk, not just for morale, but also legal and ethical concerns. If you need to navigate change, you want it, again, keep in mind it's going to happen, change is constant. There are ways that you can navigate that that are more

successful than others. First, you want to think about transparency. You want to be really open about what's happening. You want to talk about what folks should expect, a timeline of what's happening, when it's happening, why it's happening, all of that. You also want to really listen to your team as you announce the change that might be coming.

You want to hear their concerns, you want to find ways to address those concerns. You want to provide them with tools and supports and resources so that they can navigate the change successfully. We'll talk a little bit about more why that's so important. Here's a case study from my practice. What we were able to pull off is in a span of seven days, we got 160 clinicians and 24 admin staff into a new EHR. We pulled that off by following these three pillars, by being very transparent, by listening in to the team through a few different channels. Also providing the tools and resources so that people's hygiene needs were being met and they had the resources that they needed. The final source of rupture happens when leaders get tuned out when they lose empathy for their team. If you're disconnected, you're not hearing folks, you're not listening to their experiences, then you can have a lot of bad things happen.

You might communicate in ways that are tone-deaf or disconnected, and just Google Greg Glassman and you'll find out what happened when he started making comments on social media that his team really did not appreciate. You are also at risk of missing warning signs. There may be some danger or bad outcome that you're not aware of because you're not listening to your team.

You want to be thinking about the possibility that if you're not plugged in, you're going to lose people. They may not feel like if you don't listen to them and care about them, then why should they listen to you and care about you? These are some of the consequences of that kind of detachment. If that happens, you'll want to break things down into these three steps so that you can respond and provide repair.

It comes down to listening, validating, and responding. It's a lot like therapy, and it's pretty simple. First, you want to listen. You want to take time to slow down, hear your team's concerns, value their feedback, even if it doesn't always make sense. Then you want to validate what you're hearing. Whatever caused the rupture, whether you offended someone or did something that that was distasteful, you want to validate the feelings that were caused. The key to validating is to make sure that you're reflecting, not deflecting.

If somebody says something like, "You're not paying me enough." Then you wouldn't want to respond by, well, you're not bringing in enough money because that would just be deflecting it back into them. Instead, you want to respond by saying, "Yes, it sounds like you're not feeling very valued for your efforts." Yes, it sounds like you're concerned or worried, and I really appreciate you sharing this with me. Doing that really helps the team hear that you hear them and are plugged in, and it also makes them more open for when you respond.

Responding to these kinds of ruptures is critical. There are ways to do it well and ways to not do it well. Really it comes down to these three pieces, taking ownership of what happens. You want to own not necessarily the responsibility all yourself, but

own that something happened and that because of your leadership, this occurred, you want to apologize. Saying the words "I'm sorry" can be really Powerful.

It's wise for leaders to be humble and express that to their team. Then you want to move from taking ownership and apologizing to giving specific game plan for what you're going to do to help try to make things better. If the team does not like that, if they say, "No, your game plan is unsatisfactory," or "You still don't get it," then you might go back to phase one and just try to listen. I want to try to offer some words of caution here. First, not all feedback from your team is going to be accurate or useful.

Some people are going to say things that may be exaggerated because they're used to being ignored, and so it's important to also just try to stay steady and avoid being reactive and making knee-jerk changes that create inconsistency. As a leader, you really want to come across as stable and consistent. It's important to wait, but you also don't want to wait too long. That's a delicate balance. Avoid making empty promises. You want to make sure that you're not apologizing for the things that you set out to do, that the team agreed to do.

You don't want to do this alone. You want to make sure you're consulting and hearing out the other folks who are on your team. These are the big takeaways when it comes to making repairs. Again, hygiene needs are first and foremost, make sure that those are met. Then, when rupture occurs, you want to navigate those things with clarity and compassion. You want to be listening to your team and responding with strength and humility.

This is our last section before we supercharge. This comes down to cultivating culture. There are so many other voices out there who've spoken on culture and have taken a deep dive, but you'll want to be thinking about these just from a conceptual level. These are the three elements that make up any strong team culture. You've got your values, the things that matter to your team that you appreciate. You've got your sense of connection to one another, otherwise, there's no team. You have a sense of shared purpose and direction, and those things come together to create a thriving, healthy culture.

As a leader, you have to help make that happen. You might want to start by creating a clear mission and vision and values plan. Want to gather team input, hear from everybody on your team. What are we all about? Who are we? What are the things that we care about? What are we trying to accomplish as a team? Develop language about that. Have it written down somewhere. Put it in your team handbook. Then everything that you do should somehow tie back to that mission and vision, so that way it doesn't feel like we're going off track.

You want to create space for non-work connection, as well as work connections. This might be bowling or covering meals. It might also be, we're going to go to a networking event or a mini-conference. Really, as a leader, the conceptual tool that you can use is the same one that I teach parents who are trying to learn how to parent their kiddos well. That's to be a gardener and not a carpenter. Carpenters have full control over everything.

They can measure things precisely. They have full ability to create the perfect outcome that they want, and that's because they have full control. Gardeners don't. They can try to provide all the essential ingredients to help something grow, but ultimately there might be a storm or bunny rabbits come in and eat all of your vegetables. It's important as a leader that you recognize that you can't control everything. If you do, it's probably going to make things worse. You want to have the attitude of gardener.

Gardeners also really try to focus on promoting that which is good rather than getting rid of that which is not. One of the most important things that you can do is focus on the things that you want to water instead of weed. You want to reward positive behavior or the things that support your team towards their goals, their values, and don't spend so much time focusing on how do I stifle out the things that aren't working or adjust or coach. That's going to make a huge difference with team morale, especially if folks are feeling underappreciated.

That's it when it comes to culture, it does take time just like growing a garden to cultivate a strong culture that supports your team's spirits. You want to have clarity around what you're all about, the mission you're trying to accomplish and you want to invest in your people and really try to support the folks that are aligned with what you're trying to accomplish. Okay, very quickly, I'm cognizant of our time, so I want to be respectful, but I promised some supercharging. That's what we're going to do.

If you want to take it to the next level, first, with your team, you want to consider creating new leadership responsibilities and goals that are directly tied into some of the things that you're trying to accomplish. If you have the kinds of employees or team members that you want to keep around, what sort of leadership roles would they fit and how can you help support that? What are leadership roles that may help enhance the culture or support some of the other goals that you have? Consider creating new roles that make space for that. You want to take as many opportunities as you can to shine a light on your people.

You want to highlight instances where folks go above and beyond, but not to the point where they're asleep, falling asleep at their desk. It's important to brag about your team to other people so that they can know that you value them and hear that praise, but you should only provide praise if you really mean it. People can usually tell when you don't.

Shine a light and then really try to invest in your people you want to support training and continue education. You want to encourage taking on new challenges and responsibilities. If your people believe that you see them as having potential and growth. Just like in therapy, just like Carl Rogers said, that genuine positive regard goes such a long way.

As you're investing, this helps build your team, helps support the folks who can help rise into leadership positions that support your organization. That's the third pillar for supercharging your team spirit. It really does all come down to being the kind of leader that you would want to follow, and that was one of the best pieces of advice I received very early in my leadership career. I really hope the same for you. I hope that you are able to make a big difference wherever you are, and you can be that

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leader for your people. With that, I think I left zero minutes, Peggy, for questions, but I would love to-- I have time, I'm happy to hang around if--

**Peggy:** Yes, I chatted out. We're going to just add another five to seven minutes on to answer a few questions. Audience, we totally understand if you have to drop off because you have other obligations, feel free to do that. You'll get the recording. It'll have this Q&A attached. We appreciate your time. If you can stick around, great, otherwise, have a great day. Let's get to these questions. The first one is, there was some interest in the book. Could you just chat in the chat, put in the book that you had mentioned?

**Kyler:** Oh, yes.

**Peggy:** The leadership book, yes, there was some interest in checking that out.

**Kyler:** There was a lot of chats.

**Peggy:** Yes. Now let's get to one of the questions. One of the questions was about engaging with team members who might be critical of the morale or team building and who are maybe resistant to participating in these endeavors or efforts. What are your suggestions?

**Kyler:** Yes. Trying to force folks to do things that will improve their morale will have the equal and opposite effect. It's so important to make these kinds of opportunities optional. If they're not optional, they should at least be paid. Really, again, it should be focused back on what the team is trying to accomplish together. It could be that if folks are being a stick in the mud, and they don't want to engage in team building or community building, and if that's not something that's essential to their role, then maybe think about other opportunities that are more in line with things they would appreciate. That might just mean having a conversation with them.

Hey, look, we really want to help folks feel more connected as a team. That's something that I personally feel is important, but I know that's not everybody's value. What do you feel like would help you either have your needs for connection or not connection met? Do you have ideas for folks who may be feel similarly to you? Really try to listen to them and then get their ideas and feedback.

**Peggy:** Okay. Do you have some strategies or advice on providing space for all TO have a voice, when sometimes a few individuals can dominate in a meeting or in a space where you're trying to build morale and spirits, where sometimes some dominant personalities can overtake others who may have something to say as well?

**Kyler:** Yes, absolutely. One of the most important members of any team, in the team meeting context at least, is the process observer. You can assign a role. You might have a timekeeper, you might have somebody who's laying out the agenda, but you want to have somebody who observes process and takes note on the team's process. All they're doing is documenting things like this person was responding to these kinds of questions, or this person seemed to respond in a way and then other people didn't follow up. It almost like it closed down the conversation. This isn't

meant to be a tool for making people feel ashamed for the way that they communicate, but I think that awareness is key.

The folks who tend to dominate in conversations, maybe they have their own agenda and there's something going on for what then, in which case leader can drill down on that individually, but probably they just don't realize what's happening, and being able to give them that information can make a huge difference. It's also helpful as a leader if you are running a team meeting to pause and intentionally ask people who may not be speaking up as much to share their thoughts or opinions or to even just make a blanket statement like, "I'm really curious what some of the folks who haven't shared yet are thinking." That can give some really great insights without necessarily calling a person out.

It really depends on your team's culture, but those would be a few ways that I would approach them.

**Peggy:** Okay. Another question is about, similar to this one, having a voice. Are there ways that people who are not in a managerial or supervisor position or role or who aren't department heads, ways that they can help boost morale and team spirit without feeling like you're usurping the job of the manager or department head?

**Kyler:** Yes, it's a great question, and it's wise to be thinking about how certain actions can affect culture, might affect what a leader might be trying to accomplish. I think it's wise to start by checking in with the manager or supervisor, leader, "Hey, I've got some ideas of things I would like to try with the team and curious what your thoughts are on that." Based on their response, you get an immediate sense on what kind of permissions you might have within the team and whether or not they feel it's appropriate. There are so many ways that you can lead without a title, even if it doesn't mean necessarily putting together some kind of an event or doing something more formalized.

It could just be thanking your coworkers on a more regular basis. Acknowledging the work that they're doing in those small moments can make a huge difference. That may be one thing that you could consider. Another thing would be, I think, trying to advocate for the people who don't have a voice, whether that's bringing certain concerns that you're hearing through other channels, to leadership, to management, as somebody who may have more power or privilege because of your identity, that might be an important thing to consider as well. There are a lot of approaches that you can think about, but those would be a few that come to mind.

**Peggy:** Okay. There's a lot of questions about building morale and team spirit in a remote workspace or a telehealth space, or even a hybrid where it's partly in office and partly remote. What tips or advice do you have for building team cohesion and morale in these workspaces that are not virtual workspaces?

**Kyler:** That's the, I think, million-dollar question that a lot of companies are trying to figure out right now. I have seen some things that have worked really well for us. For example, especially during the worst times of the pandemic, I was doing Zoom parties where we would play Jackbox as a team. They're like creative, more playful ways you can get everybody together. I also know the Portland VA. They have a

mindfulness minute that happens, I think it's every morning. It's just like we're going to come together online and someone might read a poem or some other phrase and the idea is you sit silently or maybe there's music that plays as a way to get more in touch with oneself.

It's a community experience that also helps set the tone. I also think that as a leader, as a manager, you want to think about what is the purpose of having my team more connected. Are there problems that are being caused by people not interacting with each other as often as they should? What are my concerns? What are the things that I'm trying to intervene on? That can usually give you more helpful answers for what you're actually trying to accomplish. It might not be that you want everybody to feel like everybody's friends at work, but rather it's just important to know who's who. Maybe instead of doing group gatherings, you have different team members give presentations.

That way, other people can hear their story and learn from them, get to know them a little bit better, and get a better sense of the team itself.

**Peggy:** Here's another fun question. Is there ways you can use arts and humor? Or have you at Deep Eddy Psychotherapy used arts and humor to help build the morale and spirits of the **[unintelligible 01:08:57]**?

**Kyler:** Yes. Two main ways that's happened. Way the first, one of our psychologists ran a group based on the artist's way, which is a self-guided journaling, it's a regular exercise where you essentially sit down at the beginning of the group and you just free write. Then at the end of the time, you delete what you wrote. It's essentially just you're getting in the rhythm of creating something and moving on from it. Folks found that very therapeutic and expressive, and a great way to tap into those parts of their brain. Then we also have other things like music get-together where people can play music.

We've played around with the idea of talent shows, but it's hard to have the gumption to put yourself out there after a long day of seeing therapy clients. Not as much success with that one. Yes, I think that the opportunity to add more play, to give people permission to let loose is so important, especially in the work that we do.

**Peggy:** Okay. We have time for one more question. I think this is a good one to wrap up with, is talk about just the idea of, as a manager, trying to make everyone happy. Realistically, what can you hope for? What do you try and do? Obviously, you want to make everyone happy, but is that really realistic? How do you approach this?

**Kyler:** It's a great question. I think if you are hearing that everyone is happy, then that might mean that it's not safe enough for people to express concern. That would be a red flag in my opinion. If everybody's super, super happy unless you work at a puppy snuggling store, I don't know, I'm trying to imagine something where everybody is happy all the time, but there's got to-- even then, people may have needs, they may have ideas and you want to be hearing those from folks.

It's not realistic to try to make everybody happy and in the book, *The Art Of Gathering*, one of the author's key ideas is the idea of not making a space as

inclusive as possible if you want to have a deep, meaningful gathering. When it comes to your team, rather than trying to make an everything bagel where everybody and everyone is able to have a sense of belonging, that's wonderful and I think it's a great idea, it's also not the most effective four-deep connection, it's just more connection.

How can you, as a leader, try to ensure that you are making the right kinds of people happy and as many of them as possible in your team. There are a lot of ways that you can do that, focusing on your culture and the norms and making sure you're bringing in the right folks and that the good people aren't leaving. All of that comes together to ensure the happiest team possible, but I think that leaders tend to, myself included, take unhappiness and unmet needs very personally because we really want people to feel supported and happy. As a leader, it's important to have your own support and realistic expectations so that you don't get burned out.

**Peggy:** Exactly. Exactly. Well, unfortunately, we have run out of time.

[laughter]

**Peggy:** Thank you all for sticking around just a few more extra minutes so that we could get some Q and A in, and thank you much for joining us, Dr. Shumway, and sharing your insights with us.

**Kyler:** Thank y'all for being here.

**Peggy:** Sorry we couldn't get to any more questions. We got in as many as we could in the time that we added on here. A recording of this presentation along with the slides will be emailed to everyone in two weeks. As soon as the webinar has ended, a short survey will appear on your screen. We hope you'll take a few minutes to take the survey and give us feedback on how we did and how we can improve. Finally, don't miss the APA 2023 virtual job fair.

It's on August 10th. All registrants can participate in live texts and video chats with recruiters looking to hire psychologists. You can get career coaching and attend relevant learning sessions. Head to [www.psycCareers.com](http://www.psycCareers.com) to learn more and register. We thank you for your attention and we hope you have a great day.

**[01:13:51] [END OF AUDIO]**