

Supporting Staff During Difficult Times

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Lori Cox: I went around and talked to – individually – to the employees who I – especially the ones that had been here a long time – and let them know in individual conversations how even though we could replace their bodies, we definitely could not replace the heart and spirit that they have brought to Head Start. And just really told them how incredibly valuable they are to us and that I'm sorry we're put in this position, but I don't want to lose them. And is there anything I could answer for them. And had some really, really, really good individual discussions.

Stacey Scarborough: We have done trainings with lead physician – chief medical director to do very personalized trainings, maybe just with a center or just with this group, where we saw there was a lot of people not vaccinated, just to do question and answers. We've done town halls. We've done private meetings. But I think the difference has made respecting people's decisions. And once that has happened, it's made people feel like they would look at other options just because they felt like they were not forced, but they were respected. And once the respected starts saying, “You have these options, “I saw more people move into vaccination.

Monica Walters: We have one or two folks that are still contemplating. And what we've done in terms of giving them extra support is they spent a lot of time talking with H.R. We've sent San Francisco Department of Public Health nurses out for one-on-one conversations with teachers. We've used a lot of webcasts, podcasts. We really have taken advantage of all the wonderful resources that our local public health agency has provided to us and have found that they have stood with us every step of the way. And we feel that, again, I know we're working in a different environment here in San Francisco, but we felt like it was a relief for our staff to be able to feel the comfort of knowing that they were working in a fully vaccinated environment.

Rolanda Billy: I think for our staff that there was some hesitancy from our employees, but again, just constant support. Reassurance is coming back on periodically and checking in with the district level – senior level staff. And a lot of family collaborations with the parents that we have, the teaching and the content teams here at Navajo Head Start; a lot of coordination among the managers, the specialists here in coordinating those efforts with the center staff; providing pamphlets, bringing in health professionals, doing presentations, and ultimately, giving the resources to the employees so that they can make the best choice for themselves, for the students, and for the families they work with.

Amanda Keefer: And it is, I think, those individual conversations and being kind of vulnerable and talking to people about why they don't want to or what their concerns are, is probably – is some of the best way to really get to people who really don't want to do it.

Kathy Parson: We just really, I think, made ourselves available to staff. We went out there. We did a vaccine clinic here, and I'm on site and I'm vaccinated, but I was there. I went to it. I attended it. It kind of acted like the cheerleader, helped the clinic staff. I just immersed myself

in it, and I made myself present in it. And I think that that's important. I didn't sugarcoat anything, but we were also very kind about it, and we understood. We said we understand the hesitancy.

And I was afraid too. I think that's probably a big part of it. We just stayed really humble about it. It wasn't like, "Well, if I could get it, you could get it." No. We want our world back. We were ... We just stayed raw about it, I think, more than anything.

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