Creating A Culture of Accountability
Agenda

• 9:30-10:30   All about accountability
• 10:30-10:40  Break time—10 minutes
• 10:45-11:15  Practicum--breakout groups
• 11:15-11:25  Sharing
• 11:25-11:30  Closing thoughts
Accountability:

• The basis for having an environment of trust, support and dedication to excellence.

• Being able to count on each other for support and reliability.

• Additional work is produced when one fails to keep their commitment to be accountable.

• Accountable and committed people keep work load frustration down and team work positive and up!
When accountability is absent, the inevitable result is a significant gap between an organization’s performance and the performance it is capable of producing.
• For workplace accountability to exist, leadership must intentionally create and demonstrate a culture of accountability. If leadership does not establish that culture, it is highly unlikely that employees will do so themselves.

• In the absence of a clear set of cultural norms, accountability, if it exists at all, will be random, inconsistent, and most likely coerced.

• “coercive micro-management” and “willing accountability” are mutually exclusive terms.
Responsibility

- Responsibility is the idea of being completely in charge of something, that the person(s) responsible for something is the root cause behind whether that thing succeeds or fails.
- The concept of shared ownership exists.
- Responsibility is the before-the-fact mindset of taking ownership for the results of a project or job.
- To take ownership you must first assume responsibility.
- When you accept responsibility for a situation, you also accept accountability for the result or outcome, good or bad.
Accountability

Responsibility

The ‘X- Factor’
In post-modern context...

- Accountability is good. Responsibility is great.
  - Sustainable
  - Involves learning
  - Improves engagement

- When you focus on Accountability > Responsibility you get unhappy people and low performance.

- When Responsibility = Accountability you get happy people and amazing performance.
Accountability is *Vertical*

How we managed before complexity

...and still the dominant mental model
Responsibility is **Horizontal**

How anything **REAL** gets done in a complex world
Traditional Accountability Mindset

Results *they* care about most

Results *you* care about most
Shared Responsibility Mindset

Results *they* care about Most

Results *you* care about Most

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Accountability

Responsibility

Shared Vision
• Shared understanding of who ‘we’ are and what ‘we’ are to achieve, and ‘why’ we do what we do.
• The domain that falls outside the sphere of me, yet remains part of the whole of which I am a part.
• Safe place to go when a threat appears.
• For a manager, this can be scary because others may know more than you
• Each has the responsibility to influence, own, and take action.
• Anything that is impacted by my behavior or my decision is within my influence.
• Each has the responsibility to give input, state their case, and ensure alignment and attunement with their arena of accountability.
• Is the set of things that the leader/manager holds the team to.
• This defines what is important or central to the work.
• There is no invitation to be here, rather duty to get there.
What is a “Culture of Accountability”? 

• A culture where team members ask for support when needed and do not wait until a crisis occurs.

• Psychological Safe Space

• Committed team members take responsibility for their problems within their areas meanwhile looking for ways to develop and maintain other areas that they personally impact outside of their job description.
3-Most Common Obstacles to a Culture of Accountability
Obstacle #1
Overwhelming and Competing Priorities

• Must clearly know your desired objectives and outcomes.

• Ask yourself,

“What specifically is each person accountable for achieving?”
Be prepared to demonstrate how that serves the greater goal!

Overwhelming and competing priorities tend to break the foundation of accountability.
Obstacle #2
Territorialism and Silos

• Environment of blame and finger pointing.

• Projects and activities are not effectively coordinated due to silos and territorialism.

• Blame and finger pointing initiate when the problem(s) surface from the parties involved.

• Once this begins, there is frustration and confusion (cognitive dissonance), which does not allow things to be accurately understood and typically ends with a negative result. Spreads!
Obstacle #3
Problem and Conflict Avoidance

- Problem and conflict avoidance occurs when parties are not blaming each other for the problems any longer, instead they were avoiding the problems completely.
To achieve accountability and responsibility you must...

• **Create a culture of accountability...ownership.**
  - every employee should have a very clear understanding of his/her work processes. Better yet, co-create those processes.

• **Establish clear standards.**
  - Without clear standards, to what is the employee accountable exactly?

• **Build capacity strategically.**
  - Without adequate training, how can the employee achieve the desired standards?
Matt Selker’s ‘10-Tenets to Create a Culture of Accountability’

1. Be intentional—value.
2. Clear vision and priorities
3. Shared vision/ownership
4. Clear expectations
The 10-Elements (continued...)

5. Relentless Attack on Dysfunctional Habits
6. Surface and Resolve Problems and Conflicts
7. Be Prepared—Build Capacity
8. Measure & Share Performance
9. Transition v. Change
10. Support & Encourage
In a 2012 article published in the Harvard Business Review, authors Gretchen Spreitzer and Christine Porath reported on data compiled from seven years of workplace research. The data revealed four consistent practices that led to sustainable performance:

1. Consistent sharing of information
2. Decision-making discretion
3. Consistent performance feedback
4. A workplace that minimizes incivility

The performance advantage in those companies that demonstrated these four cultural norms was significant.

- [2] “16% better overall performance (as reported by their managers) and 125% less burnout (self-reported) than their peers. They were 32% more committed to the organization and 46% more satisfied with their jobs. They also missed much less work and reported significantly fewer doctor visits, which meant health care savings and less lost time for the company.”
Critical Reflection and Learning...

✓ Am I driving accountability in a way that increases fear? Or, am I creating a psychologically safe space for the culture to evolve?

✓ Am I clearly communicating and demonstrating the distinction between ‘being held to account’ and feeling an internal ‘sense of ownership’?

✓ How am I setting the stage for all to practice responsibility?
Small Group Discussion