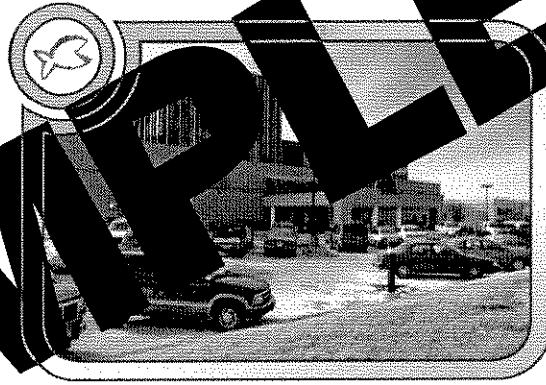


Vital Signs

Many patients on the neuro-renal ward at Missouri Baptist Medical Center are so weak it takes two or three nurses to move, bathe or feed them. Teamwork is essential. A few years ago the work became so overwhelming that even dedicated nurses felt stressed and pressured. They looked at each other and thanked each other often. Teamwork suffered. Missouri Baptist Medical Center was in a bind.



Teamwork is essential in any organization. We serve deadlines and tasks when we should be serving people. Everyone feels a little less human.

Shari Bommarito-Holmes, a clinical nurse educator on neuro-renal, explains that FISH! pulled together "the four parts of being human at work." PLAY, MAKE THEIR DAY, CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE and BE THERE renewed a spirit on neuro-renal that was buried by stress. While the demands of the job were as great as ever, support and communication increased. Patient and employee satisfaction rose.

What they did

- They expanded the definition of what it means to be "professional."
- They had a "permission slip" to bring more of themselves to work.
- They saw FISH! as a way of life rather than a short-term program.
- They encouraged each other to express themselves in their own way.

What you can do

Choose who you want to be at work. Once you've chosen, don't let outside forces dictate who you're going to be.

Bring something to work that gives you joy—family photographs, art, a way of expressing yourself, clothes, laughter. Now share your joy with the people you serve.

- Pay attention to how you encourage (or discourage) others from being themselves at work.

Conversation Starters

Bommarito-Holmes became a nurse because she wanted to be "human" at work. What does it mean to be "human" at work? It DOESN'T mean treating people as numbers, tasks or as boxes to be checked off. It DOES mean dealing with your customers and coworkers as unique individuals with their own personal needs and feelings.

"I really think [FISH!] does, in essence, pull together the four parts of being human at work and being who you are." Shari Bommarito-Holmes

- What characteristics do you associate with being professional? How many of these are about conforming to a certain type of fashion or behavior?
- What characteristics do your customers want from you? (How about these: compassionate, approachable, good-humored, knowledgeable, concerned, listening, caring.)
- Compare your two lists. How would you define professionalism now?