

## **Supporting Staff Induction**

The Cycle of Development theory, which the Behaviour Wall is based upon, proposes that growing up takes a lifetime. We visit the developmental stages the first time round at various chronological points during babyhood and childhood and we get key needs or hungers met. The cyclical nature of growing up means that we subsequently revisit them many times during adulthood.

In particular, times of change will trigger an instinctive return to the earlier developmental stages. If you think back to when you started a new job, aside from all of the 'professional' matters you had to attend to, there will most probably have been some very 'core', interpersonal matters that will have arisen:

- Who can I trust in this new workplace? Who are the staff who will take care of me?
- Where are things – rooms, equipment etc. How does the equipment work – who will show me how to use the photocopier? (How many of us made a bee-line for the office staff and IT technicians as we instinctively knew they would be important sources of help?)
- What are the expectations around here? What time is it acceptable to leave at the end of the day? Is there a dress code for staff?
- What is my role – and where do I sit in the hierarchy? Am I up to the job?

According to the Cycle of Development model, these very questions we first grappled with during our childhood years – except quite clearly they weren't related to work. During the first 6mths or so of life, a baby needs to attach to caring adults and find out how to get their needs met; as a toddler they will be exploring the world around them; etc etc.

As you consider the material below, critically reflect upon the school's existing support mechanisms for new staff. How effectively do you think the school meets these important needs? Guard against 'box ticking' – schools are incredibly busy places and supporting and caring for one another can quite unwittingly be pushed lower down the priorities as more immediate and pressing issues can be more 'visible'. Remember, new colleagues will be wanting to 'slot in' and be seen to be a 'good appointment'. This can lead to them discounting their own needs as they go into the classroom, close the door and 'just get on'.

The intention of this is not to lead schools into thinking they have to 'do more'. Often it's about critically reviewing current practice and considering how it can be tweaked. Many schools will expect members of the leadership team to mentor new staff and time will be set aside for this. It might be as simple as considering which aspects described below perhaps needs to be included in mentoring/review sessions between staff. And sharing this material with colleagues' awareness about these sometimes hidden yet critical emotional components to supporting colleagues can be enough to prompt them to 'tweak' how they currently do things.

The material below is adapted from 'Family Issues' Vol 11, No. 2, 2003, Maine University.

It is based upon the original works of Pam Levin (Levin, Pamela. *Becoming the Way We Are: An Introduction to Personal Development in Recovery and In Life*. Self-published, Berkeley, Ca. 1974.) and Jean Isley-Clarke ('*Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*' (Hazelden)).

Additional information on the application of this material can also be found in Julie Hay's *Working It Out at Work – Understanding Attitudes and Building Relationships* (Sherwood Publishing)

<b>Developmental Stage</b>	<b>Hunger to be met</b>	<b>Unhelpful responses new colleagues might resort to/unintended consequences of not having emotional needs adequately met</b>	<b>Some supportive responses</b>
<b>Being</b> (visited first time round between 0-6mths)	<b>Contact</b> <i>Who can I trust?</i> <i>Who will take care of me?</i> <i>Do I belong?</i>	Feeling that they are running on limited/no emotional energy. Questioning their professional adequacy in negative ways (as opposed to constructively reflecting on their practice); Feeling helpless. Not stating their needs – but expecting others to ‘second guess’ them. Not knowing what they need An unhealthy self-sufficiency - appearing to not needing anything. Believing others’ needs are more important than their own.	<i>You belong here.</i> <i>What you need is important.</i> <i>You can feel all your feelings.</i>  <b>New staff</b> How are new staff welcomed and encouraged to take their place within the school? Who explicitly is there to listen to their needs and respond to them, especially during the first few weeks?
<b>Doing</b> (6-18mths)	<b>Stimulus</b> <i>Can I explore/try out new things?</i> <i>Can I trust what I learn?</i>	Highly active – “doing” takes precedence over simply ‘being’. Appear to be caught up in a whirlwind of activity and are reluctant to rest. Not knowing when to initiate/reluctance to initiate. Conflicts about whether to be goal-directed or not have any goals for a while. Boredom; seeking or developing new motivations in work – possibly when core tasks aren’t being completed/responsibilities are unfulfilled. Avoiding doing things unless they can do them perfectly. Trouble finishing tasks. Thinking it is okay not to be supported, protected.	<i>You can know what you know.</i> <i>You can do things as many times as you need to.</i> <i>You can be interested in everything.</i> <i>You can use all your senses when you explore.</i>  <b>New staff</b> What support is in place to help new colleagues: find their way around the building, learn how to work key equipment.  Are staff explicitly encouraged to ‘have a go’, acknowledging that mistakes will be made and that this is ok?

<p><b>Thinking</b> (18mths–3yrs)</p>	<p><b>Structure</b> “Is it ok for me to think for myself?” “Where are the boundaries around here?”</p>	<p>A sense that they have a chip on their shoulder – they are angry about everything in general but don’t articulate this in healthy ways. Passive-aggressive behaviours. Afraid to express their own anger – and/or anger of others. Wanting to establish what is “mine” and what is “yours.” Colleagues experience high levels of resistance, contrariness and procrastination from this member of staff. Would rather be right than successful. Ego-centricity – behaving as if the world revolves around them. Scared to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ without thinking.</p>	<p><i>You can know what you need and ask for help.</i> <i>You can think and feel at the same time.</i></p> <p><b>New staff</b> How are expectations about dress, time-keeping, conduct made clear to them?  How are they encouraged to ask for help?</p>
<p><b>Identity &amp; Power</b> (3yrs-6yrs)</p>	<p><b>Recognition</b> “Is it ok for me to be me?” “How do I get noticed around here?”/ “What role do I need to take on in order for others to notice me?” “What personal power do I have?”</p>	<p>Having to be in a position of power – or alternatively being afraid of or reluctant to use power. Questioning their own adequacy. Frequently comparing them self to others - and needing to be better than them – ‘one up-manship’. Their job/status defines who they are. Feeling driven to achieve. Wanting or expecting magical solutions.</p>	<p><i>You can try out different roles and ways of being powerful.</i> <i>You can be powerful and ask for help at the same time.</i> <i>You can explore who you are and find out who other people are.</i> <i>You can learn the results of your behaviour.</i></p> <p><b>New staff</b> How is the balance struck between communicating a belief and confidence in new colleagues’ abilities – and reassuring them that they can make mistakes and turn for help? (especially in relation to behaviour?).  How are new staff affirmed by colleagues/line managers?</p>

<p><b>Skills &amp; Structure</b> (6yrs-12yrs)</p>	<p><b>Excitement</b></p> <p><i>“How do I develop the resilience needed for me to cope with the mistakes I will naturally make?”</i></p>	<p>Considerable time and energy is devoted to being part of a group/clique - or alternatively functioning as something of a ‘lone ranger’.</p> <p>An unwillingness to examine personal values or morals.</p> <p>A lack of thinking for themselves – and instead trusting the thinking of the group; discounting their own intuition.</p> <p>Expecting to have to do things without knowing how, finding out, or being taught how.</p> <p>Being reluctant to learn new things</p> <p>Reluctance to be productive.</p>	<p><i>You can trust your intuition to help you decide what to do.</i></p> <p><i>You can find a way of doing things that works for you.</i></p> <p><i>You can learn the rules that help you live with others.</i></p> <p><i>You can learn when and how to disagree.</i></p> <p><i>You can think for yourself and get help instead of staying in distress.</i></p> <p><b>New staff</b></p> <p>How is time given over to affirming new colleagues in their abilities?</p> <p>What steps are explicitly in place to encourage them to ask for help – to know that it’s ok to say ‘I don’t know’ or ‘How do I ...?’</p>
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