STRATEGIC GUIDE TO BUILDING A
LEARNING CULTURE

Six Essential Actions to Build a Strong Learning Culture

1 | FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

Learning is never an isolated experience. The most individual, self-directed of efforts must ultimately be connected back into a community to have real impact. A focus on sharing and shared learning experiences is essential to learning culture.

2 | EXPAND THE DEFINITION

Learning and education are not equivalent. Education is one path to learning, but learning in its full breadth encompasses life. A learning culture embraces formal and informal, structured and unstructured learning experiences equally.

3 | REINFORCE VALUES

Learning must be clearly communicated as a core value, and commitment to it must be visible and tangible. All stakeholders—members, employers, partners, staff—should embrace active, continuous learning as an expectation for which they hold themselves and each other accountable. Those who meet or exceed those expectations should be rewarded.

4 | USE EVIDENCE

Learning culture is not about simply pursuing the latest trends and buzzwords. It must be firmly rooted in the best available research about effective practices and refined and reinforced based on data showing those practices work in the real context of ASHA stakeholders.
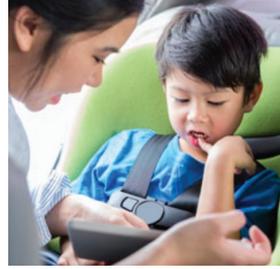
5 | MASTER PROCESSES

Processes support and drive the potential impacts of a learning culture; they become the operationalized and malleable representation of the culture and may enable or inhibit a learning culture. An organization as sophisticated and complex as ASHA must attend to processes, policy, and technical infrastructure to support and propagate the desired learning culture.

6 | DRIVE RESULTS

A learning culture recognizes activity doesn't always equal results. A solution may not always be another course or research project. Impact is what makes a learning culture sustainable over time. Learning organizations that can create significant impact for the learners, the organizations, and the fields and industries they serve not only survive but thrive.

This resource was adapted from a similar document created by the Aspen Institute.

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WHAT IS A LEARNING CULTURE?

A learning culture clearly values and prioritizes learning, rewards the pursuit of learning, and is therefore able to change, adapt, and evolve as circumstances require.

WHY IS BUILDING A LEARNING CULTURE IMPORTANT?

The capacity to change, adapt, and evolve is essential for thriving in our current world. Membership organizations that expect to remain highly relevant and valued in the professions they serve must be prepared to help members develop this capacity. Benefits from fostering a learning culture include:

- More and higher quality opportunities for member engagement
- Increased effectiveness in supporting workplace performance
- Greater agility for members and employers responding to change
- Heightened innovation and creativity throughout the profession
- Greater ability to attract top talent to the profession
- Heightened perception of the value ASHA creates for the profession
- Greatly enhanced capacity for achieving ASHA strategic objectives

WHAT DOES A LEARNING CULTURE LOOK LIKE?

A learning culture manifests itself in many ways. Characteristics in the context of ASHA include:

- Learning is communicated as a core value of the organization.
- The goal of fostering learning is integral to organizational strategy and consistently mapped to ASHA strategic objectives.
- ASHA staff at all levels embrace and model a personal commitment to learning.
- Members are characterized by a growth mindset and a capacity to take ownership of their own learning.
- The organization consistently invests to provide relevant, personalized learning opportunities, both formal and informal.
- ASHA partners understand and commit to playing an active role in supporting the culture.

LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

A learning ecosystem is comprised of people, content, technology, and the processes and strategies that unite them. Learning culture emerges from a learning ecosystem while simultaneously influencing and impacting the ecosystem.

PROCESS

PEOPLE

- Individual learners (members & nonmembers)
- Volunteer coordinators
- Speakers & facilitators
- Academic institutions & faculty
- ASHA staff (all divisions and departments, all levels)
- Regulator & boards
- CE providers
- Employers
- Clinical sites
- Collaborative practice provider associations

CONTENT

- Online CE courses
- Conference sessions, online and offline
- Community interactions
- Scheduled chats
- Social media interactions
- Journals
- Podcasts
- Videos
- Documents
- Web pages & blogs
- Research & standards
- Simulations

TECHNOLOGY

- Learning management system
- Association management system
- Webinar platform
- Virtual conference platform
- Community platform
- Social networks
- Search engines
- Data management
- Business intelligence
- Curation tools
- Competency management
- Learning experience platform
- Learning record store

STRATEGY

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